1. SATYA SANKALPA

08-05-2015

Swamini Niranjanananda is 83 years old. She lives and works out of CIF in Veliyanad, Kerala. There is a silent hum surrounding her being... the hum of her Narayana, Gurudev. Swamini ji continues to teach, to hold camps and satsangas. The smile that you see playing on her countenance is for Gurudev who she sees in everything. Hers is a lifetime spent in unconditional surrender.

It was June 1993. I had just graduated from my Vedanta Course at Sandeepany , Powai. I was in the best of spirits and health, very eagerly awaiting Gurudev. Others like me stood wearing bright yellow clothes and very pleased with our calling. Gurudev was giving us deeksha, one by one... He came to me next and putting the rudraksha mala round my neck, he as if pressed near my ear lobes....



After lunch a fever seized my body. It shot up and raged like a forest fire. I was verily in a swoon. Gurudev was leaving for Sidhabari and then to the US. My fever was consuming. I was not even able to go and see him off.The fever took over my body for three full days. I, Brni. Tapasya Chaitanya was already enduring the fire....

And in 3 days the fever went away, having done its job ... and it felt calm. Something happened - some type of change had happened. Sometimes when the mahatmas wish you or bless you, some change happens, that is what I felt. That the fever is not some ordinary fever, he has pulled out some bad element from my system. What it is I don't know. But it was a very rare, unusual experience.

August 1993 Gurudev attained samadhi. Just two months after he gave me brahmachari deeksha and set me on the path.
One month after he passed away, I got the letter he wrote to me from Sidhbari or

US can't tell -- but it shook me to hear from him during a time we were struggling to cope with his loss. He wrote to say: "We have to serve the Lord."

Soon after my graduation and fever at Sandeepany, I had written to ask Gurudev why are you going to the US when you are unwell... and he replied to say we have to serve the Lord etc. The coming of his reply a month after he had left this mortal world was as if a reminder....

So then when I thought back I began to see that in every action of his, there was satya sankalpa.
Going back to the pre-1993 days..... One incident took place, which made me feel that he had blessed me in some special way.
Before I joined the Mission, I had worked in the Chinmaya Vidyalaya for 10 years as headmistress, Principal and so on in Madras and Bangalore. My home town was Bangalore and I was posted in Madras. The salary was not enough to sustain me in a new city, so I decided to leave and return to Bangalore. Gurudev agreed but he was not happy. He was always concerned about our betterment.
Then one day Gurudev came to Bangalore for a camp. I went to meet him, and he said, 'why do you want to take retirement so early? You go and work in my school here... .'

It was an order. The next day he left for camp.

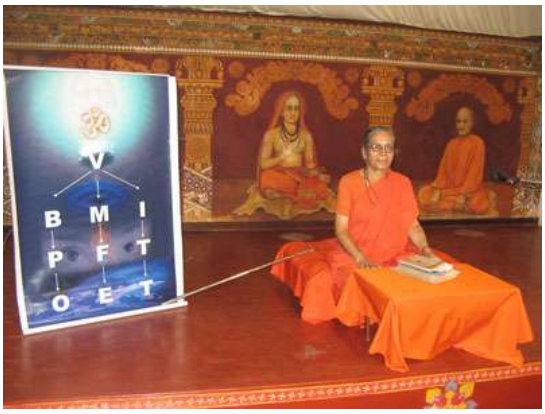
Prema Krishnamurthy was the correspondent for all Bangalore schools. Gurudev stayed at her house when he visited Bangalore. I went to her and said, 'Gurudev wants me to work in your school, I don't know what to do.'

I had been working as headmistress and principal, all along and Prema's school already had a headmistress. So Prema was unsure what to offer me. I told her 'don't worry, I will work as anything.' It was a small school up to class 6. Prema made me class teacher for class 6, and gave me all the trappings of that level. Very kind of her. All along I was concerned about what Gurudev had in mind for me. I wrote to Gurudev and shared these developments.

Time passed...

Gurudev was in Beijing. To my surprise,he wrote, 'Prema needs a new principal...' I could not fathom this. The school had a principal... what was Gurudev saying?

The next day the principal resigned for no reason! Whatever it be, her resignation coincided with his sankalpa!
I am convinced that his sankalpa is satya sankalpa. And I became the Principal and stayed so for 4 years and the first batch of class 10 kids passed during my tenure.



Then I wanted to resign and go away and join the Mission, enrol for Vedanta and so on. But Prema was not happy. She wrote to Gurudev and said, ' we hardly have any good teachers, Tilottama cannot go' (Tilottama would later become Brni Tapasya and then Swamini Niranjanananda).Gurudev understood her plight but told her, 'people cannot stay for you, they have things to do, they need to do other things too.' But the next day one lady came, a very highly qualified lady and she was a perfect principal! Out of the blue Prema's anxiety was also met. She joined and stayed as Principal for the next four years! Once again, his sankalpa brought for the school a very good principal!

Hear this story as well and be convinced that his sankalpa was satya sankalpa!

There are so many people to whom Gurudev always said, make a true sankalpa if you want it to be fulfilled! Tapovan Prasad (TP) was a very simple magazine those days. When I finished at Sandeepany in 1993, Gurudev said you must go there and improve TP. I had not a dot of experience with writing or publishing, but he was giving me all of TP. Then again, I had wanted to go to Bangalore but Gurudev consoled me and said you go to Madras and change TP. I trusted him implicitly and straight from Sandeepany I went off to Madras, while Gurudev (if you recall) went off to the US.

Slowly I became involved in TP. The editor was a very old lady and Gurudev wanted her to retire given her age. Before you knew, the editor herself retired!

Things happened very fast. Gurudev attained samadhi. Swami Tejomayananda took over. TP came under his charge. Guruji asked me to take over. I agreed. Remember, I had no editing, writing or publishing experience or training. I only had Gurudev's instruction.

The first TP was a big hit! It was Gurudev's sankalpa that was unfolding. Gurudev ensured that happened! How it works everytime ! , Whatever he said happened! He chooses the person for the job and always he accomplishes what is necessary! He was a fantastic personality.

What we think and he thinks are so different. At the age of 60 he empowered me to study and become a brahmacharini. Usually he takes people at that age only as guest students. But I joined the Brahmachari course at the age of 59 an age usually he would not take a new student into Sandeepany. And Gurudev cut new roads for me. That is why I said he did something to empower me and bring out my potential!

It was what he envisioned.....!

2. ONE MEETING ONLY

09-05-2015

Arvila Shah, is a devotee of Gurudev, and lives in Matanchery, Cochin.

1991 Cochin: Arvila ben's husband had just passed away. Gurudev came to Cochin and stayed at Jayshree ben's house. Much excitement spread in the vast Gujarati community in Cochin. Arvila was 39. It was not even a month since her husband expired and per tradition she was not supposed to even go out.

That was when Mridula, a close friend told her of Swami Chinmayananda who had come and was being hosted at Jayshree ben's house! Arvila had not even seen, let alone met Gurudev, nor did she know anything about him. Meanwhile friend that she was, Mridula went and told Gurudev about Arvila and her untimely loss. And soon she was at Arvila's home urging her to come along and meet Gurudev. A confused Arvila looked at her in-laws who told her she must go. And Mridula took her to see Gurudev.

An already stricken Arvila bent down and touched Gurudev's feet and Gurudev placed his hand over her head and gave her an orange as prasaad. He told her she must eat it by herself, it was not to be shared. And Arvila did just that.



Arvila had the onerous task of taking care of her husband's business in spices. A commodity business on top of that! It was scary. She was a science student - a Bachelor of Science, what was she to know about commodities? Her boys were less than 14 years of age, there was no way they could do anything, and her in-laws had retired from active working.

Arvila slowly got into the groove of her husband's business. She who knew nothing about accounting, banking, finance, managing people.... she was getting involved and even understanding the business...

Often she marvelled at her own self and wondered about her newly acquired skills.

Seven years layer she ran into Saroj ben suddenly. Saroj was another friend she had known many years. Saroj said, come, join our Bal Vihar. The children are sweet, you listen to what they learn... And Arvila agreed. She had no objection..! "And that was when it hit me! I realised so much about Gurudev and where I got my ability to do business and look after my in-laws...!" says Arvila ben. She now remembered with clarity that the Swami had blessed her specifically.

To continue in her words, "I started reading his books with a passion. Hindusim was not main to my life as I am Jain. But I liked his books, I liked reading and now I liked reading what He had to say. Then I joined Devi Group for a year. I enjoyed all that and then it all stopped. I moved on with work and looking after my in-laws.

The classes may have stopped but I still regard him my Guru and get my inspriation from him..

"Every time I look back and think of those years, I am stunned. Even today when I open the records of the business, I wonder how did I do all that? Where did the ability and knowledge come from? I don't know how I did it all, I knew nothing of accountancy or signing cheques... but I did all that for 12 years!

"It is amazing that when I met him that one time, I did not understand a thing but 12 years later in 2002, when I was reading his books, it came home to me that it had been his grace all along... His shakti that gave me support to raise my children, look after my in-laws and manage my husband's business. Because of his grace I was able to bear that pain. That one meeting, that one blessing had set me for life....."

... and it was His Grace too that Arvila realised His Grace.

3. CATCHING MINDLESS ACTIONS

10-05-2015

H.P Eswar is one of those unchanging images of the Chinmaya Mission. An ardent devotee and sevak, Eswar ji has been teaching Bal Vihar students in Kapole Niwas, Mumbai since the last 50 years at least! His ever joyful and boisterous nature can only be attributed to his continuous state of joy. His laughter of course is unmistakeable.



The moment he is asked about Gurudev, Eswar mama 's collection of anecdotes begins to flow.

Every year Eswar mama goes to Sabarimalai. On the 16th of one such November he donned the garland that Sabarimalai pilgrims don and prostrated before Gurudev.

As he was getting up, Gurudev asked him, "What is Pampa?"

"I knew if I said it is the name of a river, it will be stupid, because Gurudev will not ask me such a question," said Eswar ji, narrating the story. "So I looked at him and

blinked. Gurudev then said, 'Make that Pampa, ulta, reverse it! Eh? What is it? Pampa becomes Paa-pam! (Paapam is sins).

Gurudev continued, "So you take a bath in the Pampa and your sins get washed away! Then you change into white dhoti and white angavastram...From November 16th till you reach Pampa you are wearing black or blue or kaashayam (saffron) colored garments. Is it not?

"Once you are purified, made pure (by the dip in the Pampa) then you climb the final lap, the last 18 steps of the malai (hill, referring to the Sabari Hills)!"

Eswar ji laughs; "So you come in black, bathe in the Pampa, drop your sins there, come out and wear white, now that you are purified!"

Eswar ji unleashes his boisterous celebratory laugh. He relishes his own memories as if they are happening right then before him!



Unstoppable now, Eswar ji recounts another incident that took place in the Jagadeeshwara Temple at Powai Ashram, Mumbai. "You have been there? Ok. Right in front of Lord Siva's idol in the temple, there is a rectangular depression with water in it. Lord Siva faces the entrance and Nandi faces Siva. Near Nandi is a bannaaram, a donation box. I was standing there, having offered prayers. I had taken out my wallet from my pocket and I was counting out the money to drop into the donation box. "I am so engrossed counting the pennies ... suddenly Gurudev is behind me, breathing down my back... he startles me with these words that he whispers to me, "If you count your offering to Him, then He will count and give his blessings to you!"

Eswar ji breaks into his unmistakable laugh.... there is great enjoyment lurking in every of his memories of Gurudev!"

4. WHEN THE GURU REMEMBERS YOU

11-05-2015

Ananthan Nair and his brother Manoharan Nair are old devotees from Pune. While Manoharan ji continues to run the family tyre business in Pune, Ananthan ji has retired to Tallicheri, Kerala.



Manoharan Nair with Gurudev 1966

1966 - Deccan Gymkhana, Pune. Ananthan Nair was a businessman in Pune when Gurudev held a Geeta Gnyana Yagna there.
Ananthan and two of his colleagues - Unni Nair president of Pune CM, PVA Nair, one of the functionary of Pune Mission - invited Gurudev for lunch at Ananthan ji's residence at Kumud Kuteer, Deccan Gymkhana.

Ananthan ji had already attended a few gnyana yagnas of Gurudev's in Pune. Unni Nair and Ananthan were very close friends. "And Gurudev being a Malayalee we thought we were privileged to have him at our home!" And Manoharanji, Ananthan ji's brother, laughs both mirthfully and embarrassedly. " Out of our ignorance, out of

our ignorance!" he adds again and again. So they invited Gurudev and he accepted the invitation! The Nairs could not believe their luck.

Other devotees were also present on that occasion. "Gurudev enjoyed our food and thanked us for giving him Kerala delicacies," says Manoharan. "We maintained the Kerala style and served him on a banana leaf!" says Manoharan Nair. How Gurudev gives to each one the joy he seeks!



Gurudev in the front seat of the Fiat, Ananthan ji at the wheel. 1966

Ananthan Nair remembers in particular a quote that Gurudev dropped upon them, that afternoon, "Work properly, with integrity and give back to society. Vedanta will always help you during your testing times." The business folk who formed a significant part of the invitees that day, felt greatly assured, when Gurudev added, " We are all just like frogs in a pond. When the water dries up, we will all jump out of the pond. "

Was Gurudev alluding to the Nairs doing business ? Or doing business away from home town? Or was Gurudev saying, business itself is finite in being able to bring security? Ananthan and Manoharan can only hazard a guess. " I think he meant, when the situation is favorable, you remain in that area. When the situation is unfavorable, you migrate to different parts in search of living. But whatever it was that one sentence remained in my mind!"



The Nair family was extremely inspired by Gurudev's presence, noting in particular his profound knowledge of the Gita and his tremendous fluency with English Literature and Gurudev's simple explanations to confounding verses of the Gita.

After reaching Powai, Gurudev wrote to the Nairs and thanked them for the lunch. This gesture was overwhelming for them, who had invited a Malyalee so that he may taste home cooking in a strange city, but who left behind for them a road upon which to walk and find their way to Vedanta!

Manoharan Nair recalls that Ananthan ji drove Gurudev around the city during a couple of visits to Pune, during one of which Gurudev presented Ananthan ji with a copy of Kindle Life. He says, "We were very fortunate to have him... just to have his footprints in our house... later when he reached Uttarkasi , on Guru Poornima day he again wrote to us from there, and again after a couple of years...!"



Ananthan Nair, today

The Nair brothers remain grateful for this one event in their life. "I don't know the reason why he remembered us all those times," he says very simply, "but he might have understood us,...but that he remembered us on Guru Poornima to write to us again was very startling and touching at the same time.."

Often great men come into our lives and open the skies a bit for us to see what lies beyond. Or to open doors for the next generation. Ananthan Nair's grandson today studies at CIRS....

5. Finding Radha

12-05-2015

Bhaskar Raman worked at the Powai Ashram as editor of Bal Vihar until 3 years ago before moving to Delhi. As a toddler, he has played on Gurudev's lap and continues to be wrapped in Gurudev's devotion and love.



Krishna Play at Sidhbari Little Bhaskar in blue garments, waiting for his hug.

Siddhabari... 1984-85. Bhaskar was two and a half years old. He lived those days at the Sidhabari ashram with his mother Parvathy Raman (now editor of Tapovan Prasad), Dr Akhilam (now Swamini Nishtananda) and his older brother. At the time, Bhaskar had just started speaking, and he only spoke in Tamizh.

Bhaskar's memories of those days are vivid.

One day seeing Gurudev walking in a leisurely manner, Bhaskar ran across to him and must have, as little children do, stood on his path as a prelude to beginning a conversation. So there he was looking up, very far up from his two feet height up at a towering Gurudev and Gurudev peered down at Bhaskar.

As grown ups many of us must identify with moments like this when a little fellow looks up at you and you look down at him and mostly we are unsure what the fellow wants. But Gurudev knew what the struggle was, maybe. He simply said, "If you want to talk to me you must learn English. Swami does not know Tamizh."



Breakfast by the Ganges: Uttarkasi Bhaskar on Gurudev's left

It seems (as others later told him) after that “exchange”, he started picking up English effortlessly! (Bhaskar would later go on to build a career in journalism, and even served as editor of Balvihar magazine.) Gurudev has given little pushes to so many people to send them on their path!

The toddler's life at Sidhabari was thus dotted with little meaningful encounters. Bhaskar's favorite story goes even earlier to when he had just begun to walk, a time when he barely spoke. One morning he woke up much earlier than usual. Everyone had gone for Gurudev’s meditation class.

When he found there was no one around, he jumped out of the room’s ground- floor window (the ashram was still being built back then and the windows had no grills) He looked all over the ashram, the Temple, the kitchen where his mother worked, near Hanumanji. She was not to be found. He kept wandering. Disturbed and disoriented, looking for mom, Bhaskar began to cry.



sadaa govindah parirambhitah!

A brahmacharini found him, picked him up and told him that everyone was in the meditation hall. Little Bhaskar knew the Sidhabari campus well. Reaching the satsang hall, where Gurudev had just about got everyone nicely tuned and focussed, in pin-drop silence. Bhaskar burst in crying at the top of his lungs.

But please visualise the scenario. Six am, a whole host of grown ups all in intense meditation process... Gurudev had gotten everyone into silence, within and without... everyone in focus ... and enter the little child bawling loudly.

Parvathy amma, naturally was terrified. She ran to the little child, she picked him up and headed for the door...

But Gurudev had no annoyance and none of the expected anger. He simply said, “The way this child is crying for his mother should be the way you should cry for God, without caring for anything else.”



Three generations with the Guru - Uttarkasi Ashram (To Gurudev's left: Bhaskar's paternal grandmother; to right: Prarthna Saran standing and little Bhaskar; seated: Bhaskar's father and paternal grandfather.

And in a moment the situation was defused. A disturbance became a lesson, not only in devotion, but in the art of handling aggravating situations with skill, understanding and love.

Gurudev had unconditional love for children and his manner of communing with them was heart warming. When Bhaskar was about a year old, his mother had taken him to Prarthna Saran's home for bhiksha with Gurudev. This was before they left for Sidhabari.

After lunch, Gurudev went to wash his hands, and he did not return to the hall.

Everyone was waiting. The host finally went to see if everything was ok, and found him in the passage way, squatting on the ground, holding little Bhaskar's hands and looking into his eyes, and mumbling, “You are my Krishna, I am your Radha...” over and over.

In later years, Bhaskar would find that juxtaposition very interesting. He says, "Why didn't he say I am your Krishna? Why Radha?”

" Krishna went here and there, was with so many people, involved in so many tasks and was likely to forget Radha, but Radha never forgot Krishna. I have been through so many phases. Sometimes with the Mission, sometimes not, sometimes with Gurudev, sometimes not. But his care has been a constant.”

6. LESSONS IN LOVING, LEAVING AND LIVING

13-05-2015

Anil Sachdev has known Gurudev since 1959.The entire family has been completely immersed in devotion to Gurudev.

1992 December - A few months before Gurudev went to San Diego, Anil Sachdev and his family spent a very long time with Gurudev in Sidhabari. Gurudev was known to retreat to Sidhabari before long foreign trips. So Anil ji and his family stayed with Gurudev at Sidhbari, and spent New Year's eve with him.

Naturally for anyone to get this opportunity to be with the Guru as Time makes its changes, is most pleasing and satisfying.



From the family album

So there they all were, sitting in the beautiful rose garden, revelling in the idyllic surroundings and nature offering her best to Gurudev. It was evening, soft breeze blowing, a light twitter of birds, and soon the young women from the village came by and sat around Gurudev singing soulful bhajans ...

Anil ji was overcome with divine joy. He said to Gurudev, "Swamiji, this is like heaven, to be with you, the Dauladhar mountains flanking us from all sides, this bhajans, the evening...."

Anil ji was overcome with divine joy. He said to Gurudev, "Swamiji, this is like heaven, to be with you, the Dauladhar mountains flanking us from all sides, this bhajans, the evening...."

Gurudev said, "Even this is a form of attachment! No doubt this is a satvik environment, feels good and ...." and he laughed.

There was poignancy in Gurudev's words and Anil ji reflected on that even if he continued to feel the joy of the moment. He says, "In hindsight he was preparing us in a manner of speaking and even forcing us to detach from environment-aided joy. He was trying to convey, 'Don't say I will come to Sidhabari to revel and partake of this environment, to be with Swamiji, to be inspired. No doubt all this aids a satvik mood which inspires but do not think satwa lies here with the Guru. Don't be attached even to satva!'



Anil ji's mother with Gurudev

Such words can appear harsh and unbearable and it was a very deep moment for Anil ji.

But the days that followed only intensified the Guru's presence aided by the leela he displayed! The joy of being with the Guru was unabated. A bhandara (community kitchen/dining) was organised for the villagers. Gurudev himself personally supervised the bhandara, where many 100s of villagers came and ate. The bhandara began at 1130 in the morning and carried on till 4 pm. Gurudev encouraged everyone to serve in the kitchen, chop vegetables, clean the rice, wash the utensils, and later also serve the villagers. "He taught us the joy that was there in preparing for the bhandara and serving with love and joy hose who awaited Gurudev's blessings, ," says Anil ji.

"It was a great example of coming together to serve together not mindful of where we came from, all working together in the Chinmaya family spirit. Gurudev made sure that all villagers were hosted well and treated with utmost love. He cared about how they were served, looked after and attended to. He himself had planned everything meticulously to the last detail. .
"It would be so cold, those December evenings and we would sit out on the lawns basking in the mild sun and as that sun also retired, the breeze would get colder and slowly shawls and drapes would come out. Gurudev would unobtrusively pull the shawl over his legs and then the Wimbledon recordings would come out and he would retreat into his pet joy: tennis. Gurudev loved tennis far too much. "

Anil ji grows wistful and nostalgic. Once one begins remembering, the memories flow like the Ganga... silently, sweetly refreshing the mind with its serenity and satva. For

they are memories of the Guru... Another poignant memory occupied centerstage and Anil ji said:

"This was soon after the Babri Masjid demolition... we would talk to him to know his mind. We knew what made him furious and we knew what he did not worry about. But the important memory that he left for me, maybe knowing the kind of times that will come, was one that startled me silly, on a flight.



Anil Sachdev today

"We were on a flight from Delhi to Mumbai. He was sitting in front of me. A muslim leader of the time a clergyman, was sitting next to Gurudev. In my small mindedness, I was anxious that the combination may not augur well. If they have a fight, what will we do? But what do you know! They were talking peacefully...! I was straining to 'be in the know' that they would not begin talking or saying things. The next thing I know, they were greeting each other warmly, almost like long lost acquaintances and soon they were laughing together. Obviously they knew each other... their voices were soft, measured...and there was a lot of affection. I was surprised; nothing made sense; I would definitely take it up with Gurudev later. Mind you, all this was within days of the demolition.

"As we drove to the Powai ashram from the airport I talked to Gurudev. I said, "Swamiji, this is surprising, is he a friend?"

Said Gurudev, "Why should we have a problem with each other?" It was how he answered with a question. "Did you expect us to argue?" (I had expected worse, I am sure he knew!!) And he laughed.

Clearly they both existed on a different plane of Supreme peace and understanding, patience and love for the people. They had genuine love and respect for each other.

Gurudev's responses fill the heart with the greatest of learnings. He said to Anilji, " If this problem was left to (well-minded) religious leaders it would have resolved long time back; we would have found a way forward. But the politicians do not want this

problem to be solved. In the long term the sensible religious leaders will find a harmonious solution that is for greater good."

Anil ji's heart warmed. Reminiscing, he says, "What came to me was this: we have to move on from what has happened to a way of collaborating, where we can peacefully coexist, each one worshipping as he wants to, his God.

"This is what Gurudev was saying, what he wanted me to know, what he wanted us to know. That we as a collective electorate, must be able to persuade our political leaders, so that both communities can worship together and coexist..."

Gurudev was always for peaceful happy coexistence in brotherhood.

7. Daat Khaayi!

14-05-2015

Saroj Sejpal is a most unassuming, down- to- earth, humble person. From a Bal Vihar Volunteer to devotee, her journey was propelled by one incident.



Saroj Sejpal

1991, Gurudev went to Cochin for a Geeta Gnana Yagna. Many of the Gujaratis settled in Mattanchery had been inspired by various visiting acharyas and had found a very pleasing anchor in the Chinmaya Mission and naturally Pujya Gurudev. Saroj Ben was a simple housewife then, who had been busy with only tending to her children and her husband and in-laws. Prior to her marriage she was part of Pandurang Shastri's Swadhyay Parivar in Mumbai. But after her marriage she was counselled by her parents to devote time to family, 'spirituality etc will happen on its own later...!' Simple as she was even then, Saroj ben fell in step with the new rules.

By the late 80s her children had grown up and Ravibhai Joshi, a neighbour who was also an active Chinmaya Mission member told her, 'Now enough, you come to our Bal Vihar and teach the children.'

Saroj ben was alarmed. She knew nothing of the Mission, how would she teach? But her friend told her since you have been with Swadhyay Parivar, you atleast have a spiritual orientation, so come along.

So Saroj ben began assisting at Bal Vihar in Mattanchery, teaching the children to sing basic shlokas and bhajans.

When Gurudev came to Cochin, Saroj ben was excited. She loved meeting saints and mahatmas, it was a penchant she had. "Whenever any sant-mahapurush came to our town, my friend and I would run to meet him," she said mirthfully. "But CM, I had just joined and did not know anything about the rules or the graces."

The first day, the Bal Vihar teachers (and Saroj ben too, therefore) had organised a children's program to welcome Gurudev. Gurudev's love for children was widely known. The Mattanchery balvihar children danced to 'Tora mann darpan kehlaaye...'. Gurudev liked it and called for an encore!

Saroj ben was filled with happiness. "I had that wish in my mind that when a great person comes, I should take his autograph. Seeing a happy Gurudev, I felt I must take his autograph. I didn't have anything immediately. There he was, nearby, I wanted to take the autograph soon. I had a small writing pad, and going up to Swamiji, I asked him - 'Please give me your autograph.'

Saroj ben was even then a very simple lady with the sweetest demeanour. Even today she is so. She reminds you she had no graces and should not have asked 'just like that..!' She says, "Swamiji got very angry. He said 'This is so small (the writing pad) you must have a big book. Get a big pad! Is this any way to take an autograph?'

"I said sorry, I don't know all this. And ran to get something bigger and better. He wrote Om on the pad and gave it to me. I was thrilled.

"But as I left I said to myself, 'arre I must learn a few little things,.. a little courage, a little grace.... I don't know anything!' I used to be very very inhibited.

And now Saroj ben says something heart warming. "I am glad I got that one solid scolding from him and that has sustained me all these years. Today I do devi group, balvihar, serve at the Mission and whatnot!"

That was at least 24 years ago. That someone should remember it with such clarity and even appear to know the reason why that incident took place... is amazing. Saroj ben feels that one scolding set her for life. "How to talk to great people, etc I didn't know. My husband used to scold me is this anyway to deal with saints?!"

"But this saint only reined me in!" she says happily.

Saroj ben does not look for drama, but she feels comforted and happy with all that has happened with her!

Daat khayi! " she says laughing gleefully, "but achha hua !"

8. ALL ROADS LEAD TO OM

15-05-2015

Kusumben Thakker is a grand elder of Mattanchery, much loved and much revered by one and all. Head of a large family she has hosted Gurudev several times.

Mattanchery in Cochin has probably the fondest memories of Gurudev going by the enthusiasm with which the devotees tell their stories, and the superlatives garnishing their tales. Better still, Gurudev seems to have left with them some priceless memories, memories that they savour to this day. Today, 30 years hence, they recall every moment with such precision and detail, each one prodding the other with, "Tell about that time when Chinmaya Guruji....??"



Kusum Thakker, known in the community as Kusum ben is a senior, an elder, a revered elder at that. The Thakker home has been home to so many saints that Kusum ben has lost count When Gurudev was to come for the first visit to

Mattanchery for a yagna, one of the devotees suggested to him the home of Kusum and Ajit Thakker. Kusumben says, "Chinmay Swamiji enjoyed himself at our place!"

Swami Purushottamananda used to conduct gnyana yagnas in the 70s. The Thakkers moved to Cochin in 1969 and through Swami ji they were introduced to the idea of Gurudev. By 1973, Ajitbhai had set aside two vast room in his home for visiting saints and one in his office to house the office of Chinmaya Mission. By then Ajitbhai had begun to consider Gurudev his guru.

The Yagna of 1991 has many stories from the Gujaratis of Matanchery, including this one. Anyway, Ajitbhai was hosting Gurudev. He had arranged a huge ground for the yagna, attached to a hall. When Gurudev came to Matanchery for the yagna, he said, "Swamiji let us go and see the site. I wish to show you a small difficulty that can be a roadblock. The road leading to the grounds and hall is rather narrow and I fear your car will not fit into that road. But today I will take you up to the road and then from there I will take you on wheelchair to the site. You can then assess for yourself...."

Gurudev said, "Give me a paper and pen..." — a request that did seem odd at the time. When the equipment arrived, Gurudev sat and sketched the whole place . He drew the map from the Thakker home to the hall and grounds where the yagna was to be held, detailing the roads that led to and out of that location.... and all this without even having seen the place!

The Thakkers' jaws dropped. Presently, dragging his finger over a route that he pencilled, Gurudev said confidently, "This is how the car will go...."

And the car went exactly like that. And without a hitch.

Kusum ben laughs, almost gurgling excitedly like a child as she concludes her story. She is very very delighted by every leela of Chinmaya Guruji as she lovingly calls him.

9. AN UNFORGETTABLE HANDSHAKE

16-05-2015

Unni Krishnan is an entrepreneur in Ernakulam and associated with the Saraswati Vidyalaya in Hindustan Newsprint Nagar in Velloor, Kerala and a CM member .

Unni Krishnan is connected to the Melpazhur Illom family - the Mana in Veliyanad, Kerala, which was the maternal home of Sri Adi Sankara's mother Aryamba, which later was bought by Gurudev in 1989-90 to establish Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF). When the baby Sankara was due to be born, Aryamba came home to her parental home in Veliyanad, to deliver the divine child who would go on to give all of us a direction for life with Advaita.

Unni Krishnan is a distant relative of this august Melpazhur family. At the time of this story, 1990, Unni Krishnan was around 23 or 24 years of age and a confirmed atheist.

Gurudev's vision for Sanskritam needed a rich ground to be planted upon and he had been looking at properties . Melpazhur Mana was being offered for sale and Gurudev with fever raging, had gone there to see it and said Yes, on the spot. That was how the property came to become home to CIF.

This story took place subsequently, when Gurudev had reached Melpazhur Mana to receive the transference of the property from the Shankaran Namboodiri family.



Poised with a garland, Unni Krshnan in the center

As was customary all members of the Mana had assembled to receive and felicitate

Gurudev. Unni Krishnan being a relative, was compelled to attend, too. He had no choice. All family were assembled in the naalukettu, (an inner courtyard that led to the four wings of the vast property) waiting for darshan. Unni Krishnan knew what was to come - everyone would prostrate before Swami Chinmayananda, as that was customary. He was clear he was not going to prostrate; he would settle for a handshake.

One by one the family members prostrated before Gurudev. As he watched this, Unni Krishnan thought to himself, "Not for me all this; I will shake his hand .... and squeeze it as well ... just a little ...!"

When his turn came and Unni Krishnan was near Gurudev, his mind went totally blank he says. "I forgot all that I had planned to do..." He stood there staring, as Gurudev took his hand and shook it, and .....

.....Gurudev pressed his hand in a light squeeze!

Unni Krishnan was shocked silly. Coming out of his momentary stupor, he suddenly remembered his forgotten mission. How did the Swami do what he had planned to do?!

Unni Krishnan did not have to verbalise his shock. Gurudev said to him, in a soft whisper, enough to rattle the young man, "I know what everyone is thinking...."

A very special moment of play! An Universal Truth was delivered in a light moment... A stunned Unni Krishnan staggered out, a bit shaken, a bit unbelieving, a bit rattled.

That was 25 years ago. Time passes and with its passage it brings new thinking. Today Unni Krishnan is closely associated with Chinmaya Mission activities, CIF activities, arranging Bala Vihars and other classes including supporting all its activities.

To this day Unni Krishnan remembers this one moment very clearly, even if he forgot to squeeze the hand that guided him!

10. WHO EXHAUSTED MY VASANA?

17-05-2015

Nirmala amma is likely the grandest old lady of Chinmaya Mission. She lives at Chinmaya Gardens in Coimbatore. She is 93, but her voice has not a tremor or crack; only an undercurrent of a giggle.

"I became a human being only after I set my eyes on Gurudev," Nirmala amma declares in her opening sentence. Lest there remain a doubt, she elaborates, "Before that I was not."

Nirmala amma was working in Mumbai like anyone. Her life was about going to work, eating, coming home, eating, then sleeping. Whenever she found time, she went to the Powai Ashram and hung out with Gurudev.

For his part, Gurudev took her along on his home visits. If Nirmala came to Powai, he would say, "C'mon, let's go...!"



Nirmala amma today, at 93

By and by Gurudev noticed this young girl was beginning to look listless and dull. He asked her, what the matter was. With great trepidation Nirmala ji replied, " I am used to non-vegetarian diet. " Then for good measure she added, "In my office I get excellent non-vegetarian food."

Gurudev looked at her in surprise and said, "Oh but you didn't tell me!"

What had happened was, whenever she came to the Mission ashram at Powai, Nirmala amma did not and could not eat non vegetarian food. Nor could she not go to the Mission. Worse, she wanted to go to the Mission!

That was a rather heavy price she was paying. Funnily she was ready to pay it, even though it was causing her grief. But she was not vocalising all that.

The next day she again accompanied Gurudev for bhiksha to the house of a devotee. Amma cannot remember names. She reminds you she is 93, besides which all she wants to remember is Gurudev. Good point.

As they sat at the table, out came a spread of non-vegetarian food. Nirmala amma's eyes popped. Devotee looked at Nirmala amma and Nirmala amma looked at the spread and Gurudev. Then looking the devotee in the eye she said, "Thank you amma, but when I am with Swamiji, I won't eat non-vegetarian food."

Nirmala amma feels the same joy as she recalls this. Eating vegetarian food had made her weak. Her system had become used to non-vegetarian food. But her 'other' system was also getting used to Gurudev.... as a result, she decided she would not eat meat in Gurudev's presence.

"But see how he went out of his way to take care of my health! Yes, all that non vegetarian food was his doing. He had worked it out with the devotee family, I am sure. Such a great man and he went so far to take care of me!" she said.

Slowly Nirmala began to give up meat. Sure enough the day she ate vegetarian she would be limp and listless. "As long as I went to work I was eating non-vegetarian food. Once I gave up going out to work, my meat eating also stopped. I became vegetarian, but then so did so many of my friends. "

Now the 93 year old memory comes alive as she recalls, " He said you start Bal Vihar for children. I told him, what me? I know nothing! Swamiji said, you do, you do, you will get it..."

"So I went to one lady's house where BalaVihar was held, and saw that the children only sang songs. Noooo, how can you not make them read and write and think? I was not happy. The next time I took books and sat and read to them. That was how books and stories became mainstream to Bal Vihar," she says.

Nirmala amma has been living at Chinmaya Gardens for 20 years now. Those deep sparkling eyes have seen everything, but they know even better ...

11. Annaprasnam

18-05-2015

(As told by Shri K.K. Rajan, Chief Sevak CIF, and ardent devotee of Gurudev. Rajan ji was one of the Trimurtis as Gurudev called them, from the Kerala region, the other two being late Sri. Marar and late Sri. A.Balakrishnan.)



Gurudev anoints Baby Chinmay with vibhuti

Our marriage took place at Neeranjali, Trichur after performing Padapooja to Gurudev on 25th Sept 1985.

On 8th Jan 1993, Gurudev wrote " ....by now Sugeetha would have become a mother making you a responsible father" –

On 8th Jan - the same day - Chinmaya Krishna Raj was born! He was fondly named after taking Gurudev's permission. Gurudev commented-"Do not later call him

C.K.Raj!”

Sugeetha and myself wished that his first morsel of cooked grain -- which is traditionally celebrated as Annaprashnam -- be fed by Gurudev.

Originally we were to meet Gurudev at Madurai. But the Madurai camp was cancelled under strict instructions from the doctors and Gurudev went to Sidhabari for rest, from where he went directly to the Jaslok Hospital for three days.

Even though doctors advised Gurudev from going ahead with his US trips Gurudev wanted to attend the celebrations to commemorate the centenary year of Swami Vivekanandaji’s First speech in Chicago (1893).

Usually, Gurudev would come back to the Powai ashram before proceeding on any foreign trip. But that day, 8th June, after being discharged from the Hospital, Gurudev went directly to Smt. Asha Kamdar’s residence to rest. On the 9th morning (he was to leave for Washington that same night) Gurudev reached Powai Ashram at 9 a.m. He came in a wheelchair. Sugeetha was totally down seeing him in wheel chair. He called her and patted her on the back. He said to her, "I never thought I will see you like this with a child.... !" Sugeetha was carrying little Chinmay in her arms. Both of us had spent many years just serving him...



Gurudev offers the first solid annam to Baby Chinmay. Those eyes meet...

As Gurudev was not feeling fit, he went straight to the room after blessing the large number of devotees present there.

Asha Kamdar came out of the kutiya and announced that Gurudev will be coming out for satsang only at 4p.m.

Sugeetha and I were disappointed since we were not able to tell about our Annaprashnam wish. I wondered what to do. Looking around, I found a piece of paper and wrote to Gurudev stating that we have brought Chinmaya Krishnaraj for his Annaprasha. While taking lunch Bhiksha if Gurudev could put something in his mouth we will consider as his Annaprasha performed. The note was given to Asha Kamdar and the reply came on the same paper “WHY NOT “.

I was running around to see what I could get ready, but Gurudev was faster than

thought.

As soon as I left the kutiya, he asked Br.Viswanath Menon, to call the cook and the temple priest. He told the cook what to prepare for the Annaprasnam - - special Kerala food, papad should be cooked in coconut oil, food to be served on banana leaf, honey to be served, ... he was going into great detail! Presently he asked the priest to make payasam also.



Gurudev reaching for Baby Chinmay - Rajan ji (carrying the baby) and Sugeetha watch

Normally at the Powai ashram, rice payasam is prepared only on Shivathri. But that day rice payasam would be fed to Chinmay!

At 11.30 am the pujari brought the prasadam ringing the bell. (Note the clockwork precision with which every work was getting done). All food was served on the banana leaf. Owing to his delicate health condition, Gurudev could not take Chinmay on his lap, so he told Sugeeta to hold him and taking each item one by one, in tiny baby morsels, the food was put into little Chinmay's mouth.....

That experience is indescribable.

The events that led up to the Annaprashnam were themselves riddled with miraculous coincidences. Our flight was from Mangalore to Mumbai, for example - it was arriving from Bangalore. First, this incoming flight was unable to land! Twice it circled above our heads and went back unable to land. The airport announced that they would cancel the flight.

Sugeetha and I wondered what was going on. We were desperate. We had to reach Mumbai on time as Gurudev was leaving for Washington. Suddenly the announcement came: “The flight from Bangalore is landing in 5 minutes”!



The blessing: Baby Chinmay gets Gurudev's loving touch...

We were excited and I wanted to meet the captain to thank for bringing the flight to land! The captain was the first woman pilot Saudamini Desmukh. And she was standing right there and I thanked her sincerely.

She said, "Sir you won't believe this. After the 2nd attempt, I asked for a 3rd chance but the air control refused. But something inside told me that I must make one more attempt..." That was how she made the 3rd attempt and the flight landed and we could take the journey.

To me, all these are significant events.

This is why when I think of the the Annaprasanam - it was the last function Gurudev held at Powai before leaving to US -- I feel very overcome, because he tried very hard, very very hard to fulfil my Annaprasnam wish.

Truly, a Guru's love can never be fathomed ...

12. WHEN KRISHNA STAYED BACK FOR 14 YEARS

19-05-2015

Jayashree Thakker belongs to the same family as Kusumben Thakker, from Mattanchery. This story captures the presence of Gurudev in her life without her even sensing it at first.



1991 Jayshree in green sari and Mukesh to Gurudev's left

The 1990-91 Geeta Jnana Yagna that Gurudev held in Matanchery was a great moment of realisation especially for Jayashree Thakker.

One after another Gurudev unleashed his leelas and won over the young girl. He had a reason as we will see.

Gurudev stayed at Kusumben Thakker's home - home also to Jayashree, Kusumben's daughter-in-law. The ten-day camp was just beginning.

The paduka pooja was scheduled for a fixed time and the padukas had not been brought out. The lady who had carried them with her for the pooja got lost in some activity and Gurudev got annoyed. Jayashree who was sitting nearby grew tense hearing Gurudev's voice. A timid person by nature, she was disturbed and fearful. Gurudev sensed that. Touching her chin, he said, "All this is on the outside. Nothing inside, ok?"

Jayashree was greatly relieved. "I could see he wanted discipline and he was getting that...only his voice was severe."



Gurudev feeding Mukesh - pouring strength

On Day 4, preparations for morning pooja at the Thakker home was on in full swing. Jayashree got ready - she wore her mother-in-law's white sari with gold border and pink pallu, one that Jayashree was very fond of. Ba had worn it on the first day of the Yagna.

As she came down the stairs from her room, Gurudev could see her. She did not even reach the foot of the stairs, when he called out to her and said in most benign tone, "Go and change..."

Without saying anything Jayashree went and changed into a green and red sari. When she came down she did pranaam to Gurudev. He touched her chin and said, "I always want to see you in colorful saris."

Once again Jayashree did not ask or say anything,

That entire camp was a series of stunning events for everyone. Probably people experience what they need very much. On the 5th day of the yagna, Gurudev was sitting on a sofa. Out of the blue he said, I want to play dandiya raas. He said this to Kusumben and Ajit bhai Thakker, his hosts. "I want to be Krishna ... you organise everything around this."

Within moments, Kusumben and Jayashree were on the phone calling for all the paraphernalia. They called for a tabalchi and a set of tablas, The lawns were lit up, tables and things moved away and invitations went out. Within the hour a hundred people landed up dressed in dandiya finery.



Krishna! Krishna-Krishna!

A neighbourhood friend went to her temple and brought her Krishna's mukut (crown) and placed it on Gurudev's head. A chorus of gasps rent the air. The temple people came running, didn't Krishna need a flute? They had brought the temple flute for Him!

Gurudev began to as if play the flute and the hundred odd people broke into graceful raas. Gurudev was sitting on the large sofa enjoying the sight. Jayashree and her husband Mukesh played the raas with gay abandon, for over 30 minutes when Gurudev asked Jayashree to come sit next to him. As she sat he said, "You have to preserve your energy .... "

Just then Kusum ben came to Gurudev and said, " There are so many old people here, you are not asking us to sit. But this young girl you are asking her to sit and rest?" Jayashree says, " Gurudev shook his hand in the air like he does, all five fingers dancing, and said, " You will not understand..." But sometime later Gurudev made a remark, which no one who heard, could figure out, "Veda Vyasa is here...."

During the ten days he was at the Thakker residence, whenever Gurudev had meals, he would call for Mukesh , Jayashree's husband, and feed him with his own hands from his own plate. "Every meal Gurudev sought out Mukesh, called him and fed him in the same way," says Jayashree. "I even complained that Gurudev you are being 'partial', how come we don't get from you? But Gurudev said nothing!"

All three meals of the day Mukesh was called and hand fed by Gurudev.



Mukesh applying tikka on Gurudev's forehead

Within months, in February 1992, Mukesh was diagnosed with cancer. The doctor said it was the 4th stage. Mukesh and Jayashree had been married just 8 years. Imagine, within months of the Jnana Yagna and meeting Gurudev!

The cancer drama unfolded rapidly as it always does. Jayashree braved the stress of the chemotherapy that Mukesh was undergoing, "And in hindsight, I see EXACTLY why Gurudev did all that, the 'You will need this energy', the feeding of Mukesh, ... we were already protected and taken care of!" says Jayashree.

That was also when the doctor said Mukesh would have to undergo surgery and that the chances of survival after the surgery were bleak.

Jayashree was in a dilemma: to go for the surgery or not?

She found out that Gurudev was in Powai. Running there she fell at his feet and broke down bitterly, "I cannot take all this!" she said. Once again he touched her chin and said, "Don't worry, leave it all to God. All will be fine. "

Jayashree reminisces, "Once again the strength returned and I was able to do everything that the medical condition demanded of me, running to the doctors, being with Mukesh, taking decisions, helping him through the chemotherapy.... I felt greatly energised and able to fight back. Mind you, until then I was utterly hopeless.



Mukesh and Jayshree (back to camera) pressing Gurudev's feet. Sw. Swaroopananda and Kusum ben Thakker, Mukesh's mother, look on

"Next day I was sitting on the jhoola (indoor swing) with Mukesh and we were both discussing whether to go for the surgery or not. I told him how I had met Gurudev..."

Within the hour, Mukesh's aunt called. A certain oncologist, Dr. Barai had come down from the US and he was stopping over briefly in Delhi. Jayashree accompanied by her brother-in-law Rajesh, went to meet Dr. Barai.

Just as the jail doors opened and the chains fell and the guards fell asleep, so that Vasudev could carry Baby Krishna out, in just the same way, Jayashree meeting Barai was a cakewalk. She just simply met him. Once there, she showed him Mukesh's files and reports.

Once he had studied them, Dr. Barai said there was no need for a surgery; there was a new technology which enabled treatment without surgery.

Jayashree told Barai, Ok, then write a letter to my doctor saying this. All this got done, Mukesh's doctor agreed, but said, this is your risk.

"It seemed to me this Dr. Barai came to India just for me," says Jayashree. The surgery was not done and Mukesh lived another 14 years without a single difficulty of any kind. As if he never was afflicted with cancer. "Not even a headache!" says Jayashree.

Fourteen years later Mukesh passed away in 2006 after a relapse. "Gurudev gifted us those 14 years," says Jayashree. "When I think back, every detail of this episode of the 1991 camp stands clearly before me. Every morsel of food he fed Mukesh was great blessing of healing and health he was putting into him. When he insisted that I sit next to him and not dance, he was energising me ... "

Can't say if Veda Vyasa was seeing the story of Jayashree and writing it as well, but surely once Krishna wore the mukut and picked up the flute ... he ensured the raas went as he wanted it to...

Yes, Krishna stayed back with Jayashree and Mukesh for 14 years (at least).

13. TWO WORDS AND A NOD

20-05-2015

Anjali Singh was a stubborn devotee of Gurudev, following him wherever he went when she was barely out of college. And then she began to photograph him with a vengeance. Today almost every photograph that the Mission has is the handiwork of Anjali Singh.

March 1991: We were a bunch of devotees staying with Gurudev in Dehradun - in the house of Maharaja Dibyadeb Singha of Orissa; the Maharaja and his wife were devotees of Gurudev.



Geraniums and the Guru

We were sitting in their garden when one Col. Bhargav, mentioned that he wished to interview Gurudev — some army personnel had sent some questions with him. Col.

Bhargav also wanted to video shoot the interview. Gurudev agreed, saying, “You can have half an hour”.

The Colonel began his questions; his video camera began recording, and Gurudev began his answers. The ambience was perfect for pictures, so I grabbed my camera and decided to get a few shots. Gurudev did not like being disturbed, so I stayed on the side and took about five shots of him. Despite that he ticked me off for taking photographs.

When Gurudev finished answering all the questions that Col. Bhargav had come with, the Colonel wanted another 30 minutes. “That will cost you Rs. 250/-. So far it has been free!” replied Gurudev.

Col. Bhargav thought about it; then he said, “Ok, I will do without the additional thirty minutes”. Whatever be his reasons for letting go of Gurudev’s offer, I decided to take it.

“Can I have that time instead, and will you pose for me?” I asked gleefully.

Gurudev rarely posed for photographs, and getting him to pose for a half-hour would have been extraordinary!

Before I could go any further, Gurudev said, “For you, Rs. 250/- for five minutes!” Without batting an eyelid, I replied, “Ok. Deal! But you have to pose where I tell you to!”

The photo shoot began. I made Gurudev get up from his comfortable chair and go stand next to a flower pot of geraniums, and another different flower pot of geraniums. I asked him to pose next to orange marigolds; then I made him smell the fragrance of some geraniums. There were many geranium plants in the garden, but how many different ways was he going to engage with geraniums?



Your Head! Gurudev blessing Anjali ji

All the same, I was thoroughly enjoying myself. (Later, one of these very pictures of Gurudev standing next to red geraniums came to become popular with many Mission Centers)

Now, just before my five minutes were up, I said to Gurudev, “Swamiji, now your hands, please. I want a photograph of your hands!”

Gurudev looked at me and said, “For that you have to pay me Rs. 1,000!”

I thought I was within the five minutes, but his next words were, “My hands are worth much more!”

I immediately agreed. His hands were priceless. I was aware that what I was getting from him was beyond what he usually gave away. Even if I had to pay this amount everyday for his pictures, I was still willing, since he hardly ever did pose for any picture.



Those Hands that gave and gave and gave and ....

The ways of the Guru are unfathomable. I thought Rs. 1,000/- for a picture of his hands was cheap. So first, I asked him to open one hand, to which he first gave me his right hand. I took a close-up of his palm, and another one (just incase I messed up the first)! Then I asked for both hands together. This also I took twice. When I clicked both his hands together, he spread then palm-side up, like an open-hand arpana (veneration).

My five minutes were up.

It was months before I could show him these pictures. In those days of film photography it was never possible to take a shot and immediately show it to Gurudev. So when I did show them to him, geraniums and all, I had the pictures of his hands enlarged to 12x15 inches in size.

Now my plan. I was hoping to frame this picture and put it next to my bed. I thought, when I felt sad, or when I missed Gurudev, I would imagine my head on his hands and feel as if he was touching my head and comforting me. Showing him the pictures, I said, “Swamiji, please write something nice on this picture, so that when I’m feeling down and out, I can put my head on your hands and feel good.”

The look on his face was quite graphic, but I was mostly looking at the photo, waiting for him to sign.

Gurudev did sign. He wrote, “Your head!”

I looked at it. No, it did not make me feel like wanting to put my head on it. “Swamiji, that sounds more like a guillotine!” I exclaimed.He nodded, meaning that is what it was, that is what he meant!



Anjali Singh today

I reflected on these two words, and his nod, for a long time. Eventually, I saw the depth in his words. Peace cannot be brought to a bruised ego (that is feeling down and out); that is not the solution to the problem. You have to deal with the problem, and use your intellect to do it. A stroking of the head or a comfort is only a temporary solution, a band-aid so-to-speak. And although Gurudev did not elaborate further than his two words and his nod, still, I came to understand that what he might have meant was that instead of only seeking comfort during my bad times, I should in fact, also use my head, my higher intellect to come to terms with the situation, first through acceptance, and then move forward with reasoning, that this 'me' which I consider to be me, is not me. This false identity with the little me needs to be guillotined, if it cannot stretch to gain a bigger outlook on life when threatened by life's experiences.

This is how I would behead the ego!

"Your head!" seems to say, "You are suffering because your ego has got involved, your ego is the I, the aham, which is seeking self preservation. That idea has to be severed, guillotined".

In times of need, whenever I have looked at the signed picture, which is framed and put up, it always reminds me that my ego has to go.

NOT AN IOTA OF THIS CAN BE SMUGGLED INTO THAT.

YOU HAVE TO DIE TO RELIVE AS BRAHMAN.

THE EGO HAS TO DIE!

THE DREAMER MUST DIE TO REALIZE THE WAKER.

Swami Chinmayananda

14. AND THEN MY FATHER TOLD ME ONE DAY ....

21-05-2015

Hemanthini Bhatia is 84 with a memory of all that Gurudev wrote to her. Today she continues to run a study group out of her home in Mumbai.

Hemanthini lived with her family in Uganda in the 60s, when her quest for a guru, teacher, guide began.

Many teachers crossed her path but none caused the bells to chime in her head! She was growing desolate and impatient. The school her kids went to, often asked her about Indian festivals. While Hemanthini could give them a makeshift reply around sweets and fire crackers and a victorious Rama, it had begun to annoy her that she needed to know more; and she not only did not know, but also had no means of knowing. Hemanthini felt she had nothing to give her children. Every time she looked at them and her 'overseas Indian' condition, she remembered she had to leave them a legacy that was as rich as the one in India.

She wrote to her father one day out of sheer frustration and the good man replied unusually, "Swami Chinmayananda is the only one you should go to ..."

From Uganda, Swami Chinmayananda was a distant dream.

Hemanthini was relieved when they moved back to India. "And I began looking for this Swamiji," she says. One day at Chowpatty she saw a huge banner announcing a Gita Yagna. The Swami was not the one she sought, but right there was the logo prominent for all to see - and the words 'Chinmaya Mission'. She took her husband and attended the first day of the yagna. At first the waves of saffron bothered her very much, but by the end of the day she felt her dream was taking shape.

One day she decided she would go to the Mission. Her husband Narottam's factory was also in Powai (how unusual) and he said she could take the car after dropping him. But to her surprise, the ashram was almost next door.

One thing led to many other things and Hemanthini met one Swami who was the acharya for the Vedanta Course. He let her join them during Vivekachoodamani classes. And there sitting under a tree outside Saraswati Nilayam, Hemanthini began her most fantastic experience. Soon various texts unfolded and she began attending jnana yagnas but Swami Chinmayananda was still inaccessible. "He was high up for me. I could never reach him." She says. "There were always 100s of people around him and I was always lost in the queue."



Hemanthini Bhatia

That was when Hemanthini decided to write to Gurudev. Through letters that flew from Mumbai to anywhere in the world that Gurudev was, Hemanthini's study of Vedanta gained great strength of purpose. Immersed in these replies, boosted by the texts she studied, Hemanthini did not need anything more. She had a teacher who was so prompt, so meticulous, so precise, so consistent ... she was at peace now, even if her climb up the spirituality ladder was step by slow step.

"My letters tirelessly chased Him wherever He travelled," she says. "Patiently, faithfully, lovingly He answered every single one of them in His sprawling, spacious handwriting! Even the delightfully elegant envelopes were addressed in His own hand!! That is how I, an insignificant being, discovered and reached my beloved Gurudev."

On a visit to London, Hemanthini took her grandchildren to meet Gurudev. Her tiny grand daughter stood majestically before the great Swami Chinmayananda and confidently belted out ,

एकं नत्ियं वमिलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षभिूतं
भावातीतं त्रगिुणरहतिं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि॥

"Ekam Nityam Vimalamachalam Sarvaadi saakshi bhootam

bhaava teetham triguna rahitam, sadgurum tam namami ..."

Gurudev was thrilled! And Hemanthini had unwittingly just offered her tribute to the Guru through her granddaughter's mouth.

Gurudev gave of himself wholly and fully through the letters he wrote. "How patiently he replied, how much detail he went into, how cheerfully he wrote... I always felt special," says Hemanthini.



Hemanthini with her study group at her residence

So much so that once when she wrote to him about some accomplishment her son had made, Gurudev wrote back a very vibrant and bubbling reply, "That's the best birthday present I have received!" (His birthday was round the corner) His words were so celebratory! Hemanthini felt deeply gratified.

Truly, her evolution on the Guru ladder has been arduous but rewarding. She has worked extremely hard at this and her experiences are richer than she had asked for. In her words, "I was like a blank sheet of paper on which He wrote most deeply," she says.

At her first residential camp at Sandeepeny Sadhanalaya, something that Gurudev explained, touched the very core of her being. "I did so much want to thank Him that I scribbled my message on a shabby piece of paper and rushed over to leave it in His kutia. My heart lost a beat when I saw Him supervising the gardener. I was utterly overwhelmed and scared. I quickly left my little note on His desk and vanished, as Gurudev slyly followed me with His side glance!

"The response was immediate. He invited me to His padapooja the next day, which got me so excited that I managed to get a brand new red sari and wore it for the occasion!"

Truly, the Guru knows the student's genuineness! For his parting gift to Hemanthini was a surprise post parcel containing His kurta & handkerchief! "This most precious, valuable and loving gift I cherish dearly and have kept it securely in my safe, to be brought out on special occasions and celebrations."

Hemanthini 's love, adoration and faith had peaked. The Guru she wanted she had found. Her whole self was now focussed on Him. She now felt a quiet arriving into peace, as it were. So it was that she decided to attend Gurudev's Vivekchoodamani Camp at Sidhabari. Her memories are razor sharp, as she recounts the greatness of her Guru:

"We were all gathered in the open courtyard for a Vishnusahasranama Archana. As the pooja was in progress, suddenly the wind started blowing, dark clouds gathered

in the sky and rain threatened to pour down.

"There was Gurudev, upright on His pedestal seat, with His hair blowing in all directions, staring challengingly at the threatening clouds! We were all waiting for it to pour, when --- wonder of wonders --- the clouds lamely withdrew, the sky cleared up and we were able to complete our pooja unhindered! In all humility Gurudev asked us to go up to pavan putra Hanuman and thank Him for His grace and kindness."

When the first Dharma Sevak course was started, Gurudev had urged Hemanthini ji to enrol. But then she had resisted because she had family and family had needs.... " But He did not give up," says Hemanthini. "He guided me to join the 13th Vedanta Course under Pujya Guruji's guidance."

Hemanthini came full circle when she joined the 13th Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Mumbai as a guest student.

From Uganda to the Upanishads, it has been a long journey. But the Guru has a plan for every student. And Hemanthini ji says, "I continue to repay my debt to my Guru...."

15. *Bas, ab* really *bas*...

22-05-2015

Sunil Sachdev lives in Gurgaon, Haryana and is an active member of CM Delhi.

Sunil was the youngest of six siblings. His father, a civilian officer with the army, was an english literature aficionado, hence an avid reader. Between his passion for English literature, he had his religious practices like temple-going, as well as going to the club in the evening where he had a drink, like many army officers do.

One day a good friend told him about this English speaking Swami. "It was a cold winter evening, when Dad was posted in Delhi, " recounts Sunil, "Father was sceptical, and grapevine has it that father decided he would go listen to this fiery Swami talk on the Bhagvad Gita in English. And Dad went, ... with his hip flask in his jacket pocket ..."



Ab really bas! Sunil's father, the Senior Sachdev, at Gurudev's feet

"After the lecture the norm was he would go to the club but that day he said let's skip the club. The friend said, 'Come home in that case'; so they went to this friend's place. There, the friend's wife ordered chicken tikka ... but dad said, 'No, not

today.'

"The next day when the servant bought his packet of Gold Flake cigarettes and as always, placed them on the table with his lighter, dad said, 'nahi, bas...' much to the poor servant's confusion. And when fried eggs came onto the breakfast table, father said, 'bas, ab really bas!' "

And father Sachdev became Gurudev's devotee. He would later refer to Sunil as his 'Hari Om child', as "It was after you came that I met my Guru!"

The Sachdevs then moved to the cantonment in Dehu Road, Pune. The first yagna in little Sunil's memory was held in this home. Father being with the army, they had a huge army home. So they constructed a stage there for the yagna. This was October of 1965, when Gurudev held a Bhaja Govindam yagna here.

Sunil who was all of 6 and a half then, found the ambience divine. Gurudev's lectures would begin at 7 a.m. and Gurudev would arrive sooner from Pune to Dehu road to meet the army officers. "For me it was fabulous," reminisces Sunil. The dawn would break for him to the sounds of his father's friends' gentle buzz outside, the pandal builders and their light banter, and M.S. Subbalakshmi on the 78 rpm, mellifluously unleashing upon the already happy atmosphere, her entreaty to the Lord Rama,

Kousalya supraja Rama poorva sandhya pravarthathe
Uttishta Narasardula karthavyamdhaivamanhikam”

O Rama! Great Son of Kausalya, the Sun is about to rise in the Eastern skies; please arise to offer the early morning oblations

And Sunil would wake up ... to see the grounds being prepared for the arrival of Gurudev! What joy!

Sunil's childhood and youth was thus fully drenched with all things Gurudev. His father we saw; his mother too had soon taken to running Bal Vihar classes. In an otherwise Punjabi home, all Namboodiri habits had been installed. "My dad would make fun and say this son of mine will bring home a Menon daughter-in-law.. !" And that is exactly what happened.



Sunil and Devika - solemnised by Gurudev

Sunil met Devika Menon and decided he would make her his life partner. In 1986 father Sachdev had a stroke, and was recuperating. A few months after this, Sunil and Devika got engaged in the presence of both Gurudev and Swami Purushottamananda.

Soon after this Sunil's parents relocated to Mysore where one of his older brothers lived.

On 22nd Jan 1987, it was his father's birthday. Sunil was leaving for Bangalore whence he would go to Mysore to spend with his father, when at the airport departure lounge who should he run into, but Gurudev! Prostrating before him, Sunil said to Gurudev, "I was engaged to Devika in your presence Gurudev, I would also like to be married in your presence!"

Gurudev opened his briefcase and looked at his itinerary and said simply as only Gurudev can, " 30th April, Guruvayoor or 10th May at Powai. Guruvayoor will be inconvenient for family, so Powai?" Gurudev knew that Sunil's father was recovering.



Sunil Sachdev, today

When he reached Mysore, Sunil excitedly shared this new development with his parents. "My marriage date has been fixed!" he declared.

"I saw a strange expression on dad's face," recalls Sunil. "While he looked happy there was also a hint of sadness. Then, I wondered why..... "

Exactly 2 months later, the senior Sachdev passed away. "It was then that mom told me, 'That day you were confused but I could not share this with you. Dad had told

me: 'I am not going to be there for Tony's (Sunil) wedding because my Guru has taken charge, ... "

This was how the senior Mr. Sachdev had decoded the news that Gurudev had fixed the wedding date! Sweet, yet heartbreaking.

But he had installed his Guru in the hearts of all his children and his wife, who to this day runs her feeble fingers on her beads to the memory of Om Sree Chinmaya Satgurave Namah ...

16. " ... in front of you, kudu..kudu...!"

23-05-2015

A year ago, a young brahmacharini had set up a small center in a far off town. The visitors to this center were few. The brahmacharini had a study class in the mornings once a week and a satsang in the evenings after aarti.

When the whole country was abuzz with Gurudev's centenary celebrations, she sat in this small center and continued doing her daily work. The evening satsang was attended by a 75-80 year old lady whom she addressed as 'amma' - never asking her her name. This lady had never seen Gurudev or Guruji but as she went on listening about Gurudev and Guruji she started developing love for them. Especially when they read ' The Jouney of the Master'.

So this Amma came during aarti and stayed back for satsang. At this satsang they would read a few incidents from Every Breath a Teaching and then move to texts like Bhaja Govindam.

That day they were reading about an old devotee of Gurudev, Kalidas ji's experience with meeting Swami Tapovanam. As they read each part of the story, their voices began to fall into a light whisper, as if something spectacular was about to happen. Kalidas had ventured to go to Haridwar on his own, a day before Gurudev reached. On the bus to Uttarkasi he was reading Swami Tapovanam's travels from Rishikesh to Uttarkasi and uncannily it seemed to him that everything he was reading was appearing outside before his eyes. Like when the para talked about black monkeys and Kalidas ji looked out the window, he saw a bunch of black monkeys by the roadside.

To brahmacharini and the amma this was overwhelming. There they were far away in a tiny town, far removed from the bustle of the centenary celebrations where Gurudev was being celebrated, and Kalidas' experience was causing horripilations. The story went on to say how when Kalidas was climbing the hill looking for Tapovan Kuti, he encountered a mahatma and asked him how to get there... the mahatma pointed to a brick colored gate and asked him to enter that.... unwittingly Kalidas had spoken in Malayalam and the mahatma had replied in Malayalam.

Entering that room Kalidas went into almost instant meditation before the akhand jyoti until he was told by the caretakers that he was not allowed to enter that room. Much later he saw a photo on the wall in the satsang hall and was stunned because the mahatma he had taken directions from, turned out to be the saint in the photo on the wall - Swami Tapovanam.

Thereafter Kalidas ji was told to go offer abhishekam to the shivalingam in the Saumya Kashisha temple. Just as he set out with the Ganges water and flowers, he saw Gurudev come in a car. Gurudev stopped and got out and hugged Kalidas,

happy to see him. The Ganges water and flowers just dropped, falling gently on Gurudev's feet.... Here both the brahmacharini and the amma gasped.

Gurudev simply asked him, "So you met him?" referring to Swami Tapovanam of course. Kalidas shared his experience and Gurudev said, "That is why I sent you one day earlier..." (According to the story, Kalidas ji was supposed to travel with Gurudev.)

Kalidas was unbelieving. He said, "How can that be?" (Meaning, how can one meet a person who has taken samadhi?) And Gurudev said, "This happens when Brahman rides on your mind..."

Kalidas asked him, "Then when people tell me you have taken mahasamadhi... will I be able to see you like I saw Swami Tapovanam?"

And Gurudev said, "Guaranteed! When this happens I will walk in front of you — kudu, kudu, ..." and he made clicking sounds to show how effortlessly he will present himself ...

A silence fell on the brahmacharini and the amma. They prayed in the silence of their hearts.

Amma said, "Can we also have darshan like Kalidas ji had? Gurudev has promised and what he says he means it, nahi?" Brahmacharini recalled Gurudev's words, "When Brahman rides on your mind, I will walk in front of you kudu, kudu..." She smiled as her eyes gained a faraway look, imagining Gurudev and his wooden khadaus...

Satsang time was up. She then gave amma prasaad and amma left.

At the farther end of the room, by the door, sat a table where the evening food was brought for the brahmacharini by a lady. Today along with the food case there was a large-ish book.

The brahmacharini was confused. What was this book? It was large and heavy. "Crescendo Peaks" said the cover, even as she saw on the cover, a huge bright image of Gurudev. But she was not going to name her joy so soon. Unbelievingly she opened the book and what should she see but Gurudev, arms open!

Her whole being was stunned. In that far away little town He had made his presence felt...Her eyes grew hot and moist and she said in a whisper, 'kudu kudu....' and grinned very happily. "You call and I don't come? That is not possible!" she said remembering his words she had read somewhere.

It is a little town with not much Mission presence. "To remember him in the context of the story and then to unexpectedly be gifted a huge book of Gurudev images and letters.... what else could that be? That today of all days that lady chose to clean her house and she has this book which she cannot read because it is in english.... and today she chooses to give it to me!" she says grateful for Gurudev's presence right in the Centenary week.

" ... in front of you, kudu..kudu...!"

17. When the Sun rose on a family ...

24-05-2015



Panduranganji-prostrating-before-Gurudev

This is a beautiful family of Gurudev's at the Chinmaya Vidyala, Srirangam: P.Thillaiammal, her husband Pandurangan ji and their daughter Uma Maheshwari.

This family has been in Gurudev's service since 1982, a total of 33 years. It is their silent devotion that grips the heart. There is clearly an unusual quality to the devotion of those lacking materially; maybe the gaps lying unfilled by material comforts are available for the Guru and these spaces get the fragrance of divinity so that people like Thillaiammal and Pandurangan ji do not even notice their needs.

Thillaiammal began working at the school when the school had just been opened. [Later we will see the story of how the school began ...] She is a housekeeping assistant and a caregiver for children. In 1984 Gurudev came to Srirangam for one of his gnyana yagnas. Those days the school was being run out of the Netaji Subhash Road premises (later moved to Aruna Nagar). Everyone at the school went to the yagna and Thilaiammal also did. But Gurudev spoke in english ... Thillaiammal could already sense that what he spoke was pleasing, even if she did not understand his words. This is the greatness of Gurudev.

Then Thilayamma would go and pester the head mistress Miss Geetha Parthasarathy and ask her to explain what Gurudev spoke that day and Geetha Miss (as she is called to this day) would explain. "That is how I began to understand," says Thillaiammal . "When I was a child my grandfather and father both, have told me stories from the Ramayanam and the Mahabharatam, but never did I think there was a learning inside those stories! Only from Gurudev I got the teachings of the Gita..." These words have a certain quality to them, when said by Thillaiammal.

Thillaiammal now warms up as the memories of Gurudev grow sharper in her heart. "What Guru is, is something I learnt only after seeing Him (referring to Gurudev). He used to sit with us, eat with us ... It was He who gave me "Bal Vihar" the book, when it was first printed in Tamizh. I got it from His divine hands ... It has all prayers, aartis, bhajans... and Guru Stotram, which we say every day!"

The important attribute of this book to her, was that it was in Tamizh, the only language Thillaiammal knows. She goes on, "Gurudev gave this book to HM also (headmistress, Geetha Miss) and to everybody. I read it and liked it very much."

But Thillaiammal could never muster courage to speak to Gurudev. Firstly because Gurudev did not speak Tamizh, and secondly, "I would be very scared to talk to him." Ask her why and her reply will stun you, " He was like the brightness of the morning sun ... such brightness as would fill the room ... he, his clothes, his rudraksha, his whole aura, and those kaavi clothes -- Oh my! It was the color of the rising morning sun ... what will I say amma? I can only tell you what these eyes saw ... when he stepped into the room (and she gasps) it was the vision of God. Guru darshan we got — that was our fortune."

Thilaiamma is filled with happiness that she has to talk about 'Him'; more so because, so many people talk about him today, far more than she had imagined.



Uma-Miss (center), Thillaiammal to her right; Panduranganji on her left

Her two minutes of glory was always the one where she would stand with the welcome party and sing Akhanda Mandalaakaaram...! for Gurudev! Thilaiammal's joy is incomparable. The joy she got was the joy Gurudev likely saved for her alone.

Thilaiammal feels that it is by saying Gurudev's name alone that she and her husband got the equanimity of mind to wade through life's difficult spots without suffering. She lists her three blessings from Gurudev: mana amaidi (inner silence), nimmadi (peace) and attachment for God.

Thillaiammal's husband, Pandurangan ji is the watchman of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya Srirangam. He has held this job for 33 years. Thilaiammal says he has done a lot for the school because he sees it as belonging to Gurudev. "But he never says shlokas or things like that ... he has only done namaskaram to Gurudev."

But the head mistress of the school Geetha Parathasarathy (aka Geetha Miss) has a story to share which Thillaiammal did not. Long ago in 1982 when she had committed to starting a Chinmaya Vidyalaya, a particular property was to be made available to her to set up the school. But in the 'n'th hour, the person backed out. The date for the setting up of the school was at hand and there was suddenly no school premises! In Netaji Nagar where the school was planned, Pandurangan ji was running a Kalyana Mandapam on contract. When Geetha Miss happened to mention her dilemma, he readily offered the Kalyana Mandapam to her so that her sankalpa was not wasted. It was a divine stop-gap arrangement: the wedding hall would be the school admin place (for no charge, please) while, hold your breath, the thinnai - the raised pial in the front portico of a house - would be the classroom. Some parts of the day, the handful of children also walked in a procession around the school chanting their lessons (for variation) as the teacher walked along, teaching them.

On days when there was a booking for the wedding hall, another gentleman (Subramanian Chettiar) of the town offered his car shed for the classroom.

When the Vidyalaya found its premises later, Pandurangan ji moved with them, giving up the Kalyana Mandapam. From that day he became the school watchman. In later years when his wife and daughter moved into a larger accommodation, Pandurangan ji did not follow them. He chose to stay in the school. Pandurangan ji has a health condition in one foot, since he was a young lad. When Swami Shreedharanandaji (Acharya, CM Srirangam) told him why don't you move in with your family, Pandurangan ji shook his head. The school is where he belonged, that is where he would be. This story was necessary, to tell the story of his family's love for Gurudev!

Thilaiammal remains grateful for the blessings her family has received from Gurudev, which came as flowers or even fruit thrown in her direction, occasions she remembers with great joy. "He has written so much, but sadly all in english. People like us cannot learn english. So many of us, we known only Tamizh.... All you people must do is bring out Gurudev's work in Tamizh. Only then you can expect the people to change!"

And what has Uma Maheshwari her daughter, learnt especial from Gurudev? "About time ... value of time; how to be on time, keeping your word - if you say you will do something then you must do it. Time-keeping also is like that," says Uma Maheshwari or 'Uma Miss' as she is known.

Uma looks after the school office. She is in a better space than her parents, having grown up in her formative years in the environment of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya. She does a lot of typing in Tamizh. The fortune of the young lady is that Swami Shreedharaananda who has been translating Gurudev's works into Tamizh asks Uma Miss to type his Tamizh translations. "That is how I got exposure to Gurudev's teachings and greatness. When I type, I also read, and I realised how hard he must have worked. All the hardships he faced in the book "Uttarkhand Yatra", it was heartbreaking to know that his slippers tore and his feet bled. All this he has undergone to accomplish such a great Mission for the whole world ... all this I come to know as I type."

Uma runs a Tamizh Bal Vihar at Chinmaya Vidyalaya, on Sundays. "Even if I have 4 students, that is fine; at least four will do better than they would have otherwise!" she says with confidence.

There are those who have the means to go up to the Guru and there are those who do not have the means or the knowledge of his location. They have to wait for the day when the door opens and the bright saffron sun-like tejas floods the room, ... and then, only their eyes can take in the Guru's greatness; they do not even go near enough to touch him (they are overwhelmed by His greatness and only distance is bearable; nor can they smell his fragrance .... But only their hands can catch the fruit he throws their way. And they gasp and hold their breath for as long as they are in his presence, unwilling to even breathe, lest the moment passes.

Surely the experience of the Guru they have is not a patch on any other.

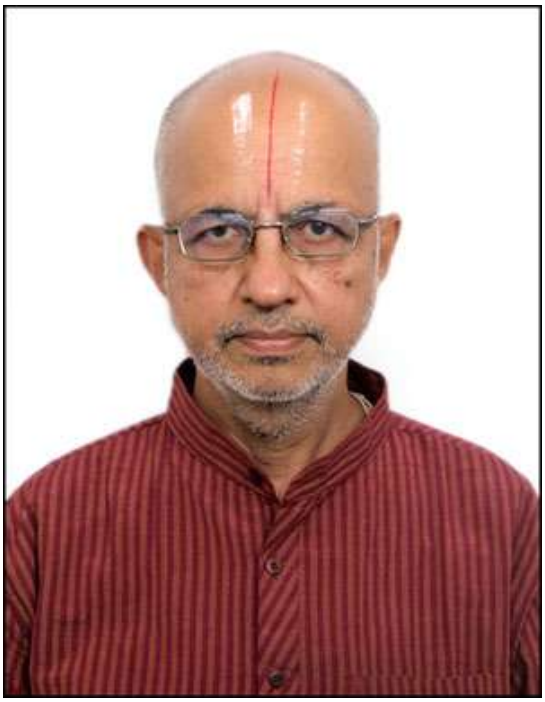
18. Spotting a Leaping Tiger

25-05-2015

Dr. Ramaswamy Aiyengar is presently the Chairman of the doctoral Committee 'Amrita Darshanam' - International Center for Spiritual Studies of the Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University). He has headed the Department of Sanskrit at NMKRV College, and Principal at SSMRV College. He is also looking after the Indology Institute MES College Bengaluru.

Dr. Ramaswamy Aiyengar's association with the Mission goes back to the period after CIF was set up by Gurudev. The setting up of CIF was itself a huge production with Gurudev expressing his vision of a sanskrit foundation that would bring back the glory of Sanskritam to India and the world. Now a global vision like that is not even easy to detail and Gurudev had repeated it again and again during his tour of the 12 US Universities where he presented the Vision of Vedanta. This was December 1992.

Gurudev was speeding, spreading his vision to as many as were willing to hear. Within 8 months of this tour, Gurudev attained mahasamadhi leaving CIF all set with an infrastructure but direly in need of a direction setter.



Dr. Ramaswamy Aiyengar

It was four years later that Pujya Guruji found Ramaswamy Aiyengar, principal of RV College in Bangalore. That was 1996. Ramaswamy ji gave CIF the direction it needed to plant the seeds of the vision that Gurudev had left for CIF. He held that august office of Director for 7 long years, till 2002-03.

Although Ramaswamy ji came to CIF much after Gurudev's mahasamadhi, he had had one spectacular day in his life when he was in the 'presence' of Gurudev! Not many know about this.

Ramaswamy ji was in his early 30s and had just joined as a teacher at NMKRV college, Bengaluru. The students' parents were obviously very fond of him, for they would whisk him away for lectures here and there. And Ramaswamy ji went along. (In fact that was exactly how he was whisked away by a student, Vijayalaksmi in 1996 to meet Guruji and thus came about his historical appointment to CIF.)

In this instance going back to the year 1983 a student Padmashree (currently teaching at Rishi Valley) and her father Satyanarayana Shetty are credited with the honor of whisking Ramaswamy ji for Gurudev's Geeta Gnyana Yagna in Bengaluru. The yagna was on Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 15. Ramaswamy ji recalls with amazing sharpness the entire episode and recounts it as if it is happening right before him.

"In the front of the yagnashala was a special enclosure for special guests and invitees. Mr. Shetty being an industrialist in the foods business, must have been a sponsor, and I got to go with him to that enclosure. It was a huge yagnashala. As soon as I entered the first thing to hit me was Gurudev's commanding voice - "Narayana enters....!" he boomed and he enunciated the most captivating seventh verse of the 15th chapter of the Geeta:

mamaivamso jiva-loke
jiva-bhutah sanatanah
manah-sasthanindriyani
prakrti-sthani karsati [BG: 15.7]

Ramaswamy ji narrates what Gurudev spoke, "That ancient part of mine, the jiva, entered into the womb as the jiva. On entering the womb this part that is the jiva, takes whatever it wants within the womb to make its own body. The five indriyas and manas the sixth, are all drawn out anew from the mother's material encrustation (prakriti), what it needs to make its body."

Ramaswamy ji adds, "Saying this Gurudev gave an example. I recall this so clearly. He said, 'You are being transferred from Calcutta to Madras. What are you going to do? Same sofa set, same wall-hanging, same clock, same table... all packed for the new place. The place has changed but the jiva is the same. Same baggage but location is different. All these sofas and wall hangings come back to the new place... this is samsara!

'But there should be a quantum leap. If not there is no point in living. Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam is for those who cannot achieve that quantum leap. This is routine transmigration without any spiritual advancement!'

"I remember this example so well. This explanation is so vivid in my mind. Whenever I think of Swami Chinmayananda, I think of this exhortation: 'Don't keep going from place to place routinely going through the same thing. Let there be a quantum leap!' The moment I think of Gurudev, this is what I recall. This is Chinmaya for me!"

Ramaswamy ji has met Gurudev in smaller gatherings before. "Yes I have seen him at the homes of several devotees of the Mission where he was invited for bhiksha. Those occasions I have seen him more closely and He has also cast his graceful (sometimes searching, even mischievous) glances on me!

"Even when I was a boy of 12, in 1962, my brother Gopal would take me to his discourses. We used to live in Mysore then. My brother is a great admirer of Gurudev. Those Yajnas are still green in our minds!" says Ramaswamy ji.

Of the Chapter XV yagna, from which he quotes above, Ramaswamy ji has this to say, " I know he saw me. His eyes stared at me and I looked back at him. In that crowd, we had met, a pact was as if made."

An instrument had been found and would be developed for application in 1996! And Ramaswamy Aiyengar had accomplished a quantum leap!

19. An Officer And A Guru

26-05-2015

Shri S.N. Sastri, 93, is the much revered author of the english translation and commentary of Narayaneeyam, a famous literary-cum-devotional work in Sanskrit by the devotee-poet Melpathoor Narayana Bhattatiri who lived in Kerala in the 16th century A.D.



Narayaneeyam

Shri S.N. Sastri narrates, "When I had almost completed writing my commentary in English on Narayaneeyam some time in 1986, I happened to mention about it one day to Br. Siddha Chaitanya (today, Swami Siddhananda) who was then in charge of the Madras Centre of the Chinmaya Mission. He then suggested, “Why not request Swamiji (Gurudev) to accept it for publication by CCMT?”

"I had not thought of such a course because Gurudev did not know me at all at that time. Anyhow I decided to try. So I got a print-out of my commentary of Dasaka 1 alone and met Gurudev during his next visit to Madras (now Chennai). I handed over to him the print-out and requested that my book may be accepted for publication. He received the papers but did not say anything and did not even glance through them.

"But, to my very pleasant surprise, I received a letter from the Bombay office of the Chinmaya Mission within a few days informing me that Gurudev had accepted my book for publication. He had obviously gone through the print-out I had given and had been impressed by my detailed vedantic explanation of the shlokas. This shows how extremely fair and open-minded he was and how considerate even though he did not know me at all.



Shri.-S.N. Sastri

"When the printing was about to be completed I sent a letter to Gurudev to the Bombay office address requesting him to give a Foreword to my book. The letter was transmitted to him and reached him when he was in USA. He immediately sent a reply signed by him saying that he would give a Foreword on his going back to Bombay. This shows his great courtesy and promptness in replying to letters. I had preserved this reply from him, but I am not able to trace it among my papers now. I have shifted my residence twice since then and it is likely that this paper was lost during those moves.

"We all know what a great sense of humour he had. This is revealed also in the Foreword he gave for my book. The Foreword starts thus:

'I never thought veteran bureaucrats could understand Vedanta! That is, until I saw Shri S.N.Sastri's beautiful work on NARAYANEEYAM'.

I was wondering how he knew that I had been a bureaucrat. I had met him only once to hand over the print-out. At that time I had not told him anything about myself. Then I noticed that, below my name as the author in the inner cover I had put, "Former Member of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Govt. Of India". He had obviously noticed this and used it for making his humorous statement! What a keen power of observation!"

20. *Annapoorne, sadaa poorne* ....!

27-05-2015

Pragnyaben Kothari lives in Mattanchery with her husband. During Gurudev's 1991 yagna, she ran the kitchen that fed everyone who came to the hosts home ...

In a large event, huge camps, often there are a handful of people who work in the background, unknown, unnoticed, but whose work never goes unnoticed by Gurudev. Never. These people are also those who struggle silently praying and hoping they do not make a mistake and the great people are not embarrassed as a result of their errors.

When a huge 10 day Jnana Yagna was held in Mattanchery way back in 1991, the Thakker household (see stories 8 and 12) was bursting with people. Who came, who left, nothing was clear. All kinds of people arrived and everyone greeted everyone else with great gusto as 'Hari Om'-s rent the air. Ajit bhai Thakker and Kusum ben Thakker were overwhelmed with Gurudev's presence and being known for hosting saints always, their athiti satkar was generous.

So what would happen was, Ajitbhai would tell everyone to eat breakfast or lunch or naashta or dinner, depending on the time of day, and only then permit them to leave.

The lady in charge of the kitchen was Pragnyaben Kothari. Her day began at 3 am and ended around 12 midnight. She says, "Sometimes so many people came there would be no place to sleep. We would each grab a pillow and lie down where the ground showed!" For she had to be up in time to stoke the fires for the next day.

As for the kitchen, her hands flew over the pots and pans, chopping vegetables with one hand, grinding chutneys with the other, peeling unending numbers of potatoes with another, rolling chapatis and puris with yet another hand, and cooking dals and sambar and vegetables ....

Pragnyaben had some helping hands over and above her own 100 hands, but her head was silently keeping a watch on what was less, what was more, what needed to be cooked again, what could fall short, what was getting consumed fast ... and what needed to be sent out to the dining room.

Every now and then Ajit bhai would poke his head into the kitchen and ask, "Pragnyaben everything fine ? There is food for everyone na?"

One day after the afternoon food had been served and eaten and the kitchen was being tidied, a bus load of children arrived. They were from a school. Pragnyaben watched the never ending line of kids jump off the bus with so much energy. Ajitbhai's heart could have sunk, but he does not tell! He ran to the kitchen and saw

Pragnyaben ladling more and more food into pots to go into the dining room for the newcomers.



Praveen bhai and Pragnyaben today

His eyes popped. How come?? He had thought she would need to cook again! But all he did say was, "Sab theek hai na? Is there enough for the children?"

There was no reason to worry says Pragnyaben (and Jayshree Thakker, daughter-in-law of the hosts, echoes this feeling.) "Food never, never fell short. How, I cannot tell, but it always amazed us. No matter how many people came, be it breakfast, lunch or dinner, it was PRECISE! Everyone who came ate to their fill! There was always enough!" (Even today, 25 years later, the Thakkers recount this aspect of the yagna with great amazement - 'Food was never short, really!')

And no, she does not assume credit for this at all. Says Pragnyaben, "When there is a mahatma, these things are known happen!" Her husband Praveenbhai says, "That is so, that is so! She would cook for 50, and 100 would eat; if she cooked for 100, then 200 would eat!"

And that mahatma, Gurudev, had noticed all this. Towards the close of the yagna, Pragnyaben said she would like to do pranaam to the mahatma. As she was getting up after prostrating, Gurudev asked her, "What do you do, child?" And all that Pragnyaben could respond with was tears.

Praveenbhai had had a difficult time at work and had lost his job. He had been sitting at home for a year and there was no money for anything. "What do I tell a mahatma? I could not say anything," says Pragnyaben. Their life was rather bleak and this was why Ajit Thakker had asked her to help out during the camp.

Gurudev told Ajitbhai, "That shop which you have (referring to a particular space they owned), it is idle ... give the key of that shop to her." Ajitbhai happily brought the key and gave it to Gurudev and Gurudev handed it to Pragnyaben. The poor lady was already overcome and now even more so. "I don't know english, I must have spoken in Gujrati, can't say, but I said, 'We will do everything with your blessings.' (With a tiny starting amount, they established a cutlery shop there.)

Then Gurudev went with her to the shop. Pragnyaben was all flustered, such a great man had entered that little space; where should she seat him? And she must give him something too ... "We have to give him something, he has come to our shop," she said to Praveenbhai. Then seeing a chair there, she wiped it quickly and requested Gurudev to sit.

They had a nice new turkish towel that was also orange in color! Quickly Praveenbhai presented it to Gurudev!

And Gurudev sat on that chair. "That chair became a blessing for us!" exclaim both Pragnyaben and Praveenbhai almost in chorus. "I used to sit on it and do the shop work, my husband has sat on it, my son has sat and studied on it ...! And we have all been blessed by the chair!"

Praveenbhai had been sitting at home for a whole year, jobless. "The moment Gurudev's feet touched our shop, many many offers just poured in! Different shop owners called him to run their shop. Someone offered him partnership in his store."

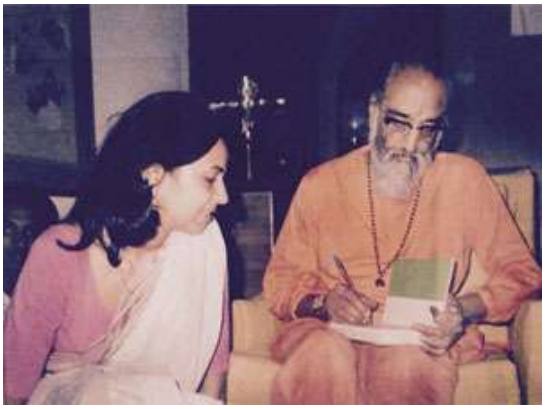
But Praveenbhai declined all offers. He began to work at his new store in great earnest. It was a small shop but it was just right. On Makar Sankranti he got the key; on 15th he got it painted and on 16th he began work!

Life changed for the Kotharis. From penury they moved to abundance. Pragnyaben's hands that had fed so many mouths cheerfully, was made rich and productive, by Gurudev!

21. In the eye of the storm with Narayana!

28-05-2015

It was 1979. Gurudev was conducting a jnana yagna in Ghaziabad (North India). Many devotees from Delhi would go the distance to be with Gurudev for the morning. Parveen Bahl had been with the Mission just 2 years. A cousin had told her about the Geeta classes and that is how she had gained a foot into the Mission door. After that several little opportunities found her listening to Gurudev's talks. "He was amazing with his analyses...!" says Parveen ji.



Parveen Bahl with Gurudev

Anjali Singh was going for the Ghaziabad Yagna; So Parveen decided she would go along with her. It was during the yagna week that one morning Parveen ji reached for the breakfast bhiksha for Gurudev. While others bustled around with this or that, Parveen's mind chattered.

There was a difficulty she had been grappling with for long but had been unable to voice it to anyone. Maybe it was not a polite thing to say? Maybe her interpretation of the 'difficulty' was wrong? Maybe she needed to change some things around herself? Maybe that was the nature of 'the difficulty' and she did not know to decode that? What was it?

Whatever it was, she was unable to deal with it anymore and just needed a little bit of shepherding. The thoughts had been rising and falling upon the heap of confusion they were creating. And many many weeks had passed nursing the problem. But important to Parveen, eversince she had started her Geeta studies and the clarity she had been hearing in Gurudev's voice during his various talks, was this: All that is great, but what should be MY attitude in the face of this problem?



Parveen Bahl today

Faced with a variety of thoughts on the same subject, Parveen tried to edit them in her head. Trim off the pointless fat and structure two sentences that would present her question succinctly. Oh but any more editing would result in a question that had no purpose. What must she do? Parveen had a mild thought: she would ask Gurudev in private. But she would not go into details, there would be no point ... ok keep it brief, keep it brief she thought.

While outwardly she was a picture of calm and poise, there was a huge tsunami raging inside....

Ok, she concluded at last. She would be brief. She would get the clarity she needed...he was such a clear thinking amazing Swami! Gathering up all her courage she timidly ventured to ask, “What is duty?

No sooner had the words left her mouth than Gurudev exploded. He roared forth in his most impervious manner, "So what if you have a cantankerous father-in-law? See Narayana in him and serve him!!"

Parveen shrank in shock. On the Richter scale it would have been 9.5. She could not even open her mouth nor was she breathing. " That was exactly what was bothering me! How did he figure out?" she says now laughing. But then she was at least 35 years younger and knew nothing abut Gurudev.

Stunned silly by what she had heard, stunned that he had hit bull's-eye with simple agility, stunned at his x-ray vision, she struggled to get back her balance. Her head

spinning and now completely off balance, she slid out of the room.

"I met him several times after that, but oh no, I never brought this up again, nor did I ever ask him any questions after this! I remember those words so clearly it is not funny. He had hammered them as if in stone!" says Parveen amma.

It was true she had been struggling with her relationship with her father-in-law and the Geeta had harassed her with getting her attitude right. But the coin fell into the slot. She had been given a new sadhana, tough but thought out!

22. UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE ... THEN THROUGH THE DRYER

29-05-2015

Prarthna Saran is a very old devotee of Gurudev's from New Delhi. Today she conducts study classes and gnyana yagnas in many parts of Delhi.

1982. Prarthna ji was new to the Mission. She wondered if she too could cook for Gurudev. For her it was one of the few ways in which to express her love and sincerity for the Master at whose feet she was learning. The overwhelming thought was, 'He should eat food cooked by my hands ...'

New as she was, she was inept and unsure how she could do so. Even so, she decided to brave it and entered the kitchen where much activity was on, instructions flying around, pots and pans dancing to the tune of the chief orchestrator and the rustle and swish of bodies moving in frenzied hurry.

Prarthna's entrance did not go unnoticed. The chief lady gave her a glance and said, 'Come come, help out, here is a pomegranate, peel it. I have to serve this soon to Swamiji (Gurudev).'

"A silly thought came to me," says Prarthna ji, "'But he will never know that it was I who peeled it! She will come, take the plate and offer it to Gurudev and He will think she did it! "

Even so reason prevailed and she thought, "OK, never mind if Gurudev finds out or not, I will peel this and I will do my japa as I am peeling."

Presently the lady came and said, "Give give, I have to give him the fruit, he has finished his lunch!" and in most hurried manner the plate was taken away and the chief-lady left with the peeled fruit.

Prarthna ji stood on tiptoe to look into the huge hall. Gurudev was sitting there having finished his lunch, listening to bhajans being sung by devotees. She thought to herself, ok I could not give it to him, but I can at least watch him eating it ....? In any case being new, Gurudev did not know her by name or even by face, she was not an actively visible member.



Prarthna Saran and family with Gurudev

From the kitchen to the dining room there are three steps going up. If she thought she would get to the top of the stairs, she had better perish that thought for it was dotted with so many brahmacharis, who likely had a greater claim on Gurudev having committed their lives to the Mission. Prarthna adjusted her position to find a binocular vision through the gaps in their arms and between necks. Oh there was Gurudev! She spotted him. He was swaying to the rhythm of the bhajans ... but she waited. The pomegranates would reach him in an instant. Pomegranates that she had peeled.

The little red seeds lay waiting in a bowl. Yellow arms and necks realigned and she nearly lost sight of Gurudev. Soon, there he was again, his hand had reached into the bowl and he had grabbed a fistful ....

And all too suddenly Gurudev turned and looked in the direction of Prarthna! Her heart gave her a lashing beat. The brahmacharis also seemed restless for they moved a lot. Gurudev could never see her through them from so far.

But he saw her. And he saw her intently. Gurudev gestured for her to come forth.

Naah! She thought. Don't be silly. He does not even know me why should he call me?!



But he beckoned to her again, he was looking at her. "Even then I did not go. I was sure my mind was playing tricks," says Prarthna ji. By now even the restless brahmacharis looked over their shoulders at Prarthna who was playing with the gaps to catch sight of Gurudev. They had stepped aside now and were saying something amongst themselves... to her. There was a Brahmachari who was attending to Gurudev. Now, he turned to look at her too. He beckoned to her - she was more clearly visible now, now that the crowding brahmacharis had stepped aside making way for her.

The serving Brahmachari gestured to her to come and she gestured back to him wondrously asking, "Me??"

Prarthna started walking towards Gurudev. She was now in a different world. Those fistful of pomegranates, were yet in his hand. Gurudev put it into hers and said, "Here, prasaad for you ..."

"I was stunned. I received them with my heart pounding in my ears. The next minute I ran to where my husband and friends were in a makeshift shed outside, to share the experience that was threatening to make me burst!"

Those seeds went a long long way and continue to nourish the work that Prarthna ji does today. "He continues to work through me," she says. "For he had often said to us, "When I leave my body, I will work through your hands and your mouth."

But not without putting her through the dryer first. Five years later, in 1987, Prarthna ji was in Sidhabari for a jnana yagna. But she was in an unusual dilemma, battling a crisis in her head.

Prarthna nursed a feeling that she had blundered in her sadhana and consequently, was unwilling to stand before Gurudev, or be seen by him. So daily she would slip into the yagnashala unnoticed (or so she allowed herself to believe), and made her exit too as quietly. Naturally, she did not go up to Gurudev or prostrate to him or even stand up to be noticed and offer the long distance pranaam. None of that. She was grappling with a huge inner turbulence.

"Because I felt I had fallen in my sadhana. Also it always worked like that. If you had done any wrong, you could not near him. Worse, you also did not want to be near him because you knew that he knew what was going on in your mind!" says Prarthna ji eloquently.

The satsang hall in Sidhabari had three doors. Gurudev used the central one both for entrance and exit. Prarthna ji who had always sat in the first row for every of his talks and camps, had chosen to be hidden at this one. "Because I had guilt within, I sat in the last row. After the satsang, Gurudev would offer obeisances to his guru (Swami Tapovanam) then greet the people who prostrated even as he walked out of the satsang hall, blessing them each with so much love.

"This was when I would beat a hasty retreat and disappear. I would run out from the left door and head straight for my room. I simply did not want to be near him," says Prarthna ji.



So on this given day that we talk about, she did likewise - made a hasty exit from the left door. This door had steps leading down and thence she would run. Just as she exited the door, a lady stopped her. Holding her hand with the greatest love she greeted her with great joy and surprise -- all so unwanted now.

Prarthna was desolate, and she weakly tried to buy her way out of the encounter. The lady left but those few moments were expensive. By now she was at the head of the stairs, ready to sprint down. Prarthna looked left and right to see if Gurudev had not left the satsang hall already. Then she turned to begin her race down, when she froze. There he stood at the foot of the stairs looking straight at her.

Prarthna found her eyes transfixed too and unable to even blink let alone shift her gaze, when all too soon he said, "Oh my dear child! Come .... come... where have you been?"

Now in Prarthna ji's words: "I ran down and touched his feet, so overcome! He simply and quietly embraced me tightly and said, 'Never mind, never mind ... it happens! And where will you fall? From His shoulder into His lap!'

"My eyes were filling with tears and I could no more see the way. He led me and we walked together, his arm around me, my arm also around him.



Prarthna ji Today

"Later I thought about his words. That meant I would never leave Him! And he had not admonished me or reprimanded me for not coming to greet him. Instead he had said, "I know why you have not been coming. Every sadhak has a fall. Sadhana is not smooth. But the Lord protects. Don't leave Him because you did wrong. It never matters. A sadhak falls, he also rises. The Lord protects him. You just keep clinging to Him ...!"

"How much he has taught us, every action, every word, every glance, taught, loved, gave, showered, protected, guided, held us in place. Such little-little things he taught us, He looked after our physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, moral, spiritual, financial, --- every aspect there was to us!"

How can we stay apart from him!

23. THE LADY WHO COULD NOT SPEAK IN PUBLIC

30-05-2015

Vibhuti Shah is an acharya with Chinmaya Mission - Trichy.



Smt. Vibhuti-Shah - today

1987 - Kathopanishad Camp in Bangalore. Smt. Vibhuti Shah was attending this camp. At the end of the camp, the organisers asked for feedback. Gurudev was handing out the prasad pustikas himself and Vibhuti ji received hers. Faced with the prospect of giving feedback, she was disconcerted. How was she to even talk? She had never done so! For Vibhuti ji was a mild mannered, quiet person. Unsure, uncertain and anxious, she spoke at last. As she did, Gurudev watched her very keenly, hearing every word.

"From that day, I began talking more readily in public ... just like that!" says Vibhuti ji.

This thread runs commonly in the stories of many devotees. A turning point, a transformative moment. And they retain that memory and realisation distinctly to this day. But for Vibhuti ji, it was only the beginning.

"That day Gurudev said go out and share what you have learnt today, that is the best gurudakshina! I said, Swamiji, I don't know anything! How can I go teach? But Gurudev said, 'You know more than them!' "



Serving Gurudev 1978

Vibhuti ji then started a Bal Vihar in Trichinapally. That one, became two, became three ... Soon, she had one Bal Vihar Class everyday in different parts of this little province. She wrote to Gurudev to share this. His reply? " You can do more!" Soon she was teaching two classes per day and before long was conducting 13 Bal Vihar classes per week.

But Vibhuti ji's family had known Gurudev since 1976. He held a yagna in Trichy every alternate year and always stayed at the house of her brother-in-law, Deepak bhai. Those days Vibhuti ji does not recall having any great devotion or love. She did what she was told, serving all visitors as a good daughter-in-law would. But unusually Gurudev always wrote to her sharing with her where he was, what camp, which text... 'I am in Madurai, or Erode or Karur, or Salem...' and he would say, 'Come and see me.'

Says Vibhuti ji, "I had two small children, leaving them and going anywhere was out of the question. I would blandly reply and say I cannot come. Finally in 1989 I left my children with family and went to see Gurudev at Erode or Karur - not sure. He refused to let me leave! "You cannot go back, you stay here.." I said Swamiji I have not brought any clothes, and I have left my children and come!"



Pada-Pooja at their new home - Vibhuti ji and her husband

But he would not hear anything. He said, "Clothes? You can borrow your co-sister's clothes. And if your children lose 1 or 2 kilos in your absence, no problem!"

During that stay, Vibhuti ji had some unusual and unexpected experiences. "Those few days I stayed there I began to see him as Krishna. All the time, all the time, not Swami Chinmayananda. Wherever he moved, whatever he did, I was seeing Krishna..... and Krishna was our family deity. That changed my life once again. "



First-visit-Sidhabari---1987-Vibhuti-ji-second-on-Gurudev's-right

On the persistence of Thangam Warrier from Coimbatore, Vibhuti ji went to Sidhabari. "When I reached the place, Gurudev was standing out in the open. He saw me as I entered and said, 'So finally you reached here? !' He was truly very happy."

Going to Sidhabari was transformational, she says. After Sidhabari her devotion for Gurudev increased significantly.

"He was working through me; He made me his instrument from that day! After that day, my life was for Gurudev. My life existed for Gurudev. There was hardly anything of 'Me' in there."

From a reluctant mother just a few years ago who resisted staying back to enjoy the camp, Vibhuti ji was now eager and hungry to study more, serve more, do more for Gurudev. She then wanted to enrol for the two-year Vedanta Course at Powai but

Gurudev told her 'Not now; complete your duties, and you have a lot of them!"



We stand as a family ... Vibhuti ji, husband and sons and Gurudev.

In a letter he would write specifically to her, from Manchester, " At the present age and state of life, as mother and wife, Lord has given you a set of duties. Do them efficiently, joyously, with an abandon — because you are doing it all for Him as He wishes. When once the children have grown up to be of their own, suddenly you will discover a burst of spiritual hunger. ..."

And that happened.



After-the-Upanayanam-of-her-son---Sriram-on-Gurudev's-lap

After Gurudev's mahasamadhi Vibhuti ji wanted to foster the Gita like Gurudev did. And she wanted to work like him. Her passion to teach and spread Gurudev's messages was overwhelming her. She recalls, "Imagine, all I had as training was one Dharma Sevak Course. Where did all the ability to do yagnas come from? Gurudev!"

From power to power she went on encouraged by senior Swamijis. The burst of spiritual hunger remains unabated. Today Vibhuti ji teaches at Trichy. Her Upanishad camps at CIF are widely attended. And her urge to teach goes on and on.

This is the lady who could not speak in public. And now, that is all she does. For Gurudev.

24. *Entey Moley..*!

31-05-2015

Indu Ajay Kumar is the daughter of Smt Shanta and Shri Balakrishnan, a very dear and very close associate of Gurudev and the first Chief Sevak of CIF. The beauty of devotees like him is available to us through their children who have had a front row view - sound, light, action and all! Balakrishnan ji is one of Gurudev's trimurtis (the other two being Shri. KK Rajan and Shri Marar - all three were keenly involved in establishing CIF with Gurudev!)



Balakrishnan ji, Shanta ji, Indu and Subodh

In 1971, Balakrishnan ji was an electrical engineer, with the Ministry of Electricity & Water, Kuwait. A man given to logic and reason, hence barely any emotion, Balakrishnan ji was never known to concern himself with saints and swamis.

One day a friend called to say that a swami by name Swami Chinmayananda was coming for a 7-day yagna; could Balakrishnan ji take charge of the sound and lights for that event at the Indian Embassy?

For Balakrishnan ji it was one more event to help out with. For Shanta ji, it was a distinct bell ringing in her head. Yes, she had heard Swami Chinmayananda's discourses while studying in Kerala! She was naturally delighted. But Balakrishnan ji was unmoved. He was concerned with the sound system, thereafter he would have nothing to do with Swami or anyone.

On the day of the yagna Balakrishnan ji went to the Embassy ensured all systems were in place and was about to leave, when Gurudev entered. And within seconds, he started his talk — for he was never known to linger and waste time.

Balakrishnan ji just sat on.

That was day one.



My yearly hug continued

The next evening when it was close to yagna time, he told Shanta ji, "Come, let's go .." Shanta ji was perplexed. What was he saying? "Where to?" she asked. And Balakrishnan ji said, "I need to check the sound system to be sure."

Shanta ji knew it was not the sound system. "I think dad became Gurudev's disciple right from the first day!" says Indu, Balakrishnan ji's daughter.

But that discipleship was not going to come without some 'real' experience to hold it in place.

On the last day of the yagna everyone went to Chander Gurbaxani's home to meet Gurudev. Shanta ji asked her husband, "Would you like to meet Swamiji before he leaves Kuwait?" Neither a yes nor a 'No', but he went along. "As they were entering Gurbax Uncle's house," narrates Indu, "dad saw many people prostrating. He whispered to amma, "I am not touching his feet ... I only came to meet him."

Imagine his shock, when as soon as everyone sat, Gurudev gave a talk on the importance of prostration! Balakrishnan ji was stunned. They had been far away from the crowd, he could not have heard them ... then?



Paduka-Pooja

Slowly the coins began to slide into the slot. Balakrishnan ji began to see method in what he had seen as madness all along.

In Kuwait it was not known as Chinmaya Mission but CFK or Chimaya Family Kuwait. Soon the CFK study classes began to happen at Shanta and Balakrishnan ji's home. Says Indu, who was all of 5 years of age, " I would sit with them and before long fall asleep on amma's lap, waking up when the class ended, exactly when they began to chant the Pledge!"

On 15th December, 1973, her younger brother was born. On 26th December (just 11 days later) Gurudev came for a yagna and was hosted by Chander and Rukma Gurbaxani. "Dad went to see Gurudev but Gurudev's eyes searched for amma," says Indu. " Where is Shanta?" he asked. Very inhibitedly Balakrishnan ji said, "Swamiji she has just delivered ..."

Gurudev stood up that very instant. "I want to see the baby!" he declared most resolute. Balakrishnan ji was very confused. The baby was barely 11 days old, per tradition neither mother nor baby were permitted to socialise. What was he to do? Anyway, he sat Gurudev in the car and brought him home. But not before he had silently asked Shri Gurbaxani to call Shanta ji and warn her.



At the dining-table

When Balakrishnan ji opened the door to his house, Gurudev made a most dramatic entry. Stepping in with great strides he called out boisterously, "Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Where is Shanta? Call her here!"

In Indu's words, "Amma was petrified. In Kerala a woman who has just delivered a baby does not go before a Swami. But Gurudev was Gurudev after all! She came out most timidly. Seeing her Gurudev said, 'Where is the baby? I came to see the baby!'

"Amma said, 'But Swamiji he is only 11 days old!' There was no appeasing Gurudev. So amma brought the baby out and placed him on Gurudev's lap. Gurudev said bring me kumkum, get me akshadai (turmeric-ghee treated rice for blessing) ... then looking at my parents, he asked, 'What is the elder son's name?'"



Gurudev with his Hanuman

Balakrishnan ji already had 2 sons and a daughter. So now he said to Gurudev,

"Pramod."

Gurudev asked, "And the second is called?"

Balakrishnan ji said, "Ravi."

"OK, my daughter is Indu, I know, OK, this is number four, OK," and he looked at both and said, "You started with Pramod, this is Subodh (discrimination, understanding)— and you will end with Subodh!"

From 1977, Gurudev stayed at Balakishnan ji's home when he visited Kuwait. "Dad was his Hanuman," says Indu, echoing the thoughts of many who had seen Balakrishnan ji serve Gurudev. "For him Swamiji was everything."

In later years, the duty of taking the early morning coffee to Gurudev was assigned to Indu. But this was too much for Gurudev woke up at 3 am and his coffee time was 4 a.m.



Yagna-at-Tripunithura

Indu was in the 8th grade then. "It was not about the 4 a.m," says Indu, "It was also that the coffee needed to be piping hot and there was a little drama that would get played at that hour!

" So what would happen was I would have to walk ultra carefully with a cup of piping hot coffee at a bit before 4 am so that I was in his room at 4 a.m. Between 3 am and 4 a.m. it appears Gurudev wrote all his mails. They were all handwritten, fitted neatly into envelopes duly addressed in his own hand, and placed on the carpet in neat piles - one for U.S., one for U.K., one for India, one for Singapore and Far East ... bundles of papers but neatly organised. All this, envelopes included, by 4 a.m, written in just one hour.

"When I walk in, the drama would begin. First he would look at me, his eyes a packet of mischief; then he would grin and say, "Ah there you are!" then smack his

lips, make funny noises, click his fingers and there would be one letter yet in his hand which he would flick at me. Sure enough it would fall to the ground as would my heart which I was anyway holding in my mouth. Now the floor is already covered with letter piles, this new one is lying right on my path, I cannot step on it, yet I have to weave my way in the maze of letters, reach his desk WITHOUT SPILLING THE COFFEE!



And His Sabari

"And as I would gingerly walk the length of the room, he would grab more paper and crushing them, throw them at me. I would dodge the papers, half delighted, half giggling, half frightened to death, half laughing and nearly ready to cry.

"It was a game. He did it for my joy... My success was to bring the piping hot coffee to his table without spilling even a drop on the saucer. And once I place it on his table, he would give me a big hug! All that game of dodging was reee-alllly worth it!"

Indu remembers his penchant for perfect timing. "He would first arm himself with all data - how long does it take to a given destination (that he was scheduled to reach). Then he planned his departure from home. If he reached the destination even 2 minutes sooner, he would remain seated in the car. Then at the dot of 6.30, not a second more or less, he would be on the stage and in a second his voice would boom, "Sri Krishna said ..." and he would pick up exactly, exactly exactly where he had left off the previous day!"

She was his 'ente moley' - my daughter, a title Indu holds close to her heart. "I always believed he was mine and mine alone. It was not easy knowing that there were thousands who thought likewise!" she says.



CIF-inauguration

When she was joining university in Chennai, Gurudev told Balakrishnan ji, "Let her go, Leela (Nambiar) is there." And to Indu who had gained admission into a hostel, he slipped in a sound advice, "When you need a nice oil bath (a staple of Kerala lifestyle) go to Leela's house and have a good oil bath there!"

Gurudev's attention on Indu was specific as he wrote to Shanta ji, "Don't worry about your boys; they will find life partners. But look out for the girl.."

Some years later when she was married, Indu came home to Tripunithra for Gurudev's Yagna. Recalls Indu, "At the breakfast table He looked at me piercingly with those all seeing eyes and asked me in Malayalam... “Pregnant aano?” meaning “Are you pregnant?”



Holding my son Abhinav

I replied “Aane Swamiji” which means yes. But “Aane” also means 'male' in Malayalam. Gurudev then just burst out laughing, shaking his whole upper body looked at me and mother in turns, proclaiming loudly, "Aane!” emphasising each syllable.

"Amma understood — it would be a boy! And it was . Abhinav was born soon after."

In 1992 Indu went with her baby to meet Gurudev in London, at Laju Chanrai's residence. Gurudev's health was delicate then, and her baby was heavy. But seeing the little baby, he washed his hands and carried the little boy and raised him right over his head, even as she protested. Calling out to Anjali Singh, he said, "Anjali, take a picture and send it to the grandfather!"



Shanta ji on Gurudev's right, Balakrishnan ji to his left, with Anjali Singh

Grandfather Balakrishnan suffered Gurudev's mahasamadhi rather personally. After a long period in a shell, he resumed his life, living as Gurudev had taught him, until he departed six years later. "In 2012, amma suffered a stroke," says Indu. " She woke up early one morning with a smile on her face and told me happily ‘I saw Papa just now...he was calling me and saying..come come...and just behind him Gurudev was standing, smiling and with his hand showing ...come on ..mathi mathi !’(meaning 'enough, enough').

The very next morning, 7th February 2012, they truly did come for her...."

Indu's memories are rich as only a child's can be — from the love in his hugs, to the fragrance of bhasmam that he exuded, to the mischief in his eyes, to the 'ente-moley' preceding the hug. She has grown up from the age of 5 watching Gurudev's love and care for her parents, knowing he was entirely hers ....

25. When Divinity Stood Between North and South

01-06-2015

Jyoti Raj is a devotee of Gurudev and currently lives with her family in Auckland, New Zealand.

Jyoti was a little girl in Mumbai when her father Shri Gopalkrishna Shetty was called to the Powai Ashram to attend to the typewriters. Mr. Shetty worked at Godrej & Boyce and his boss was one G.B. Bhatia a devotee of Gurudev's. So when the Ashram typewriters troubled, Bhatia ji requested Shri Shetty to come take a look.



Tell them I also stood between the two of you

What a grand suggestion, for what happened was little Jyoti tagged along since these visits were weekends. And Mr. Shetty got drawn to Swami Chinmayananda and his talks now and then. Later, as Jyoti entered the terrible teens, she stopped visiting Powai.

Her association was to be renewed much later in 1985 when Swami Tejomayananda began to take Ramayana classes in Mulund, Mumbai and Shri Shetty got hooked to these classes. One day he told his daughter, "Come and listen, you might like it ..." Ramayan, Swami Tejomayananda and soon Sandeepany Sadhanalaya Powai. Jyoti began visiting Powai every weekend.

Jyoti started working and when Guruji began taking Bhagvad Geeta classes at Garden Crest - Khar, Mumbai, Jyoti got her boss interested in the talks and soon he began to accompany her too. A year later, Kishan Raj - the boss, mustered courage and went up to Sw. Tejomayananda to ask him if he would take Raj's proposal of marriage to Jyoti!

Such unusual and sweet events dot the Mission and these events become conduits

for great bhakti. Now while Jyoti agreed, she and Raj were from different communities - as apart as North and South. The parents were supportive but anxious but they went ahead with the wedding, albeit unhappily. When Jyoti and Raj went to invite Gurudev for the wedding with the invitation card, Gurudev laughed his famous laughter. Looking at both of them and the card he said, "Seems like there is a problem!" Gurudev just knew ...



Eyes only for Gurudev ... After the Mastakabhishekam

Then standing up, he went and stood between both them and said eloquently, "Now go tell your parents I have also stood between the two of you," he said playing with the pun. Gurudev had replaced the obstacles! There was nothing to worry over now!

Time passed and when Jyoti was expecting her first child, Thangam Varier who fussed a lot over her and adored her as her own child, told Jyoti , 'Take some home made butter and request Pujya Gurudev to bless the womb. He will do the rest." This was one of the 16 samskaras of Indian tradition that cover the entire life span of a person. [It appears Gurudev has perofrmed this samskara for many of the Mission babies so that there is a group called 'Gurudev's butter babies'.]

Now in Jyoti's words, "When Pujya Gurudev came to Powai on his next visit I asked him if he would feed me the butter. And in his booming voice he said, 'Of course!' and gently told me to come early the next morning to the temple. Next morning in the presence of Jagadeeshwara, he took the butter in one hand, and covering it with the other, he closed his eyes and divinised it.

"This blessed butter, he lovingly fed to me with his hand! . Then he placed his right hand on the womb and blessed the baby.



Vidyarambham - Gurudev anointing Daivik at Kamala Hall, Sidhabari

"After Daivik was born and I had to do the visit to the temple after 40 days I could not believe my luck that Pujya Gurudev would be at the Powai ashram. But there was a huge wedding at the ashram. The vast family were waiting outside his bedroom to take him to the mandir. [His bedroom led to his office whose main door led outside.] I too tried to find a spot for myself but the jostling was too much. Shivramji saw that and I will never forget how he guided me. Shivramji gave me a spot near Gurudev's office door. "Stand here. Then see what happens,] " he said wisely. Clearly he knew what Gurudev would do.

Gurudev came out and saw me. Instantly he put out both hands .... I gave him the baby. It was a magical moment as Gurudev bent over the little bundle and whispered great mystical words into little Daivik's ears!"

"In December of 1990, we moved to Nairobi, Kenya. In Feb 1991 Pujya Gurudev made his third visit to Nairobi. I could not believe my luck. This was a week of pure bliss and I had no idea what was in store for me.

"Before he came to Nairobi, Gurudev had been unwell and he was recuperating at Thangam amma's home in Coimbatore. Thangam amma must have told him about me especially since he was coming to Nairobi. It was Gurudev's 3rd visit. He was so unwell that he was not supposed to climb even one stair. On the first day of the talk he sat on a chair below the stage as he was not allowed to climb. He looked so pale I broke down. That day I think he sensed the audience could not see him where he sat. So next day he insisted on climbing the stage. All this is heartbreaking.



Vidyarambham - Gurudev writing Om on Daivik's tongue

"On the last day of the yagna after the samashti bhiksha, there were these two people who asked Gurudev when the Bal Vihar would start. Apparently they had been asking for long, to start a study group and Bal Vihar in Nairobi. Gurudev had not given permission until then. They repeated their request on the last day and he pointed out to me and said this lady will start the Bala Vihar and study group. I was stunned, speechless. I had been attending classes, yagnas, all that. But never had I thought about conducting classes. I went to Gurudev and told him my

confusion but he said, "Start with 'I Love You'" That was even more confusing. 'I Love You' is a set of letters to Bal Vihar children. How could that become Study Group text?

But once I started the Study Group, I realized how deep it was. And this: Gurudev had chosen the text to make it easy for me and simultaneously create a training platform for my growth into this new portfolio! 'I Love You' gave me the foundation."

From Dehradun, Gurudev wrote to Jyoti to reconfirm the BV plan and to suggest names of people she should take help from. (See letter image)

Gurudev's fondness for Daivik was one thing and Daivik's fondness for Gurudev was another. In 1992 Jyoti had the fortune to attend the Vivekchoodamani camp in Sidhabari and the Hanuman Mastakabhishekam. She had taken little Daivik along as her husband had just moved location to Dar-e-salam and needed 6 months to settle in. One day she says, Daivik took ill and she was unable to attend class. Gurudev asked one of the devotees to take a box of chocolates to Jyoti for Daivik. The devotee said she did not know who Jyoti was. And Gurudev's reply? The only mother with long hair!

"The next day I remember looking around at all the mothers at the camp to validate Gurudev's description," says Jyoti. "I realised how perfect his observation was, not to mention how amazing!" These little things havae always left deep impressions in devotees.

For example, during the paduka pooja ta the same camp, Daivik was very restive so that Jyoti had to keep watch over him by the door. "And every day after the puja as his wheel chair was rolled out Pujya Gurudev would hand me a coin since he knew I missed the opportunity to catch the coins that he would throw and devotees would rush to grab!" How he observed, and gave his all to every devotee is always fascinating.

Jyoti then requested Gurudev to perform Daivik's vidyarambham. Gurudev said ‘not at the temple but at the Kamla hall after the pran prathista of the beautiful idol of Lord Krishna’. That amazing day first the pran pratishtha was done and then Gurudev called Jyoti and the little boy. Narrates Jyoti, "He made me write Om on a rice plate holding Daivik's hand. Then with my gold ring dipped in honey he wrote Om on Daivik's tongue. Daivik absolutely adored Gurudev and that was only why he let him do that!"

August 1993 Sw. Swaroopananda was with Jyoti's family in Daresalaam. It seemed his yagna was not destined to happen for both the first day and the secnd day there were untold distrubances and sound system failures, as if the talks should not happen. Daivik who was 3 by then, kept telling Swami Swaroopananda, ' I want to go to Sidhabari with you.' He said this again and again. Swamiji also said ok to appease the child. The next morning, ie 4th morning Daivik woke up at 3 am and told Jyoti, 'Come, come we are going to the airport.' "I shushed him and put him back to sleep," says Jyoti. " At 5 am the phone rang to tell us that Gurudev had attained mahasamadhi.

"That afternoon Swamiji and I came to Delhi with Daivik, from where we left for Sidhabari. He kept asking for Gurudev. Once he saw Gurudev seated in Kamala Hall, his beard moving in the breeze, he quietened .....

26. *Ramachandra mama bandho, ... daya sindho!*

02-06-2015

'Geetha Miss' as she is popularly known to most in Srirangam has been teaching at Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Srirangam, Trichy - since 1982. Many teachers like Geetha Miss who were 'brought up' by Gurudev owe great allegiance to him.

Geetha Parathasarathy is almost synonymous with CVS Srirangam. Her every breath is devoted to the school which she sees as Gurudev himself. Before CVS she was teaching at another school where she had made her terms of reference clear - 'When I have nothing to do I will read Chinmaya books and you will not mind!' And the headmistress of that school consented.

At that time Deepak bhai (another extremely ardent follower of Gurudev, brother-in-law of Smt. Vibhuti Shah, story 22) had become the secretary of CM Trichy. Geetha Miss is all praise for his service to Gurudev and the Mission, "He would go to any extent to introduce the Mission to people and people to the Mission." That was how she moved to CVS when it was just an idea. She, Deepakbhai, Bhanu Miss and M. Lalitha were in the yuva kendra and they worked together on the CVS in Trichy.

Once, Gurudev had gone to Trichy to inaugurate a jewellery shop owned by Deepak bhai . The inauguration was fixed for 1st January and the muhurtham (auspicious hour) was as early as 6 am..



Geetha and Radha Miss with Gurudev

Now inauguration of jewellery shop is one reason. But for everyone whether connected with jewellery or not, the fun value is seeing Gurudev, being with him, hearing him and grab those flowers and fruit he might throw at you.

Ms. Geetha Parathasarathy, headmistress of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya Srirangam, saw all this as one more rare opportunity to be in the Presence. She gathered her teachers and they agreed they would wake up early and make the distance to Deepakbhai's house in Collector's Road, Trichy and after that Deepak bhai would take them to his shop.

To reach Deepak bhai's house the teachers had to change two buses. "But after we got off the first bus, we could not get the 2nd bus," says Geetha Miss. "So we hired two auto rickshaws and stuffed ourselves in the autos ... and in our excitement," she pauses now, a light laughter entering her voice, "we began chanting ! Even now I can picturise that and even now I find it very thrilling!"

Geetha Miss as everyone in Srirangam knows her, has a photographic memory. And a perennial hint of joy in her voice. So when she recollects an event that happened 25 years ago, it seems as if it is going on right there to see. Hear her, "We were so excited to meet Gurudev, we were anxious that we would reach late and miss Gurudev! So we started chanting in the auto." At 5.15 am or so, the temple city of Srirangam was coming awake to their light singing.



Geetha Miss with Pujya Guruji

The tedium in changing buses, not getting a bus, then looking for an auto at that hour, all this convinced her that Gurudev would have left for the inauguration. For they had been delayed by all that. It was with this trepidation that they entered Deepakbhai's residence.

But Gurudev was there! Even as they trooped in quietly, Gurudev slowly walked in and sat slowly on a chair as if he was waiting for someone... The teachers stood there in pin drop silence watching the most happy vision before them and unwittingly they broke into a light lilting chant right there: Ramachandra Raghuveera Ramdhoota maam paahi,Ramachandra Mama Bandho Ramachandra Daya Sindho...

Glory to Lord Rama, the hero of the Raghu dynasty. He is our very own relative, the sea of mercy and compassion. Sing the glory of Lord Rama!

The scene can only be imagined. "We were so excited we kept on singing

continuously...and Deepak ji also urged us to continue," says Geetha Miss. "We could not make out whether we are standing or sitting, chanting ... Gurudev was nodding and taking in all our chanting, even nodding to our bad singing .. . but our voices would not stop, just seeing him was such joy, such great happiness!"



Geetha & Radha Miss (with backs to camera) welcoming Gurudev

At that precise moment, Deepka ji's daughter Preeti came down with a string of jasmine flowers (note: Gurudev's most joy giving favorite flower is the jasmine!) and she offered it at Gurudev's feet. That was also when the teachers' song ended. At this point Deepak ji said, "Swamiji shall we start for the shop?"

Geetha Miss says, "Swamiji got up and took the string of jasmine and threw it at me. I caught it ! Then they all started for the shop and the inauguration ceremony took place."

Did she think she was somehow special or chosen to have the flowers land on her? "I don't know... we are all too small to understand many things. Then I was in my 20s, I could not have had the subtlety to understand the greatness of the Guru's actions ... today after so many years I feel the moment very much... it moves me."

Then completely seized by the memory, she seemed to have lapsed into deep

reflection, and she said, "We were thinking of him all the time (reference is to their early morning auto ride) and so deeply too, from the time we left our homes (in Srirangam) in the morning. Through our travel we were revelling in the whole joy of meeting him soon. It took us more than 30 minutes to get there ..."

That means for 30 minutes they were revelling intensely! Geetha Miss adds, "When you devotedly think of Gurudev, wherever he is, he is definitely able to hear and understand ... he knows your heart. That was how he waited for all of us to reach. Otherwise Swamiji is so punctual, you can set your clock by his movements! We were so petrified that he would have left. But he created that situation and increased our desire to see him...!

"If seen from the vyaavaharik (transactional) standpoint, then only bus was not there. But at an adhyatmik level he made two things happen: a) he wanted to increase our desire for him b) he created the bus situation and the delay so that we would yearn more and more. Only when we have that yearning can the Guru give us, Guru's prasad can be received only when we have that much yearning. So he made that yearning take place. The bus not being there was just a situation to cause the yearning..! His leela!"

Geetha Miss is a teacher by nature. And it is this that underlines all that she does. The presence of Gurudev has been more intense at the Vidyalaya for another reason: Geetha Miss' and her sister Radha Miss' manner of teaching. Celebrating Gurudev's birthday is a big event at CVS Srirangam. She makes them all sense he is there amongst them. That is the reality within which she works.

And the students also treat the day as such. Likewise she emphasises when Guru should be given importance like Guru Purnima. Sharing her ethos on this is her sister Radha Miss, also a teacher at CVS Srirangam and the following dramatisation is entirely her handiwork.

The CVS Srirangam has linked all classrooms via an intercom system to enable mass announcement or talk. On Gurudev's birthday for instance Radha Miss would tell the students "Ok Gurudev is coming from Block A to Block B now; he is moving to Block C ... oh this class has been noisy so Gurudev is missing this class, he will go elsewhere...."

Says Geetha Miss, "When we tell them that, he has skipped a class because they were noisy, the whole school would become silent." And since these announcements happen on the intercom, the errant class is known to the whole school. The feel for Gurudev is kept live through stories and anecdotes. Why? "Because for him too we are real...!" she says.



A Gift of love from Gurudev

And how is that? She has a story to back that claim. "One occasion we went to Coimbatore. Mr. Varrier was the President of CM Coimbatore. Whenever Gurudev would come to Coimbatore, he would stay at the Varrier residence. That occasion we took the teachers and went to Coimbatore. We reached very late - the route we had taken was like that. After Gurudev's yagna was over, we went to see him. He had just finished a long yagna and yet his first question was, "Have you finished dinner?"

"We kept quiet. He immediately called Mrs Varier and said, "Make arrangements amma!" Those days Gurudev ate only nuts and pomegranate in the night. While she was preparing, -- all this was kept on the table ready for his consumption. We were all sitting in the front verandah of the house. He did not eat. When the cooking was going on, he called us one by one and gave us the pomegranate and asked us to eat. We didn't know how to tell him 'Swamiji you eat, it is kept for you, our food will come please eat....'; No, we were tongue-tied. We have no courage. He asked us to eat and we ate what he gave us. Very few nuts were left for him and he ate that...The motherly concern and love he showered on us cannot be forgotten... Are we not real for him?"



With students of CVS Srirangam

The next day Gurudev's leela showed his love and respect for teachers. That afternoon, around 3 pm he had go to address the PSG college. Our students those days created the school magazine by hand - no printing. The entire magazine was hand written. I had carried three volumes of the magazine and asked Gurudev to sign it. He began asking about it, discussing it when Varrier arrived to take Gurudev to the college. "Come let us leave for the college," he announced.

Swamiji said, "What about my children? Are they coming with us?"

"Varrier ji said no Swamiji, they are not in this list Meaning - they are not invited.. Swamiji sat down and said, 'Then I am also not coming. If my teachers are not coming, then why me?' See how he felt about us!"

Varrier somehow had to console and cajole him and take him, recounts Geetha Miss. Maybe Swamiji wanted the teachers to listen to his address to the teachers of PSG... ! she muses.

Whatever it was, his heart was with his teachers and the teachers were completely immersed in him.

No wonder then that Gurudev sensed the teachers rushing in buses and autos to reach him. No wonder then he enjoyed their eager earnestness to see him. No wonder then despite being late for the inauguration he sat down to hear their beautiful singing.

No wonder then that Geetha Miss says, "He is real for us!"

27. Why Narayana Moves from Point A to Point B

03-06-2015

(Part One)

Kalidas Narekkat is one of those icons of the Mission who leaves a deep learning wherever he goes. A long time devotee of Gurudev,' Kali', as Gurudev called him with deep affection, he has spent some memorable moments in Gurudev's company, seeking, finding, learning and.... more.

One day a little boy of three went missing in the Guruvayoor Temple in Kerala. They found him sitting on Gurudev's lap eating a banana!

How the life of this jiva would pan out, what he would do, where he would go ... all that lay in its seed. This three-year old would many decades later reason out, "Gurudev is a great ' Jeeva Culturist', He alone knows where the seeds are sown! We grow as he willed and it is His function to culture us. That was exactly how this jiva had crawled towards Him as an ant toward a drop of honey. Everything continued as His plans. Once you have fallen within His range of vision, you are sucked in!" says Kalidas ji, now many decades after that picnic on Gurudev's lap.

We 'met' Kalidas ji not too long ago (Story # 16: Kudu, kudu) when a brahmacharini sitting far away in a silent small town read about his breathtaking darshan of Swami Tapovanam in Uttarkasi followed soon after by a great satsang with a laughing Gurudev --- a satsang that was as breathtaking.

This Kalidasan ji is that Kalidasan ji, as the Theory of Knowledge will say using postulation or arthāpatti. That Kalidas ji was supposed to accompany Pujya Guruji to Ernakulam this year for the Centenary Celebration launch on May 8th.

As it happened a marriage was fixed in the family and Gurudev's Kali found himself in Melbourne, Australia on the 18th of April. It became somewhat evident by then that the trip to Ernakulum could be affected. Knowing Kalidas ji, Pujya Guruji told him he should do what he needed to do - both of them clearly knowing that Gurudev enables many good events and their goodness may not always be apparent at first.

Hence Kalidas ji was not unduly perturbed.

Then he got a call from Chinmaya Sannidhi, Sydney. The local Brahmachari Gopalji conveyed that Swami Swaroopananda would like him to come to the ashram. From the 1st of May to the 7th, Swamiji was taking Aithereyopanishad. The delegates

wanted to know more about Pujya Gurudev because, Swami Swaroopananda quoted his Master in every sentence! Also Swamiji often cited examples in his talk, examples that connected Kalidas ji and Gurudev. Thus it was a great satsang Kalidas ji had for seven days, talking to delegates about the glory of Pujya Gurudev and his experiences with Him!

On the 8th, the great day of Gurudev's birth, when the whole Chinmaya family was in the throes of celebrating the memory of the Guru, Kalidas ji who would have under different circumstances been with Guruji at Ernakulam, found himself hearing from Swami Swaroopananda, "Please perform Gurudev's Paduka pooja today ...!"

And as divinity alone has a way of accomplishing for us, Chinmaya Sannidhi- Sydney, Swami ji and Kalidas ji all three conducted the pooja at the same time that Guruji conducted the paduka pooja in Delhi.

And with that, CBCC was launched in Sydney! This was truly a Chinmaya Leela, to whom neither time nor space had any term of reference. Om Ajaya Namah, One who is never born yet we celebrate your brithday, Om Vibhave Namah! (O All-pervading One - yet we think of you as being in Delhi and in Sydney and ....)

Says Kalidas ji, Gurudev sent him to Australia, like Lord Krishna sent Naradji to Gokul to learn from the Gopis, what real bhakthi is! The reason for the change in plans was now slowly becoming apparent. "He put me 'down under' in Australia so that I could see how much devotion they have for Gurudev, without even having seen Him! How they revelled in Him! The very joy of the name Swami Chinmayananda, He left behind for us! Just the naam was enough to stoke their devotion! They lived in Him! I had to go all the way to Australia to see a Swami, spreading His Swaroop, using the Gurudev style pointer to point the 'pointed' on His famous BMI chart! That was Swami Swaroopananda! This took me back to the 80s and I was reliving my days with Gurudev! I found Gurudev in Swaroopji! The devotees were singing those good old bhajans that I had known a long time back - Aavo Gurudev Darshan deejo, Tum ho Jagat ke Daata Swami, ... refreshing my memories".

Moving to different places comes naturally to Kalidas ji, and uniquely affirmed by his training as an airline purser, too (Gurudev once told him, "You are already a vanaprastha - vaanam is another word for aakash; prastha - prakarshena sthah = well established.) This is how life's blueprint works for us.

"We are placed at different places to serve Him and eventually become one with Him! We do not have any choice!" says Kalidas ji who had rold us about Gurudev the culturist! Instead of becoming a scientist this boy grew up, reached Mumbai and started flying Air India. "I never knew I was a 'kite' in Gurudev's hands," he observes poignantly.

And this kite would only get steadier and steadier, as it flew higher.

Beginning as a flight purser, Kalidas ji feels he was placed in Air India only to serve Him ."Gurudev used to say that I was His 'Travelling Agent'. He always flew Air India to give me a chance to serve Him! Gurudev was the real Maharaja of Air

India. Air India prostrated to Him! Vayudhoot had given me an aircraft with pilots, exclusively for His use. That was His Mahima!"

And how did all this begin?

"One day in 1976, I walked into Sandeepany Powai after a picnic at Powai Lake. It took few weeks to learn that I was at Gurudevs academy! All these happened as if I was in a trance...." says Kalidas ji. But even then, the meeting with the Guru remained elusive. He says, "Whenever I went to meet Gurudev, He will go to His room. He played this hide and seek with me for three years and kindled that fire in such a way that I started reading Kindle Life and other books, as per the prescription, available at the last page of Kindle Life!"

But even so the meeting had not taken place. Until one day flying to Trivandrum enroute to Sabarimala temple, he found Gurudev on board! A seeking heart cannot be reined in. Kalidas ji says, " I went and prostrated to Him. At that very moment I heard the pilot announcing 'We are flying over Guruvayur temple, at 30000 feet! '

Spectacular meetings are destined to happen in spectacular ways alone. " Over the very temple where I met Him when I was three year old," over that very temple he was to prostrate to Narayana. How great is our Gurudev's love for His devotees!

And it continued--- with its gentle lessons to unasked questions that need to be cleared so that the onward journey was rendered possible. Here is how.

Kalidas ji was in London with Gurudev. Gurudev was travelling from London to Mumbai on Air India. Gurudev asked Kalidas ji, 'Can we have a detour to Las Palmas (in Spain)?' The answer can never be 'No' because Kalidas ji knew that for Him to think was to do and so it was already done! His ticket was rerouted via Las Palmas instantly and Gurudev travelled as He wished! And that detour? What was earthshakingly critical to make that detour? Gurudev took that 'detour' to be with one of His 86 year old Amma, just to have a meal with her!

Gurudev is Narayana- no doubt- and Narayana cannot move from point to point (need not move from point to point) because He is all pervading and everywhere already -Sarva Vyapi! Then why an itinerary for Him, he wondered.

Kalidas ji found the answer from within himself: Gurudev's movement is directly proportional to His devotees' punya! If you honestly and sincerely call out to Him He will come!

His thoughts continued .... 'Since Brahman is One without a second, then how I can be different from Gurudev, who is Brahman?! "How can there be a different entity?" says Kalidas ji. " Never! A thought came to me one day: What do I do when Gurudev leaves His mortal body, leaving me high and dry! Everybody will say Gurudev had Mahaasamaadhi and has left. Where can/will He go?"

This was the same time and distance dilemma that had reared its head when Gurudev wanted to eat a meal with an Amma in Las Palmas and when instead of going to Ernakulam with Guruji, Kali was going to Sydney.

"The next day I was catapulted to Delhi, a day before His retreat trip to Uttarakaasi. Since there was no place in the cars, I set out to Uttarkasi a day before, on my own. My companion was the book - 'Wanderings in the Himalayas' - My first trip beyond Haridwar. I enjoyed my journey and on arrival at Uttarakasi, when I was walking up the slope in Ujjaily, I found a sanyasi, and I asked him in my mother tongue Malayalam where is Tapovan Kutia. He replied in Malayalam 'see that brick coloured gate, just enter'! I prostrated to Him and I entered! All doors were open all the way to the kutia and I remember sitting by his bedside looking at the diya! I merged! I was woken up from that rare experience by the care takers and when I went to the satsang hall, I found a picture on the wall — the person who I had taken directions from to enter the brick colored gate, was in that frame! That was Swami Tapovanji! I said to myself 'sukritam sukritam!'

"The next day I met Swami Govindagiri ji. He asked me to go and have Ganga snan and bring some Gangajal in a kalasham, pluck two flowers and go and do the abhishek at Sri Soumya Kasheeswara temple. As I came down the slope, I found Gurudev! I merged! I woke up from that experience, when Gurudev's beard tickled me, I was in His hug!

Gurudev said 'So, you have seen Him!"

No reply.

"That is why I sent you a day before"

Again no words.

"This happens when Brahman rides on your Mind!" He added and explained 'When you subject your limited mind for the unlimited Brahman to ride upon, the limited will become unlimited! The Mind is no more Mind! Never Mind!'

" Then when I could speak I asked Him "Gurudev, when people tell me someday that you too attained Mahasamaadhi and have left, will I be able to see you like I have seen Him? His assured reply: 'Guaranteed, when this happens I will come in front of you kudu kudu kudu!'

"I looked behind to see that His devotes had travelled with Him, carrying the empty kalasham and the flowers that I had intended for the Shivalinga at the Soumya Kasheesha Temple. It appears that when I found Gurudev and he asked "Kali, you have already arrived? " I merged with Him and I did the abhishekam at His Lotus Feet and kept the flowers at His feet and left the kalash there. The abhishekam and archana meant for Sree Soumya Kasheeswara took place at His Lotus Feet! (Later on Gurudev clarified and said that the above act was done in 'Karma Samadhi'!)

"That Soumya Kasheesha is Tapovanji and that Tapovanji is Gurudev!" elaborates Kalidas ji.

"Shree Soumya Kasheesha Maheswaraaya Tasmay Namah Swami Tapovanaya—Tasmay Namah Satguru Chinmayaya! "

Kalidas ji concludes with an entreaty to his mind: Remember, Remember Remember!

Kali's thoughts continue to flow and with great rapidity. We continue tomorrow.

28. Anywhere, Anytime, for the love of Your Lotus Feet

04-06-2015

After yesterday's flow of memories, Kalidas ji has not been able to stem the thoughts flowing.

Kalidas ji's Story Part Two

Bhaktas have a way of seeking the Lord's love and attention and the Lord undoubtedly enjoys this. So it was that Kalidas ji had wormed his way into Gurudev's heart and asked that he be allowed to perform his paada pooja. "Anywhere, anytime, any place!" granted Gurudev unconditionally.

It was verily a boon granted for Kalidas ji and its mahima is seen even today.

Now among the various mortal tags attached to Gurudev was a slew of birthdays, one of which came attached with star and month coordinates. As 'Balan', Gurudev was 'born' on a Pushya (Guru) Nakshathra in the month Mesha, coincided by Sri Rama Navami that year.

In Kerala where he took birth, the tradition is to follow the star birthday. And Gurudev had given his 'Kali' (as He fondly addressed Kalidas ji) the permission to conduct His Paada Pooja, on this particular day, regardless of time and place! Thus Kalidas ji has performed the paada pooja at a variety of locations: the the first class cabin of an Air India flight at high altitude, in cozy caves of Himalayas, under a banyan tree on Jammu-Srinagar highway over looking Vaishno Devi, in deep forest-shrines like Sabarimala, at the palatial homes of many of His devotees -- "many are those divine Sthalas (spots)," says Kalidas ji.

The 1993 birthday celebration of Pujya Gurudev, the last in that body, happened on the Paschim Express between Borivli and Surat in most fantastic manner which must be heard in Kalidas ji's words. "My wife Swarna, brought the bhiksha for Him, onto the train at Borivili and we -- Padmashree of Bangalore, Beena Sutarwala of Ottawa, Canada, Rajbir Singh of Bombay and many others who were accompanying Gurudev to Surat -- conducted His Paadapooja and offered Him bhiksha, on a running train between Borivili (Mumbai) and Surat! We all got a gold coin from Him as prasaad!

"Next day, on Sri Rama Navami day, we returned to Mumbai and arrived at Sandeepany Aashram. A birthday cake was waiting for Him. Naina Daswani, an ananya bhakta of Pujya Gurudev, (who left her body immediately after Gurudev's Mahasamaadhi), was in charge of the birthday celebrations. One single candle was lit and Gurudev was asked to blow....

The more He blew the more it glowed! He just plucked the candle out of the cake

and raised it very high — and then bringing it down, he inverted it and fixed it back into cake, the flame going into the cake. (note: Gurudev did not blow off the candle.) Then He licked His cake- smeared-fingers and said, 'Finger lickin' good!'

"Then He looked at us and said, "April 21 (as per passport), 29th(as per star), May 8th (as per Chinmaya Mission)" --- in a slow manner of listing out the various dates ---"How many birthdays this Swami can have? That itself shows that the Swami is 'Unborn'!" And He laughed gleefully! "

Om Ajaaya Namaha!

"Actually it was as if Gurudev lit the Chinmaya Jyoti Himself that day by raising the candle high up as if again handing over His jyoti for us to be worshipped during and after this year of His centenary celebrations. Om Sathya Sankalpaaya Namaha!"



Taken the day before he handed in his uniform and left for Sidhabari!

Wrapped in the joy of this memory and interpretation, Kalidas ji asks, "If Gurudev is Viswanaathan, the Father and Viswa Dhaathri, the Mother, what more do we children require? Vasudaiva Kutumbakam! He feeds us as much as we can chew and digest!"

And 'Kali uncle', as many call him today, lapses into another memory, "When we used to stand behind Him during a Bhiksha, we hear a sound 'pichku' and without our even realising it, we find He has His fingers in our mouth and that prasaadam (uchishtam) has found its way into us! This is how Brahman plays! It is this that launders our mind very effectively."

"सर्वत: पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखं |

(Sarvada paaneepaadam tatsarvatokshi shiromukham)|

Such a laundered mind, now burrows through the past and pulls out one more memory: the one about the similarity between Gurudev and Swami Vivekananda.

Kalidas ji says, "In many ways Gurudev resembled him — His words, His deeds, His poise,His voice ..... Many wondered 'Was this Yugapurusha Swami Chinmayananda, the Vivekananda of the 20th century? May be!' "

"Incidentally," adds Kalidas ji, "Gurudev was the only inaugural speaker, representing Hindu Religion, to address the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 28th of Aug 1993, commemorating the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's Chicago address! He was also chosen for the Vision 2000 award which was going to be awarded in Washington that year. This is the back ground before His last journey....

"June 8th 1993, was Gurudev's last day in Mumbai. Gurudev asked for a Satsang and it was arranged in the evening just before His flight to the U.S. We were all at the satsang hall at His kutia. Doctors had forbidden Him from talking. Yet, pointing to the Sidhabari Hanumanji sitting over the door in His kutia, He said, "Only that doctor knows, so arrange the satsang!'

And we did. Gurudev came and sat.

Utter silence!

Mrs. Neeru Mehta, another ardent devotee of Gurudev, walked through the aisle, with her daughter. Gurudev opens with, 'My beti, come, come ...' and He raised His hands as if to hug her.

"That gave Neeru amma also a chance to approach Gurudev. The stage was set for a most unusual exchange of words...

"Neeru ji asked, 'Swamiji, can I get you a turban to wear on that occasion, while you address the Parliament?' Gurudev said 'Who told you Vivekanananda had a turban? No no, not a turban; He had an uthareeya and He tied it round and around like this, like this, and threw the rest over his shoulder at his back, like this ...' — and He so beautifully enacted it!

"Then His eyes widened like a lotus petal, and showering that kataaksha at us He spoke:- 'I will blast to the World Congress 'Look at this planet in crisis, come on, rise up, wake up! Uthishtatha Jaagratha Praapya Varaan Nibbhothata -----and I shall quote a lot of Vivekananda and roar like Him and ..... and finally I will

conclude my speech and look behind at the President and say "Did I say anything? The person who spoke had merged with Ramakrishna! " "

29. The Artist's Archana - From Bokaro to Thrissur

05-06-2015

Sidharthan ji is the Manager at the CIF office in Adi Sankara Nilayam. He is an old CM member and great sevak.

It was Sri Gurudev's first Yagna In Bokaro Steel City: Gurudev was walking around the yagnashala, inspecting the arrangements, when he stopped in his tracks. On the stage two men stood with their backs to Him, bent in rapt attention, intently focussed on a painting that they were creating on the stage back drop.

Gurudev went there in tip-toe silence and taking off his footwear, he stepped onto the holy stage and stood watching them for a full 10 minutes. When the secretary, Sri Krishnaswamy came hurriedly wishing to tell the duo that "Gurudev is here", Gurudev stopped him and gestured that they were not to be disturbed!

What a great lesson for the people in power and for respecting the artists for their work!

Throughout this, Sidharthanji and his colleague had not an inkling that they were being watched as they intently shaded a huge artwork of Krishna's Gitopadesam!



Sidharthanji

During this yagna, Sidharthan ji who worked at Bokaro Steel Plant, got the opportunity to stay with Gurudev. The Bokaro Steel Plant authorities had made available a bungalow for Gurudev's stay and the Mission had arranged a few volunteers for his seva. Mother of Sri Vasudevanji, the then Secretary of Jamshedpur CM was specially called to Bokaro as Gurudev had a special liking for her food.

After breakfast, she used to serve fresh juice for Gurudev. On the first day when she had so given him a glass of fresh juice, Gurudev drank half of it and gave the unfinished half to Sidharthan ji. Delighted by his luck, Sidharthanji instantly raised the glass to his mouth when Gurudev said, "Stop!

"Whatever you get, learn to share it!" Sri Gurudev was teaching the youngsters... Vatsala ji and Hema ji, and the other volunteers staying with Sri Gurudev with whom the Nectar as Sidharthan ji calls it, was shared.

It was very hot season. That day when the yagna began, Gurudev's eyes fell on one fan that was not working and one tube light that was flickering. As soon as the talk was over, Gurudev asked for a meeting of Yagna Committee members immediately after dinner. In the meeting Sri Gurudev called out to the person in charge of Yagnasala. Who else but Sidharthan ji!

"I was aware of the perfectionist in Sri Gurudev and hence with great difficulty, I was preparing myself to stand in front of Him" he recounts half laughing. Gurudev said, "Are you not aware of Chinmaya Mission's way of organizing a Yagna? It's perfection and discipline? If people fan themselves with the Gita, how can you expect them to concentrate on my discourses?"

Sidharthanji recalls those days: cyclostyled copies of the Gita were distributed; being slimmer, they lent themselves for fanning as well! Gurudev added, "I am not a saint performing a ritual. I am a professor teaching the student the philosophy of our scriptures. It is a subjective science and I want people to concentrate! That tube light and fan must be repaired and fixed properly before we begin tomorrow's morning class." It was an order ...!

And Sidharthan ji recalls staying up all night to get those fixtures rectified and some more like those.

In 1974 the 3rd National Yagna was held in Jamshedpur and few CM members from Bokaro went to attend. The pandal could seat more than 3000 people. Gurudev was teaching Chapter Three of the Gita in the evening session.

During the intense discourse on Karma Yoga, one elderly gentleman supported by his walking stick, got up to leave the arena. Gurudev noticed it and suddenly stopped his lecture. As the elder began to walk the length of the pandal, every pair of eyes followed him. When the eyes returned to the stage, Gurudev asked, "Are there more

people who do not understand my language and wish to leave? If so, do that now." He continued, his voise more severe now, "I am here to teach you Gita and its in-depth knowledge with its philosophy and I want full attention and high order of discipline."

Gurudev's penchant for strict discipline was famous even then and wherever he went, Gurudev left many lessons in discipline for devotees.

As it was to repeat at the end of the National Yagna. What happened was Gurudev wanted to take the participants on a Pradakshina around yagnashala. ""These were practices of yore and Gurudev wanted to do it at the National Yagna as well," says Siddharthan ji.

Gurudev asked everyone to get up and form a queue. All the participants came forward and the result was a haphazard queue - no shape, no form, and they gathered up in most untidy order. Recounts Sidharthan ji, " Like a military Major, Gurudev came and inspected the queue then he roared 'Is this any way to form a queue? I need a perfect queue. Organise it now.'"

People began to fall in line but not too well yet. For Gurudev remonstrated again "I want an orderly queue" and presently he showed them what 'orderly' was. He instructed that they form the queue height wise. Only then did Gurudev begin the pradakshina of yagnashala with the chanting of the Ram mantra.

Sidharthanji also got a great taste of Gurudev's encouragement and appreciation of sevaks and the love and care he gave to them. When Sidharthanji moved to Salem, he began a Balavihar there in 1977-78 and wrote to tell Gurudev about this. "What a lovely letter he wrote to me!" says Sidharthan ji. Gurudev had said that when he comes to Trichy he wished to meet the Salem team. Sidharthanji had suggested that they would like to start a Chinmaya Mission in Salem.

Now in Sidharthan ji's words, "Gurudev was delighted and asked me to bring everyone to Trichy. IThis was at Deepak Shah ji's residence. When he saw us he was visibly thrilled and said, 'The dynamic people of Salem are here! For a long time I was wishing to start a Mission centre in Salem and now they have done it!' He patted us on the back and we all felt so good. Then suddenly he asked, 'What do you want now?'"

"Impulsively I said, 'Swamiji, your yagna!'

Sidharthanji could not believe what happened next. Instantly Gurudev called out for his itinerary.Going over the dates he struck out one program and said, "Give this to Salem!" and told Shri Chandrashekarji (Coimbatore) and Deepakji to extend all help to this dynamic youngster. Truly Gurudev taught great leadership skills and qualities!

Sidharthan ji was stunned. There were people he knew who waited (even fought) to get a date, any date from Gurudev.

The most memorable episode was in 1986 when Sidharthan ji was serving in Thrissur Chinmaya Mission. The Pope was visiting India and there were a lot of

festivities, talks and conferences and whatnot planned by different Christian groups. The secretary of 'Pope's reception committee' approached Gurudev and requested that he inaugurate the Pope's reception committee of Kerala.

Gurudev accepted the invitation and all hell broke loose. Various Hindu groups protested and objected to his accepting the invitation. But Gurudev was clear: " Once I accept an invitation, I should go, I will go." Some groups got really intense and they said, 'Then you must drive over our dead bodies.'

Gurudev said, "If that is your fate, there is nothing I can do."

Sidharthan ji who had accompanied Gurudev alongwith Atma ji, Marar ji and C.K. Suresh ji, recalls this event most proudly. In his words, "Our Gurudev walked in like a lion, great strides, confident .....' He was on time and many people who had gleaned his precise ways, landed up earlier than scheduled.

"Gurudev said, "I will wait till the welcome address and after that I will talk for 25 minutes and then leave as I have to continue my Geeta session elsewhere.'

"Gurudev said, 'We are ready to welcome the Pope, but we do not need any religious institutions from outside India to come here and teach the Indians their philosophy, because we are already blessed with a rich culture and philosophy of our own.'

"The Pope had spoken (before his flight to India) warmly about Indian heritage which Gurudev made a point to mention and appreciate, but he also pointedly mentioned the role of many overenthusiastic missionaries who had unleashed a spate of conversions in states like Andhra and Orissa. Referring to this Gurudev said, 'You should not indulge in such practices as will create hatred among the citizens and imbalance in society. We are all brothers and sisters and we should continue to live like that.' Gurudev took exactly 25 minutes for his speech!

"The next day the papers were full of his talk. When asked, Gurudev said, "What I spoke is true. What I had to say, I said." Gurudev did not have a problem with people changing their faith, but luring people with gifts to get them to convert, that he disliked and called it wrong.

"Shri Gurudev initiated a Samooha Archana where all sections of Hindus, regardless of caste, would sit together and offer archana. This took place at the Vadakunnathan Temple, Thrissur (a very large Siva Temple), after a month of the Pope's visit. There was a kodi (1 crore or 10 million) archana going on and the committee wanted Gurudev to attend the concluding day. Gurudev made a demand. "I will come if you can organise another kodi archana on the same day.' He said that CM Thrissur should take the responsibility of organising this, and the Chinmaya yuva Kendra has to play a very important role.

"Gurudev was clear about the proficiency of the chanting groups," says Sidharthan ji. He wanted that the participating priests should be able to chant the mantras clearly slowly and loudly. He wanted the yuva kendra members to chant the Shiva Sahasranama on the day. And they did their part very well. He was proud of them.

"Accordingly the yuva Kendra and mission members contacted all the temple authorities and religious organisations in Thrissur district and teams were organised for the event. It was a great event on a very large scale. More than 2500 lamps were collected and more than 10000 people participated in the archana."

"Gurudev closed the event with a talk on the need for unity among Hindus and its various sects in the larger interest of India as a whole.," says Sidharthan ji, happy to have been in the ringside seat.

30. The Girl Who Would Not Dance

06-06-2015

Keshav and Uma's devotion to Gurudev goes far back. While Uma got inducted, so to say, after her marriage to Keshav, his own birth happened on the lap of his father's intense love and worship of Gurudev.

Keshav's father, M.S. Unni Nair, had seen Gurudev in Ernakulam even before Keshav was born. Thereafter Mr. Nair kept trying to visit him, although he was not in touch with the Chinmaya Mission anywhere. And then some years later, when his wife underwent a surgery and was recuperating in a Cochin hospital, across the street from the hospital near the Maharaja College, Gurudev was conducting a yagna. Mr. and Mrs Nair would hear strains of the lecture delivered in impeccable English waft through the air and fall on their ears as prasaadam.



Pada pooja .... to Guru with love - Uma and Keshav (son of Mr. Unni Nair), and Gurudev

Cochin was also where Mr. Unni Nair worked - at the food department of the Government of India. So when a friend offered to pick him up and take him to the talk, Unni Nair readily agreed.

A major setback followed him a few years after the birth of Keshav. The older child, a daughter, aged 7 or so, fell ill and passed away. Overcome by grief, Keshav's mother went into depression, unable to deal with her already weak state post the new baby. This was when Keshav's father willed himself to somehow go and meet Gurudev.

Later he would recount to Keshav, "But once before him, I could not even bring myself to say anything about wife or child, I could not even feel that anything in the world was a problem!" That was the kind of energy he imbibed. When Mr. Unni Nair was transferred to Chennai he began attending study groups and soon became a

sevak himself.

In 1965 Mr. Unni Nair was transferred to Pune. He wrote to Gurudev to share this, adding, " I am new to Pune, I don't know what I am going to do there." Gurudev replied to say, 'don't worry, the Lord is with you, if you are lonely you can start a Mission there.' And via a letter of introduction, Gurudev connected him to Susheela Mudaliar in Pune.

Thus went the life of Unni Nair and his family, including a young Keshav who was then 7 or 8, and grew up under the cooling umbrella of Gurudev and the Chinmaya Mission, studied, evolved and married Uma.



Keshav, Uma, Ashrita - with Gurudev

In 1985, their daughter Ashrita was born. This is that lucky generation that got the best of Gurudev. Ashrita's annaprash was performed by Gurudev at Leela Nambiar's house, in Chennai. Uma recalls mirthfully, "Gurudev was feeding her bits of rice into her tiny mouth and she kept nibbling at his finger. And Gurudev said, 'Don't ever become a glutton, eat only what is enough!' "

What also happened was, as this tiny girl began to walk and talk, everytime he met her, Gurudev would say to her ”You will become a world famous dancer!” Says Uma, "And everytime he met us, he would ask her 'have you started dancing? You have to travel with me around the world!' But Ashrita showed no interest, not even a bit although she went to a class to study dancing.

Uma contnues,"Her first teacher at school did keep saying she can become a great dancer, but, no! Ashrita did not show any interest. We were intrigued, Gurudev had said she would become world famous dancer ...then why no interest?"

The parents did not push and left the Guru's prophecy where it belonged - with their daughter.

In 1993, seemingly his very last bhiksha in Chennai, Gurudev sat at a table in Leela Nambiar's house. He was leaving the next morning for Delhi. That night, Ashrita was pressing Gurudev's feet, sitting at his feet. Presently, Gurudev stood up and gesturing with his finger, he asked her to get up too. Putting out his finger for her

to hold, he said 'Hmmm'' and then he walked across the room to where the wash basin was to wash his hands. Once done, again he put out his hand behind him and said to Ashrita, 'Come with me.'

Ashrita knew he was calling her to the dinner table. She was terrified. Not only was she a poor eater, she also took painfully long to eat. As a result if anyone suggested eating, it rattled the poor child and she had grown to hate eating.



Ashrita with Gurudev - feeding with love

Now in Uma's words, "When Gurudev gave her his hand and asked her to come with him to the table, Ashrita turned to look at me for support. Gurudev said “Come with me; don't look at your mother.” She was more terrified by now. The dinner table that usually had some brahmacharis and other guests was bereft of any company. Only Gurudev and Ashrita. A plate had been served for Gurudev. He added some rice to it and ladled some of these onto Ashrita's plate. And he started eating. But Ashrita, as was wont to happen, started playing with her food.

"Gurudev took a piece of the rice and pushed it lightly into her mouth. Then he turned to me and said 'Why did you say she is not eating? See how she is eating! Feed her with love!' and so saying, he gave her one more mouthful .... then one more... and what do you know, she ended up eating everything on her plate!"

Now Keshav takes over, "Uma came running to me and said get a photograph, get a photograph! She is eating with Gurudev!” I was flustered. I looked around and said how do I take a picture? It was not as simple as that ..

"Dr. Isabel Taylor from Canada was upstairs packing. She was Gurudev's personal physician and was travelling with him. I ran up to her and said I need a favor. She said I am packing. I said yes, but please come soon, my daughter is eating with Gurudev and I need to take a picture!"

To most this would have been the most bizarre exclamation and request. Keshav and Uma's joy was scaling the heavens seeing their daughter eat and better still, with Gurudev feeding her !

Says Keshav, "Isabel took three pictures and they are there on our mantle --- there

was so much love in Gurudev's eyes, just amazing compassion and love!"

Some moments are gifts that only the recipient sees and knows, such as the love in Gurudev's eyes. It was likely HIS gift for Keshav and Uma to know that his love was abundantly showered into their child.

Keshav talks of another great moment in Ashrita's childhood with Gurudev. She was all of 6 and as usual, she was sitting at his feet. Adds Uma, "It was as if her prescribed place! So we got a picture of her - she was holding his feet but looking back. We took it to Gurudev to get it signed by him. He looked at it and said, "See how she is holding my feet but looking away! Attached but in a detached way."

Overwhelming....!

In 1993 Gurudev had a youth camp in Sidhabari. Keshav and Uma decided to go to Sidhabari and be with Gurudev.

Other children were present oo - Nikki Rajbir Singh's son, Padmashree's son Nandu, Ashrita... these kids would hang out in Gurudev's kutiya when he was alone. On one of these occasions Gurudev asked Ashrita, "When are you going to dance for me?"

The comment was not taken casually. The parents went about putting together a dance performance for Gurudev. Says Keshav, "We took one song from the Hari Om Bhajans collection and Uma choreographed a dance with the Dasavataaram , and Ashrita and Nandu danced post dinner. And when he blessed her, Gurudev said again, 'I thought you could only sing. You are going to be a world famous dancer!'

Says Keshav , "We were confused, because this child was not showing any interest. So much so, that her teacher had also stopped teaching her!"

And then it happened. Come 2006, Ashrita out of the heavenly blue went up to Uma and asked if she could, once again, study Kuchipudi - a dance form. Needless to add Uma was stunned. "Talk to my dance teacher, please," said Ashrita.

The master, Jai Kishore Mosalikanti had stopped teaching her because she was disinterested. Uma did not think she should be doing this. So she said to Ashrita, "Very well, if you are serious you will have to go and do the asking."

So Ashrita went but had to talk to the dance teacher's wife Padmavani. She said, "If you really are serious, then I will speak to Master and we will see what to do."

Thereafter there was no looking back. Ashrita put on her dancing bells and began. And how! Her passion for Kuchipudi raged like a fire and she gave in to it completely. So much so that she performed her "Rangapravesam (as the 'arangetram' is called in Kuchipudi) by 2009 at Chinmaya Heritage Centre in Chennai in the presence of Swami Mitrananda and a renowned dancer, Alarmel Valli. This is actually very rare, for a student takes at least 5-6 years to be stage ready.

Ever since, Ashrita has performed to many discerning dance audiences - at the NCPA Mumbai, at the Konarak Dance festival, at the Guruvayur temple, at the Nada Bindu

.... and she continues even as we read this! "Now she is focused on being a professional dancer," say her parents.

Keshav remains intrigued. "All this happened in the last seven years since 2006-07. But he kept telling us this in the first seven years of her life .....! ”

31. BORN AGAIN HINDU ON THE BACK OF A SANKALPA

07-06-2015

Dr. Manoj Khurana's story will instantly hit home with a lot of people who have been where he was: on the fence. It will also go home with people who have the kind of temperament that Manoj ji has. It is a story of perseverance and an ability to 'hear' and then respect the inner voice.

1989-90: Manoj Khurana was a graduate doctor with a renewed interest in Homeopathy as a healing therapy. He had enrolled for a 2-year advanced diploma in Homeopathy residential course at the National Institute of Homeopathy in Kolkata.



Manoj ji (left) with family and Sw. Subodhananda

They were a batch of 25 students from almost every part of India - all doctors but pursuing a post graduate diploma in Homeopathy.

One day as they relaxed between their study hours - exams were near at hand, they spotted an ad in some english newspaper. A Swami Chinmayananda was delivering a talk on Chapter 15 of the Bhagvad Geeta and better still in english. This was sometime in Sept/Oct 1990.

Now we cut to the inner goings on of Dr. Manoj Khurana. He had a be-friended one of the batch mates , a doctor from Kerala, a Christian by pursuit. Both Manoj and the Kerala friend often had intense discussionss on religion, its value, its purpose, its necessity...

Somewhere, somehow, the good man from Kerala (indirectly indicated; never directly) suggested to Manoj that he should consider studying Christianity and practise it.

Dr. Manoj Khurana had pondered on this. He had been seeking a spiritual anchor for a very long time but being a not very vocal person he had not been able to discuss this with anyone with the merit to discuss this. He sought God, he sought that super power that presided over man and all creation - for this was all the definition of God that he had settled for, so far.

A question had arisen in Manoj's head - a man of science and an affirmed believer that every cause had an effect and ran thus in an unbroken chain -- 'If I am born in a hindu family, then there should be some reason for that, if they are the cause and I am in the effect, where is this unbroken chain heading?'

The Kerala friend's gentle suggestion had recently developed a little more muscle and it was now a gentle persistence. And the more Manoj began to feel that he must first read about Hindusim, about which he knew next to nothing.

Away from the friend in his silence Manoj faced a wish in his heart - 'I wish there was some course or talk or comprehensive text that presents to me what this Hinduism is and then I can maybe figure out if I have anything to do with it, if my birth in a hindu home is design or accident....

And that was the day he was also staring at this ad in the english newspaper for a talk by a swami named Chinmayananda.



At the AICHYK Conference at CIF, 1999

In Manoj Khurana's words, "I motivated some of the doctors, come let us go attend this lecture. But the exams were round the corner, everyone was keen to be done with the exams and go home... everyone was focussed. They each presented an argument, the most convincing of them all being the famous Kolkata traffic which would take them two and a half hours to reach the yagnashala. And maybe as much on the way back... and all that would come out of study time."

Friends also made fun of his desire. "What will you do listening to the Gita? You are a doctor!" One by one they all dropped off. The three left at the table were unsure in the face of 22 who had laughed it off. But they decided they would go. Yes all seven days would be suicidal given the exams, the distance, the heat... "Let us go

just for the first day," they agreed.

So there they were on day one at the yagna grounds looking about them at a fantastic crowd. Manoj's heart swelled with a feeling he cannot define. There was definitely something to all this....After the inaugural session and prayers and invocation which had already overwhelmed him, Gurudev began his talk. Says Manoj ji, " I knew nothing about Mission, but his aura was fantastic. As the talk proceeded I decided I would attend one more day whether others came or not."

Funnily all three went the next day.

And then: "We ended up attending all 7 days, we could not resist! But daily we had that doubt rising in our mind, whether to go or not, as exams were near at hand and spending 5 hours on this filled us with a lot of doubts - right or wrong?"

As if all this was not enough they were pushed again. Says Manoj ji: "On the last day of the yagna we came to know, that from the next day another 3-day lecture was starting, "Born Again Hindu"!

Manoj was stunned. Good Lord, this had been the bee buzzing in his head - 'why am I born in a hindu home'. Now it seemed the answer was coming gift wrapped almost! The three men looked at each other as one of them shook his head, "Nahi yaar, I am not in on this," he said.

Only two remained.

"This was at the Sangeeta Kala Akademi auditorium," recalls Manoj ji. "Once again the aura was fantastic. Gurudev began with the last few verses of Geet Ch. XII. ... "

The next day the two of them had left for the lecture on their own. Manoj ji says,"But when we returned the third person who had dropped out, a delhi boy, he was missing in the hostel. We got concerned. When we found him later in the night, it turned out that he too had struggled with the yes-no-yes-no dilemma and had changed his mind and gone to the venue by a different route! Of course in that vast ocean of people we could not have spotted him!

" But those 3 days completely washed and scrubbed my brain. Totally! And I was clear - I must pursue Hinduism.

In 1991 Manoj ji returned to Jaipur his home, his mind soaked with Gurudev. He did regret that he had not been able to meet Gurudev in person. "The first thing I did was subscribe to Tapovan Prasad, the only communication we could ever have with the Mission in those days," he says. "And my subscription continues to this day!" he adds with complete delight.

Those were very difficult days for young professionals. "I had graduated then decided to study further, in 1992 I married, expectations from me soared, I was struggling to establish my practise and then the one thing that broke me was 1993 - Gurudev attained mahasamadhi. It was like the last straw on the camel's back.

" I watched all that on TV and was so extremely devastated. But there was no one to share it with because my family was far far far removed from all things Chinmaya Mission as they had their own pursuit, naturally. I wanted to go to Sidhabari, I was overcome, I was young, and they said, 'Is it necessary for you to go?' And I was unable to go...."

Manoj ji was in a bad state all by himself. His only connection to the Mission was Tapovan Prasad. There was no internet or Whastapp In the midst of so much struggle he came to know about Sw. Subhodananda. He asked Swamiji if there was a Mission Center in Jaipur .... no there was not.

In 1995 once again he came across an ad announcing lectures by Brni Amrita Chaitanya (now Swni Amitananda) in Jaipur. The sun rose again in Manoj ji's heart. " I was so happy. I attended that program," he says reliving that joy.

A lady by the name Mamta Mansingka (now President of CM Jaipur) had invited the brahmacharini in her personal capacity. Her mother was President CM Lucknow. "Mamta ji was kind enough to accompany Brni. Amrita Chaitanya ji to our place for Bhikasha....." says Manoj ji



Dr. Manoj Khurana today

"After hearing Amita ji I felt so happy there was renewed hope in my heart. I said to myself Gurudev has built such great teachers for us. Such a vast institution that goes where people need it ... I was already very desolate after his mahasamadhi, added to that that I wanted to go to Sidhabari but could not, did not... then add to that that I had seen him so closely in Kolkata but could not meet him. After hearing Amita ji I felt calm, that Gurudev continued....

"A ray of hope dawned in me that I will continue getting Gurudev's teachings."

Once Chinmaya Mission Jaipur was set up, Manoj ji began to be associated with it very actively.

In 1996 Manoj ji enrolled for Foundation Vedanta Course. Once he completed, it the desire to go to Sidhabari reared its head with renewed intensity. "My reverence and gratitude for Poojya Gurudev multiplied many times. But convincing family was really tough," he says. As it happened a plan was afoot to go to Vaishno Devi temple. So I said ok come we will go to Vaishno devi and on the way I will stop at Sidhabari!

This was 1997. Manoj had a little son of 3-4 years. Listen to him, "At Pathankot, by chance the bus broke down. Instead of being anxious my wife began to go into raptures over the scenic beauty. She said, 'if we have to come to such a lovely place why did you make a one day program only?' The visit to Sidhabari was thus made even more wonderful. "And my wish to offer my pranaam at Gurudev's mahasamadhi sthal was fulfilled."

Manoj came back and completed his Advanced Vedanta Course with CIF. And today he is studying the Bhagvad Gita Course. What is more, his whole family is involved with the Mission and they have been visiting Sidhabari almost every year.

Lest it be forgotten, the Kerala friend who had started all this, continues to be a great friend of Dr. Manoj Khurana.

32. .....*Now you have come to the Swami !*

08-06-2015

Uma Keshav, her parents and grandparents - going that far - were very dear devotees and followers of Papa Ramdas of Anandashram. From such a devout family when she married Keshav, she was also received into the Chinmaya Family for Keshav was fully immersed in Gurudev then.

For Uma the experience was new, not to mention she was unprepared for this. Not just the marital home was new but now also the focal point of worship!

Naturally one of the first activities post marriage was being taken to Gurudev. She went with the flow uncomplainingly -- mercifully this comes easily to women prepared as they are for change after marriage.



Uma - awe filled, waiting to deserve...

But once her baby was born, a moppet she named Ashrita (see story 30) Uma found the birth of a new feeling inside her, a feeling she could not quite understand. But there it was: she wanted Ashrita to have as much exposure to Gurudev as possible. And she realised that was going to be possible only if she went along with her to spend time with Gurudev!

"But the superlative ecstatic joy that others felt for him, was not happening to me," she says. "Undoubtedly he was an AWESOME person, his demeanour, his manner of speaking... everything. He mesmerised you. But I was not picking it up. But I was amazed at how Ashrita was taking to him. He always called her 'My Child' and she was also drawn to him..."

In 1993 Uma, Keshav (her husband) and Ashrita decided to go to Sidhabari for the

youth camp. They went to Kathmandu first where sadly Uma took fiercely ill. Even so they drove up to Kangra but she was in no position to make it to Sidhabari. So Keshav left her with a friend in Kangra (a devotee of Gurudev) and he went on to Sidhbari.

The next day, Uma felt better enough to go to Sidhabari. When she went to offer her pranaams to Gurudev he asked, "Where were you yesterday? I didn't see you!"

Uma said, " I wasn't feeling well Swamiji..."

In Uma's words, "He looked at me for a few seconds and said, 'You don't have faith in the Swami!'

"I could have died. He likely nailed my malady, but I would never have known." But during the next few days she made it a point to spend time with Gurudev.



Uma with her grandson

It so happened that there was a pada pooja for Gurudev in the offing. Keshav began asking if they could also participate in it. But the pooja had been fixed many months ago... it was not possible to change it. Keshav felt terrible about not having known sooner.

What happened next was enough to astound him. Just before the time for the pada pooja a Mission member came running to him and said, "Oh the person who was to do the pooja is unable to come, do you want to take it?"

Keshav lost speech as it were, struggling with the miracle which he swears was the Guru's compassion. But Uma says, "The only thought I had was, ' am I really worthy of this experience, this miracle?' " Uma was sorely aware of her faith not being full or pure; yet here was Gurudev giving her this opportunity of a lifetime .... "But am I worth it?" she fought with herself.

That the Guru gives you answers, she learnt in the most amazing way. After the pada pooja all of them assembled in Gurudev's kutia. Uma was sitting with her back

to one of the entrances. Presently and without a warning she felt a hand on her head. "I looked up. I saw Gurudev standing there, his hand on my head.... I shot up like an arrow and before I knew it, he put an arm around me, gave me a tight hug and said 'Now you have come to the Swami!'

"I honestly did not know what it meant. I took away the meaning that I should spend as much time as I could with him.

"But we were leaving a day before the camp was getting over. When we went to say our pranaams before leaving, Gurudev was watching a tennis match, a Grand Slam. One question had been bothering me immensely for many months —: Every time Gurudev referred to Ashrita as 'My Child'; it was a special bond he had with her. And she with him. As a mother I wondered if it meant something else - that she would join the Mission as a brahmacharini maybe, or what...?

"I had raised it with Keshav many times and every time he had said, ask Gurudev —But I did not have the nerve. Like if her future held something like that, I would like to know so I could prepare for it. So, that day when we stood before him in his kutia, Keshav said 'ask him what is bothering you so much, ask him. I said No ... .

"And suddenly Gurudev turned to me and said, 'When are you giving me another one?" I was flummoxed, very sure he did not mean what I thought he meant. But he repeated himself. I said I am not planning another one Gurudev. I have this one and she is more than enough for me."

"Gurudev said, 'This child was born to dance, I want another one for me ...for the Mission.' Keshav immediately turned to me and said, 'There! Your question has been answered.'

"Again Gurudev asked, 'Aren't you having another one?' and again I said no Swamiji, she is 8 already, and I cannot go through all that again."

Gurudev was not very happy that they were leaving sooner than the camp was finishing. Bidding them goodbye with a terse 'OK, go,' he summarily ended the meeting.

Four days later, on the 3rd of June, Uma and Keshav received a letter from Gurudev - How the rain had started and the camp ended and he specifically mentioned how happy he was to see Ashrita... and in that letter he also added, "There is greatness her, look after her."

In 1996, Uma completed her 1st level in Reiki under a Master in Bangalore and enrolled for level II. Initiating them with symbols, she then led her group to close their eyes and meditate. But this time she told them to focus deeply without thinking of any person or thing ... 'and you will see your ishta devata,' she had said.

Uma was very sure she would see Lord Ganesha whom she had been worshipping all her life. Presently the Reiki Master told them to prepare to receive their devata by building a worthy place in their minds to receive Him. Uma says, " I visualised a huge palace with a looooong driveway waiting to see my Lord Ganesha. I saw myself

standing a little inside the palace waiting for him. I saw a hug car come into the drive way and stop at the portico. I was not able to see who was inside the car.

"Then the car door opened, a pair of feet stepped out... then when the person came out, I saw Gurudev!!!!!! My heart just stopped. I had not thought of my husband or daughter or anybody! But I was facing Gurudev. My mind replayed one line he had spoken a few years ago, ... Now you have come to the Swami...

"My stomach went into knots. This beautiful palace was barren and I had nothing to offer Gurudev to eat. I was watching all this and I was there too. Gurudev was walking into the palace and I was just standing there transfixed....He was the last person I expected to see. I went to receive him. I made him sit on this magnificent throne and he looked at me with a smile. I said I am sorry Gurudev but I have nothing to offer you.

He said, "But I came only for you not for anything else!" I was saying, Keshav is not here Ashrita is not here... what do I give you? And he said that is ok... I came only for you.

When I came out of the deep meditation, I was wondering if all this had really happened. It was very confusing. Later my Reiki Master asked each of us to name the ishta devata who had come. Everyone was taking names of Shiva and Rama ... and I was not sure if my teacher would even understand my mentioning a seeming human being. When my turn came I slowly said Swami Chinmayananda and my teacher was shocked silly. "GURUDEV??????" she said excitedly.

"I had had enough surprises for one day but she was now adding to it. Her parents, she said, were founder patrons of the Deenabandhu temple in our Mission in Bangalore! Now how would I have expected this! Clearly they were so closely associated with the Mission.

"It was a sense of belonging. I could not believe that I had gone through this experience. That I had been alone with Gurudev and ... I was so incredibly shaken," concludes Uma going back in time reliving her feelings.

Many more amazing events have taken place in the lives of Uma and Keshav. But then devotion is like that.

33. Lazy Meena and the Art Of Respecting Children

09-06-2015

Radha Parthasarathy is a longstanding teacher at Chinmaya Vidyalaya Srirangam.

Radha Miss as she is known at the school, is a keen teacher and her work is directly with the students. Hence what she does, what she hears, what she observes are all always transferred to students and their betterment.

That was how the first thing she observed about Gurudev and cherished so very dearly (the joy in her voice as she narrates something so simple, is almost tangible!) was his punctuality and precision.

The first thing she says therefore is, "He used to be so punctual, that if he was late by even one minute, he would say, 'Sorry I am late by one minute....'. We teachers would be so thrilled!"

When the Vidyalaya opened in 1982, there were many interschool competitions between the school in Srirangam and one in Ayyappa Nagar. And whenever Gurudev visited, the school would request Gurudev to give away the prizes. So Gurudev's close association with children was a given for the teachers at the schools.



Radha Miss with Students and staff

Once something had happened and Gurudev was very angry. Something had gone wrong with the organising of something. That was also the day the school was planning a prize distribution for an interschool event. Radha Miss took all the children and went to Deepakbhai's house - a very sincere and ardent devotee of Gurudev in Trichy. Gurudev often stayed at his home.

In Radha Miss' words, "As we teachers and students waited for Gurudev, Deepakbhai came and said, 'Gurudev is very angry; somehow you must make the children make him come out of this.' Our children were waiting. We started singing Krishna bhajans, slowly, gently, softly. We did not know if Gurudev would come out and

bless the children, meet them or not ..... everything was uncertain.

"Then Gurudev came out and he sat. He sat there and watched the children for sometime and slowly began to talk to them. Before we knew Gurudev was in a great mood, very happy! Then he asked them questions and they answered him. ('Does your teacher beat you?' Children said nice and clear, 'Noooooo'!)

"And in that manner many different little joy-giving things happened. One girl Uma Maheshwari had won some music competition and we told Gurudev about her. Gurudev called her out and asked her to sing, and without hesitation she sang. This also made Gurudev very happy.Then another boy had won a prize for speech competition - he had spoken about Pandit Nehru. Immediately Gurudev asked the boy to narrate what he had spoken and the boy narrated. Gurudev was very happy! He hugged every child."

This narrative of Radha Miss might seem very simplistic, but God lies in the detail.... a detail called joy. Oftentimes it seems that Gurudev's joy is far greater with children than with the grown-ups! That day he revelled in their company and one can almost hear the multiple voices all chirruping like baby birds at dawn, each grabbing Gurudev's attention. Covetable! But what happened next is even more so!

Gurudev had warmed up sufficiently and told them a story about Lazy Meena.

Lazy Meena does not want to do any work. She prays that God must do all her work. She wanted others to do her work. What happened was from the very next day, she began to see that all her work was getting done! She would enter the bathroom, and toothpaste would come to her all squeezed and ready to fall; the tooth brush would come and stand before her, hot water would also come and pour over her head - all at the same time, all unstructured and disorganised. Her clothes would come on their own in any color and attach themselves to her in any order. Food would come to her but she has to eat what comes. In this manner work happened in a haphazard, thoughtless manner. Likewise at school, she finds she cannot do what is asked of her to be done, but work happens on its own in a very crazy way.

Meena prays and tells God, ' Enough I will do my work myself.'

After narrating the story, Gurudev asked one of the teachers from Ayappa Nagar to explain in Tamizh the lessons derived from the story. Gurudev had spoken in english so far, and the Tamizh was for the benefit of all others present in the drawing room of Deepak bhai's residence! Says Radha Miss, "Gurudev then talked to all Mission members. They were all happy that he was talking to everyone. They came and thanked us, saying, 'because of your children, he spoke to us as well and we also got prasaadam! And from this story we also learnt that we have to be punctual - do the right thing at the right appointed time and therefore we must plan our work."

Gurudev was likely explaining that work becomes a tedium when it is not planned; and that leads us to shirk work.



Radha photo solo

Radha Miss has picked up from Gurudev's messages, some very fine nuances of teaching children, be it in the classroom or on the field or on the stage. For Gurudev every interaction was a learning opportunity for children. For example, she says, "Gurudev does not like the use of recorded music when children are performing. He wants there to be a live singer. Then again he insists that children must dress/ be dressed properly and not put to shame. This includes the perfection in every aspect of the costume, hairdo, make-up. Once, when the children were dancing, one child's jata (a false hair piece, even a simple false plait) came off and everyone laughed. Gurudev got very angry. He admonished the teachers and organisers very severely. Gurudev said, 'This is not the way to work with children, this is not the way to put them to embarrassment. If you arrange a programme, you have to perfect every aspect of the detail. If jata falls, child is embarrassed. Why should a child pay for your inefficiency?'

Because of this one incident Gurudev was very very angry... but it taught the teaching staff that he respected children deeply and expected everyone to do likewise.

Radha Miss recalls another poignant incident. Whenever Gurudev came to Trichy, he would always visit the Chinmaya Vidyalaya. The Netaji Nagar school was a very small school, only upto class III, the roof was a thatched one, and so on. Says Radha Miss, "But Gurudev never hesitated and he always came to that school. So once when Gurudev was coming, we had asked the children to work on a program we asked them to present it to Gurudev.

"Gurudev was unwell, and minute to minute we were being given a bulletin that 'He is unwell, he may not come, he cannot walk, cannot exert ...' ... but we waited at the entrance.

"He came, stopped the vehicle at the entrance and walked inside. We asked the children to present their program. A small girl came to the mike and wanted to start her speech - (mind you this is a school till class 3, which means this little girl could not have been more than 8 years) -- when a photographer came right before her to take a picture.

"Just as she was about to start speaking, he clicked the camera. The flash came on and the girl stopped....

" See how Gurudev respects children! He bombarded the photographer - yelled at him, 'a small child is trying to talk and you have distracted her!' The photographer ran off!"

These incidents delight Radha Miss for this is the same stuff she is made of. That Gurudev could stand up for a two feet tall child and holler at a photographer, endorses for her that if the Guru respects children then everyone should.

She adds, "We learnt through all this how to respect the needs of children... he was more concerned with how we as teachers performed than how the students performed! He judged our skills in teaching and teacher-hood, but not what the children had learnt or not learnt.

"Children were not show pieces for him!"

34. Gurudev, make her understand, please?

10-06-2015

Shabari and Madhuri, mother and daughter are both ardent devotees of Gurudev. Both have held his feet earnestly and wept and cried asking for help .... help from the dissent of the other ... One Guru, two devotees, two prayers, one solution. And silently flows the Ganga....

She is an ardent devotee of Gurudev, very committed, very devoted, very trusting. For her He was the one voice that answered her. Inside her puja room, where an assortment of gods and deities existed -- on the wall, on the shelves, on the base of the wooden mandir -- as they had at her own mother's place and grandmother's place.... also stood a stunning photograph of Gurudev. It was Him she sought when her eyes looked up, so that wherever in that room she saw, it was Him she found.

All her practises as far as religion went were inherited from her parental home, something she just fell into probably by instruction, as a child. Once in the safe haven of her husband's home, she worshipped Gurudev without any restraint. But the deities remained and that, more to not disappoint her mother.

We shall call her Shabari, only owing to her patient love for Gurudev. If not, writing in pronouns can be tedious.

Shabari has a very sweet daughter, whom we will call Madhuri.

As a child Madhuri had been the apple of Gurudev's eyes and he indulged her every time she visited him. And when as a lower and middle schooler she won the Geeta chanting competition three times in a row and a Super Jumbo Competition pitted against all the winners, she wowed the acharyas with her diction and delivery, Gurudev was delighted. He knew she was far more capable and prophesied she would go places.

Madhuri was the archetypal teenager who lived a full life. Her childhood had begun on the lap of Gurudev, there was nothing else she knew or cared about. She ADORED him. She too found Gurudev only in the puja room. The other deities were pretty, but her eyes always gravitated to the God of her babyhood.

One day Madhuri told her mother that she wished to bring home a friend. Shabari did not think it needed announcement. It is a boy, Madhuri clarified and that disturbed her mother. "But he is only a friend, so don’t get hasseled," she clarified more. Shabari found him to be a breath of fresh air from the average boys she had known. But when after a few days she found phone calls and text messages growing, she restrained Madhuri. Once again Madhuri told her 'He is just a friend and a very nice person, that is all!'

Shabari was no one's fool. She said, "That was exactly what I told my mother when I met your father! But enough is enough, I am not allowing this."

But a year later when she was maybe 19 or 20, Madhuri said she wished to marry this boy.

Mother: But he is a Christian!

Daughter: Religion does not matter Ma!

Mother: To me it matters!

Daughter: Why?

Ouch. That was one question Shabari was not prepared for. It did not even seem like a valid question. But she found one: "You are from a traditional Hindu background, a three time Geeta competition winner. How did you even think of marrying him?"

Shabari then had a dialogue with the young man, we shall call him, Mark.

Shabari: Religion matters to me.

Mark: To me it does not. I am not a practising Christian.

Shabari: Why don't you kids find partners within your religious boundaries?

Mark: What else do you have against me?

Shabari was taken aback. One more question she had not analysed....

So on it went back and forth, back and forth... She told both Madhuri and Mark to wait for a year.

In the meanwhile Shabari so disturbed by this turn of events stopped talking to her daughter Madhuri.

After the one year ban was over, Madhuri brought it up again. Things got extremely sour at home. Madhuri had spoken to her grandparents and although they flew off the handle and threatened her with dire consequences, an unfazed Madhuri said to mother and grandmother, if you are so unhappy, fine I won’t marry him, but at this point in time, I won't marry anyone else either.

Grandmother found this too much and gave her the go-ahead. The peripheral aunts and uncles rubbished Shabari's objection....

But Shabari locked herself in the pooja room and hugging Gurudev's photo frame, wept bitterly, hopelessly, helplessly. "How can you let this happen? How can you? " At other times her plea would be, "She is a Vidyalaya child, your child, she is a Geeta chanting winner, she has chanted for you also, she is geetam.... Gurudev how

will I deal with this?"

Shabari was broken completely. How would she tell people in the Mission that her daughter was abandoning her Hinduism?

Everyday Shabari lived through this hell, her only succour being the pooja room after everyone had left home for work or college. Holding Gurudev she would cry and cry and cry. "But talking to him helped me very much because I have known him as a real God, and I would always feel greatly relieved after unburdening my heart," says Shabari recalling all that...

That Pooja room was the family pooja room. It was the one place to which everyone gravitated in good times and bad. And these were rather bad times and the air at home was very charged with animosity and an absence of love.

It was a refuge for Madhuri too. After her morning bath she would slip into the pooja room, when her mother was not within hearing distance and have deep chats with Gurudev. "I am your child, what do you have in mind for me? Look they are all unhappy and so am I. If You want this to happen then MAKE IT HAPPEN ,... if not, stop it NOW, erase this totally so that no one is hurt or pained."

Gurudev loved both of them intensely. And both of them knew no other God than Him. They forced Him to answer them, everyday. "Tell her!", "You tell her Gurudev...", "Please speak to her...", "Are you not going to make her understand?"

And we want the Guru to be the magician who removes all sorrows.... This is our faith. Who cares how he does it as long as there is no sorrow?

If mother rushed to him in the morning, the daughter rushed to him in the evening. If the mother said 'make her understand...' the daughter also said, 'make her understand....' For both, he was the heaven and the haven. He was everything. The Father? He loved his Guru blindly. He had nothing to ask or anything to say. He stood mute before his Guru ... If his Guru could watch, he too would do just that...

One day Shabari was at the Mission Center as Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda had come. Relieved like a bird who has been locked up, she ran to meet Guruji and bask in His presence, simply be there, just inhale His presence .... . And Guruji for her was Gurudev, she never saw any difference between them. Never.

A dozen others were present too. Guruji came out of his room and greeted everyone... His eyes slowly rested on Shabari and stayed there for a long time. Suddenly he said, "You have so much to tell me ...."

Shabari was stunned. Before she knew He called her to his room and seated her. "Tell me," he decided for her. "What is bothering you?"

Shabari broke down and cried helplessly. "It is Madhuri ...." spoke Guruji for her.

Now Shabari shared her entire grief with Guruji adding, "I have told her I will never get her married to him."

Guruji asked gently, "What have you against him?" Shabari was dumbfounded. This was exactly Mark's question too. She replied, "He is a Christian! And my child, she chants the Geeta! What is she doing marrying a Christian?"

Guruji said in those same gentle tones, "But he is also a human being! You must not shut the door on anything." Then Guruji also met Madhuri and Mark individually.

He liked Mark very much. He saw Madhuri had great clarity.

The wedding took place according to Arya Samaj tradition. Mark was perfectly fine with all this. When the priest gave him the janeu, he held it like a pro with the little finger of both hands and as the priest chanted the Gayatri mantra, Mark slipped the janeu deftly over his shoulder and under his arm ....

This was the lad Shabari had said to, "I have wanted a son-in-law with whom I can go to temples and weddings ...."

And this was the lad who had said, "I will do all that, I have been to Isha Ashram and to Tirupati... you tell me what else you want me to do ..."

Shabari was filled with great gratitude and joy that everything was blessed. How she just happened to meet Guruji and have Him know her grief ...how he had made everything so easy to manage and bear... all this was the greatest source of relief. He had heard her and she knew He always did.

Madhuri was filled with peace and joy too. He had heard her and she knew He always did.

35. A SLIP OF THE TONGUE, A TASTE OF THE OCEAN

11-06-2015

C.K. Suresh belongs to Chinmaya Mission, Trichur. For long he has been coordinating the Kerala CHYK activities. He also runs an organisation called Atma Foundation.

C.K. Suresh was 16 when he heard that a certain brahmachari was going to be talking on the Bhagvad Geeta at the Neeranjali Hall of CM Trichur (Trissur). Sixteen is a glorious age for young men who are exploring life, forming values.



Living in Harmony @ Thrissur

Somewhere in his heart Suresh wanted to understand India's glory. He says, "I used to be proud of the Geeta but had not set my eyes upon it even once. But when I heard he was talking about the Geeta, I wanted to hear its glory, for it stood for the greatness of India."

Suresh's family was far removed from all things Chinmaya Mission, nor did they have any interest in renunciates. So whatever Suresh did was the drive of his own heart, his passion, his pursuit. We will remember he was 16.

Thus he found himself in the yagnashala at Neeranjali Hall watching and hearing the brahmachari extol Krishna and Arjuna in Chapter IX. The mix of Chinmaya Mission and Bhagvad Geeta was fulfilling. After the yagna, Suresh went and spoke to the Brahmachari and expressed his young mind's joy. That joy led to the beginning of CHYK Trichur! At the tender age of 16, Suresh joined a study group -- he was one among six!

A few months later Gurudev visited Trichur. Intrigued, Suresh went along. He saw Gurudev sitting in the Neeranjali Hall and devotees were queuing up to prostrate at

his feet. In his words, "Though I was also in the queue I was against the idea of touching the feet of another human being. But I wanted the ‘fruits prasada’ that he was distributing to the devotees! How to get the ‘prasad’ without touching his feet was my only thought!"

So strong this thought must have been, as we will soon see.

Says Suresh ji, " Just in front of me in the queue was a balavihar boy (Vijay Kumar) whose family was also very close to Gurudev. They had met Gurudev several times before. At one point, Gurudev raised his head and saw this boy. But that same second, his deep, powerful eyes were on me.. He spoke to the boy, but his eyes on me, Gurudev said, ‘Just because your parents told you, you need not prostrate. Only if you feel inside, you should prostrate to somebody’. Gurudev said that in Malayalam and I believe that was his personal message to me! And alongside I heard his laugh!

"He looked at me, he has never seen me before! I did a sashtanga pranam...! He touched me! ..... And I forgot to take the fruit prasaadam!"

That touch was so electrifying, or did it numb him altogether? Had he not wanted the fruit as the prasaadam without touching His feet? Suresh ji says, " I think I got Gurudev Himself that day, the fruit did not matter. He came into my life to make my life a celebration of joyful achievements and pleasant sharing."

For Suresh ji, this seems to have been the most significant moment in his life. The mother of all moments! He says, "Since then I have been to so many yagnas and camps and Gurudev has also made many short visits to Trichur. Every meeting recharged me with His powerful divine energy."



C.K. Suresh addressing a gathering

Funnily, nobody ever introduced Suresh to Gurudev. "Even so he knew me - he knew my name, what I was doing then ! I had no relatives to connect me to the greater Mission family, I was my own representative! Yet his Love was available to me, I was experiencing it! For him I was one among many who he met once in a while;

for me He was the One and only one and Always For Ever!"

So on... Suresh went on serving the Mission basking in Gurudev's brilliance, His touch, His look.

Come 1986 January. Trichur had another yagna to celebrate the Mission Center's silver jubilee. Suresh was 27 years old. Many events were planned during Gurudev's visit.

There was a torch march planned. Three torches would arrive at Trichur's Vadakunnathan Temple grounds, led by three processions - one from Kalady, one from Guruvayoor, and one from Thiruvilwamala. From Trichur this huge procession then took Gurudev to the yagnashala. Gurudev was in a jeep and more than 10,000 people walked with the jeep in procession. All this was the handiwork of the CHYKs.

At Trichur Gurudev lit the 4th torch with these three, and this was taken to the Chocherikunnu Temple -- a Muruga temple, that Gurudev was helping renovate (Om Jeernamandiroddharajkaaya Namah!)

It was one grand affair. A rare one of its kind. Many reputed personalities participated in the youth meet during the yagna. Suresh says the publicity committee failed to take off and the chyks had to then take complete charge of publicity too.

Gurudev had noticed all this. Nothing misses His gaze.

Then during the yagna, an audio visual Bhajan Sandhya had been organised. Once again a great amount of innovation and creativity had gone in to make it memorable. This despite limited resources.

Says Suresh, " After the programme all the chyks went and met Gurudev and received much congratulations and appreciations from him. Gurudev for his part, spoke to some parents about the chyksters and praised them."

Since Suresh was occupied with many details pertaining to the yagna, he missed meeting Gurudev that night.

The next day the devotees of CM took Gurudev to Guruvayur temple. Suresh was escorting him in another vehicle. On reaching Guruvayur, Suresh opened the door of his car. "As soon as he saw me," says Suresh, " he just patted my shoulder and told me, 'That programme was very good. Congratulations!'

"He was touching me and looking at me!" Suresh was spellbound.... "As usual in his presence I was speechless and the words that came through my mind were 'Sorry Swamiji', instead of ‘Thank you Swamiji’. And I told him apologetically, 'We could not practice sufficiently' "

It just came out like that, he says. He was tongue tied. "In his presence I simply could not talk and when I tried to, I said all the wrong things."

Continuing his narrative, Suresh says, " Then he tightened his grip on my shoulder,

held me closer to him and told me 'It is ok. Don’t worry. Next time we will make it better.' I was instantly transported. When he touched me he was considering me an important person. And the very next moment he considered me one of his workers, someone he wished to see contribute quality to his work -- and he began talking to me seriously. Then, till we reached the temple (that was a few minutes walk) he was pointing out the various aspects in the Bhajan Sandhya program that needed corrections!"

Suresh explains that the bhajan program was interfaced with a live dance enactment of the bhajan. This was an experiment they had done. Gurudev had observed so keenly says Suresh who recounts, "He was talking about the order of songs in the Bhajan Sandhya, where the melody should come, where you can introduce dancing... Swamiji said, you can have more dancers for the Sabarimala songs!"

And not just the bhajans ... Gurudev said, "That boy who was sitting near the Tabla, ask him to put his shirt buttons right.."

" And throughout, the firm grip of His hands was on my shoulder! My God.. if that had been a thank you from me - I would have missed all those great moments... It taught me to think big and gave an insight about the standards he expects, when we are available to him! If we are happy and proud about our performance he won’t bother!

"So precious that moment was to me! Thereafter whenever I organised something I would keep his standard as my goal. A sense of dissatisfaction urges me to think big. After that whenever we organised any program I would take it as a big project and give it my all. And till I perfected it I would remain dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction does arise as I work but it interprets as 'there is more that can be done to make this work the best, what have I missed?'

"Whenever I took up big projects (mostly with some senior people disbelieving or discouraging) I would feel His firm grip on my shoulder. It serves to remind me that everything has to be according to his standards! "

After the 1986 yagna Gurudev wrote to Suresh, a letter that started with 'That was an ideal chyk....'

Looking back Suresh ji says, "It is like school children going on an excursion to see the sea! The teachers will not allow them to go ‘into the sea’. From a distance they enjoy the waves. But a rare moment will present and the teacher will walk the child to the water and allows him to touch the ocean. In the sea breeze a tiny drop of salty ocean water reaches the lips of the child. And he believes that he has experienced the mighty ocean!

For me those few moments I lived in the physical presence of my Gurudev is more than enough to celebrate for ever! "

36. THE STUPIDITY OF ATTACHMENT, AND OTHER LESSONS

12-06-2015

V. Vijayalakshmi grew up watching, hearing and learning from Gurudev. She lives in Bangalore and runs an annual country and culture festival that lasts three months. The inspiration she says came from working on the cultural events for Yuva Kendra..

Vijayalakshmi fondly known as Viji grew up in a spectacular home where the rules were even more spectacular. The youngest of 5 children, her oldest sibling was 16 years older than her, so that that one family seemed like two - those of grown-ups and those of the not-yet grown-up.

But her parents were tough about one thing - wherever they went, they would all go together.

Vijayalakshmi was four when they heard about Gurudev. Those days a jnana yagna would last one whole month. This was 1960.

The whole family was prepared by the parents to go attend the yagna. The morning class was for members only, evening for public.

Says Vijayalakshmi, "We attended both; we had no option. We went to meditation class then to morning class, from there straight to school, some days we would go to meet Swamiji. Again evening we would go to meet Swamiji and go straight to yagnashala, attend the lecture, then go home. This was schedule for many years. We could never, never say 'I have home-work or exam. Those were not even valid statements. We had to do our homework in the car or at midnight."



Shriram playing mridangam; Grandmother Ranganayaki watching; Guelph camp, Canada.

And as for exams it had a different level of stress for Vijayalakshmi. For every time

he met them, Gurudev would say, ' show me your marks?'

"And we would cringe and die not wishing for him to see our marks," she says..

So the first yagna she went for with the army of siblings, was in 1960-61. A thousand people were in that yagnashala and from the back where they all sat, Gurudev seemed to this 4 year old as a doll on the stage moving hands and legs. But she remembers being captivated by his slightly pinkish orange clothes and his bandana.

By the second day, the army would be right in the front row and, "we could not make any noise. We had to sit still. There was sand on the ground - I would play with that. That is all!" she says summarily.

But she adds with emphasis, "From this experience we learnt how to sit still. We could not stand up, run, definitely not play, cannot eat or want to go to the bathroom... and thus we learnt how to just be."



Little Rukmini and Viji and Shriram on the mridangam

Growing up with Gurudev, in his presence, around him, in the midst of his roar ... all this meant she was also being shaped by him, every which way.

For Viji and her siblings, attending Gurudev's yagna was a part of their life. Going to meet him when he visited Bangalore was what you did normally, unconditionally. It was non-negotiable. And like one learns from parents, Viji learnt by being with Gurudev all the time.

"It was from him I learnt that children are to be showered with love and respected! He always called me his secretary. He would say, 'how many years before you become my Secretary?' And he would start calculating on his fingers!"

Once there was a gathering. A family asked Swamiji, can you initiate us and give us a mantra? And all too soon they also suggested to Gurudev that they wished to chant his name.



Gurudev at Viji's home; Viji in rust-orange sari

Vijayalakshmi recalls Gurudev's laughter as she says, "He said, 'No that is not right. Never chant the name of a limited human being. Understand this is not about a personality, it is about the message that I give. Don't make this a personality cult. Understand my message! That is important.'

"Then in lighter vein he said, 'You will do 10 years of Chinmaya japa, then one man will come by and say, that Chinmaya you know, he is a crook! Finished! Your 10 years work will go down the drain! So this is not about a personality. And don't believe everything I say. Question it. Then make it your own. Then nobody can shake your conviction. Once it becomes yours who can shake it?''

These were the things she watched happening before her eyes, these were the things she heard and these were the precise exchanges that shaped Viji into the person she is today, shaped her values and sense of right. This was the foundation on which Vijayalakshmi grew up and studied.

Years later when she was married with 2 children, they were all in the US. Gurudev held a camp in Guelph, in Canada. For a girl with a foundation like this, Gurudev was naturally the essential part of her life. Whatever she did or didn't do, Gurudev stayed. So she told Gurudev matter-of-factly, "I can attend the camp only if my children can come."



Sidhabari 1987: Rukmini and Shriram in Gurudev's kutiya serving him bhiksha after pada puja

He looked at her defiantly and said, "What??! I am not frightened of your children!" His retort sums up how he treated her - as a friend. And that was how their relationship was.

During this very camp, Vijayalakshmi's living quarter was two floors above Gurudev's. The meditation class was at 6 am and she would leave the kids asleep, sprint down and run to the meditation hall which was a good run away. After class when they broke for breakfast, she would make an air dash back so that she got in before the kids woke up. Shriram and Rukmini were 5 and 3 years old!

Whereas Gurudev would be driven to satsang hall from the residents' building. On the first day when he saw Vijayalakshmi race back after meditation, he told the driver to race too but even as he reached her, she had entered the building and disappeared up the stairs.

Now Vijayalakshmi sat strategically in the last row, close to the exit so that as soon as meditation was over, she could fly out. Now she says candidly (as she did to Gurudev too later), "I always ran because if Gurudev was walking I would have to slow down for him and then I would have to linger and wait for Gurudev and I could not afford all that. I needed to return before the kids woke up."

But on day 3, he caught up with her and so she had to wait. She recalls, "Another very elderly lady, a non-Indian was with him. He put his hand on her shoulder and

another around mine and said now you have to walk me to my room!"

Vijayalakshmi's heart sank. But she had to.

On day 4, she swore to a better strategy; she would make her escape bid even before he spotted her. But once again he caught up with her. By now she realised he was upto something. "He then asked me, why exactly are you running like this? Or are you running away from me?"

Vijayalakshmi said, " Stop it Swamiji, you know why I am running. (Of course he knew)."

But he said, "Ok so go up and take a look. Your son and daughter will be all ready and waiting."

In Vijayalakshmi's words, " I was more than disbelieving. I know my kids. Yeah right, I thought to myself, my 5 year old son will wake up my 3 year old daughter, really! But when I quietly entered the room, I was startled. Both kids had woken up, the older had woken up my daughter, both had bathed and Shriram was trying to braid Rukmini's hair!"

Since the kids were ready and she had no effort to exert, she reached the satsang hall with the kids sooner.Gurudev saw them and said, "Ah! See? Did I not tell you?"

Now as funny events go, Vijayalakshmi's son Shriram played the mridangam even at that age of 5 and often ended up drumming on any surface. A little later Gurudev felt his little baby fingers drum on his shoulder. Gurudev said, " Taalam is ok, go bring your mridangam, let me hear you play!"

Such was his superlative joy with and love for children. He levelled with them as equals. He enjoyed them and they in turn showered him with their divine mischief. Says Vijayalakshmi, "He would look at Rukmini and say, 'You are so sweeeeeeeeeeeet, my diabetes will go up!' But same instant he would whisper in Shriram's ears, ' actually you are my favourite but she is small so I have to tell her this!' "

At that same Guelph camp, Vijayalakshmi's mother developed some uterine hernia but she refused to leave the camp. A doctor came and saw her and insisted that the surgery would have to be done immediately. But mother refused to go.

Vijayalakshmi went to Gurudev and said, "Swamiji you please talk to amma, she is creating a racket!"

Gurudev came to her room, sat by her side, held her hand and closed his eyes for a while. Then he said, "Amma you have to go for your surgery now, your sons are here to take you (Viji's brothers had come down from Buffalo). All will be well." Then looking at Vijayalakshmi he said "You are not going anywhere."



Vijayalakshmi today

Vijayalakshmi protested, "But she is my mother!"

Gurudev replied, "Yes, your brothers are there, your sisters-in-law are there, they will take care of her. You will stay, finish the camp then you can go."

At the end of the camp when Gurudev was leaving, Vijayalakshmi began to sob. He noticed that and called her and said, "No tears! Even when I leave this body, there must be no tears... go beyond the body..!

"This message has stayed with me all my life," says Viji. But it seems many of her experiences with Gurudev was about going beyond the body and not being attached to the physical. Be it choosing camp over mother, be it faith in the children to be able to be responsible ...

And she was to witness an occurence which drove home a quality, a practise. Narrates Viji, "Duing the camp he had a lot of pain in his legs. One of the doctors came and touched his legs and Gurudev went 'Aaaah...'. Clearly there was pain. But immediately, Gurudev said to the doctor, 'just wait a minute please...' He shut his eyes and stayed so for sometime, Then on opening them he said to the doctor, 'OK, now you may do whatever you want.' Then when the doctor touched his leg he did not wince at all!

"It seemed to me he was detaching himself from the body, from the pain. It was quite a lesson," she says. We do see what we need to learn...

This lesson was to come to her again and again in small doses. Some years later Vijayalakshmi met Gurudev. He was watching a tennis match. He was on a wheel chair. For Vijayalakshmi who was seeing him thus for the first time, the sadness that took over her was too powerful. She sat with him but remained uncharacteristically silent. "His condition had really affected me" she says. "I was very silent He looked at me and said, 'Is this silence because of your stupidity of having attachment to the physical being?'

"I looked at him and said, 'Yes, I am sad seeing you on the wheelchair.'

"Gurudev said, 'There is a journey of this body. Don't attach yourself to the prarabda (journey) of the body.'

"He was constantly sending messages like 'Do not worry about me, don't attach yourself to me, listen to my message, to what I teach... It is not the limitedness of the person you should worry about but the message about the Limitless....."

37. Her Master's Voice

13-06-2015

Kamala Ganapathy's association with Gurudev goes back to the mid 60s, but the role he gave her was verily a part of himself - his voice. Meet the melody of the Roar.

There are many flowers in a garden yet to the gardener each flower brings a joy that is distinct and incomparable. Such was the joy that Kamala brought Gurudev.

Kamala (Ganapathy) came directly in contact with Gurudev in 1966 when she was a class XI student. Until then she only heard his discourses.

What happened was, her sister Jaya who worked with Gurudev, had been sent to Trinidad to teach Math and Indian Cultural studies at the request of an educationist who had asked Gurudev for a good teacher. ("Those days we knew Trinidad and Tobago only as a place where cricketers came from!" says Kamala ji mirthfully.)

When Jaya left, Kamala had to take over her Balvihar class in Mumbai's Kings' Circle. For Kamala this was overwhelming. She was all of 16 and inept. Or so she thought. Everything was new; from student and playful girl she would now move to being a teacher!

"I was not trained for this," she says, "I knew how to chant but I had no confidence to teach."

That was how she went and met Gurudev and told him, "How can I? I don't know too many bhajans!" This was the only available reason.

Gurudev said, ""“Learn from children, you will be successful.” This became her mantra thereafter.

Putting her trust completely in Gurudev (— a result of her utter simplicity that did not complicate anything), Kamala took over her older sister Jaya's class of 13 children, who likely found her closer to them in age! She went with the flow and the flow went with her, so to say and the children took to her so easily!

Soon this Sunday morning BalaVihar of 13 swelled in size. Says Kamala ji, "I started off and it came true from Gurudev. I was awarded the Best Class in Mumbai, winning the trophy. This was a blessing from Swamiji."

That she would learn from the children began to prove itself. Those days Gurudev would send out a letter to the children, every week or 10 days. It was called a 'I Love You' letter, which was then circulated among the Bal Vihars. Gurudev would address the children, and fill the letter with jokes, quotes and lessons.

"In whatever way we can we had to explain to the children," says Kamala ji. "Once I was explaining to the children about love and giving love and how people need to be told to give love. One little boy said to me in class, 'Yes, so, somebody will come and say (as if asking for alms), 'Give me love, give me love' and we will say 'maaf karo!' (Literally, 'Forgive me', but colloquially - 'carry on, you are getting nothing from me'.) '

"I was taken aback. Such a small child and how profound was his thinking...! So what Gurudev said I will learn, I did learn!

Assisted by two more Mission volunteers, Kamala took this class to 70 in 2 years. That she had always been a student of Carnatic music and her school optional subject, 'Sanskrit' also stood her in good stead.



Smt. Kamala Ganapathy today

Very soon, Gurudev wanted Kamala to chant for his Geeta Jnana Yagnas. But not till he had put her through the grind. Gurudev wanted her to practise with Shri V.B. Deshpande, a devotee and someone whose chanting skills Gurudev trusted.

Says Kamala ji, " I was barely 20-22. Gurudev told us to learn from Deshpande ji all 18 chapters of Geeta, namavalis, prayers and sankirtans. After that we had to chant the verses from the Geeta book in Gurudev's presence to get his approval that our chanting was 'alright'. Such were the tough days but valuable for progress in life."

But merely being trained was not enough. Before every yagna Kamala and her partner in chanting, Mridula Jaykar had to practise. "And Gurudev would check our chanting," she says. "Those days Jnana Yagnas would last 22 days and he would take two chapters at a time."

So now listen to the pattern of practise: "Suppose next month there is a yagna; a month before we will take an appointment from Gurudev. First we practise by ourselves to be sure; then we present our chant before Gurudev. All 44 stanzas we have to chant in his presence and he would listen keenly. Nothing missed his ears. He caught you so quickly if one syllable went here or there. He will focus on the Tha and Dha and the Kha -- the hard consonants which many people get wrong.

Gurudev would say read Sanskrit like Sanskrit not like Hindi or Marathi (they share the same script). And you have to speak Sanskrit like Sanskrit, AND from wherever you are heard, it should sound like Sanskrit! His favourite was Dakshinamoorty Stotram -- I can't remember how many times I have chanted it. Gita Chapter XIII was his other favourite."

Often when they chanted for Gurudev in a practise session, some people would be present. When Gurudev would correct some diction or pronunciation, those present would enjoy his jokes. "But soon after his correction he will turn to the others and say, 'Very good, you laughed, now you chant and show.'"

Kamala ji delights in these memories. Gurudev was so sensitive to every tiny emotion in students, she says.

She adds, "I am trained by Swamiji in every way including the sense of time. If he called us for practise at 8 am, it cannot be 8.01am. Jaya and I have turned out like that. Both of us have evolved into sticklers for time. These are all Gurudev's blessings."

In Feb 1968, Kamala ji and Mridula Jaykar accompanied Gurudev to Delhi for a 22 day yagna. They stayed at the home of Leela Nambiar in Jhangpura Extension. "Gurudev took care of us like a mother and father put together," she says wistfully.

Gurudev's room was on the first floor. The girls had their room on the second, with an open verandah. After lunch Gurudev would go into his room to write mails and catch up with work. Then he came out only at 4 pm.

On one of those days, Kamala and Mridula believing that Gurudev had retired, left their room door open as it was very cold and they wanted to catch the sun. Then the two began to practise their chanting. As luck would have it, unknown to them, a gentleman arrived to give the prasada pustikas for Gurudev's yagna. Naturally Gurudev came out of his room to receive the man.

Well, ... the girls were chanting rather loudly.....

The gent who had come looked concerned as the Gita flowed down in torrents in the middle of the afternoon. "These are my children," Gurudev told him, seeing his anxiety. "They don't need a microphone, as you can see..." and then, "One should be perfect in everything one does."

Gurudev took the girls and went on a trip to see Mother Ganga at Rishikesh. He also had a day's lecture there. Kamala took ill for a day. To hear Kamala here is to hear her interpretation of Gurudev, " He would not ask me anything but he would ask Mridula, 'Did she sleep? Did she eat?' That way only he would get perfect information as to my health , " she says clearly. The following day, when they went to see Mother Ganga, Kamala decided she would take a holy dip in the Ganges and bathe. "This time he asked me, 'Can you bathe? Are you well enough?' I said 'I can, nothing will happen, I am fine.'

Kamala ji cherishes these parent-like questioning from Gurudev.

Once in the middle of a yagna the microphones failed, "but he indicated to us to continue chanting," she says. "Two voices should be heard as one, that was his standard. That was also the kind of coordination he had trained us for. People would wonder if it was one person or two persons chanting. Gurudev called us 'his voice', 'My voice, my voice...' he would say with so much joy! It was wonderful being with him."

Her memories have more visuals than she can put in words, but they belong to her and she revels in them sharing with us what she can about her parent, Gurudev.

On another visit to Vishakapatnam, the journey had been painfully long with a stopover as well so that they reached Vizag just a little before the yagna. "Gurudev told us to have a wash. And since it was winter, he said do not wash your hair. So we did not wash our hair. So much like a father or mother, every little thing he gave us!

"But what happened was, that night we (Kamala, Mridula and Dr. Bharti Kulkarni) could not sleep. Once we put off the lights, these mosquitoes came out. They were so huge I feared they could lift us! We covered ourselves but they poked us through the thick covers!

"Next morning we were up by 4 a.m and had to leave for the yagna at 6 a.m. We had to reach the yagnashala by 6.15 as we had to receive the crowds with chanting, bhajans and so on. Gurudev would come at 6.28 sharp. You cannot take for granted even one minute.He was better than a clock. But it was already 3 consecutive nights of no sleep.

" After morning session and breakfast Gurudev went to his room to attend to his mails. He would next come out at 11 a.m. We were so faint by then with no sleep, that we decided to take a short nap and wake up for the 11 am Q&A satsang. Gurudev always wanted us present then.

" Instead we slept very well ...!" she says laughing.

" Swamiji saw the 3 girls were missing. There was a Malayali cook. Swamiji asked him where are the children? And he said I will see ..., and he came up and peeped into our room and found us fast asleep. He went back and told Gurudev, 'All 3 are sleeping.'

"Swamiji saw us at lunch but he did not say anything. He joked as usual..

"When the evening session began, Swamiji began Chapter XIII with an introduction. The middle part of the chapter deals with Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. He explained each one in detail but when it came to Tamas he said, 'Aaah ....., I will tell you about tamas. People who sleep between breakfast and lunch? That is tamas.'

The three of us sat up ramrod straight. What? Was he talking about us? How did he find out?Who told him? We were already embarrassed that we had slept until lunch, and now this. We didn't know the cook Uncle had reported us! We were taken aback. After the yagna we stood before him looking silly. We told him about three

sleepless nights and the mosquitoes.

"Swamiji said, ' Why did you not tell me about the mosquito problem?' I said, 'Swamiji we are here for a yagna, we should not complain ...'

Gurudev said, " But when it is necessary to save yourself you must tell. It is not a complaint." He called the caretaker and asked for a mosquito net! You won't believe, but the mosquito nets arrived in half an hour. THAT’S GURUDEV, HE IS ALL IN ALL AND ALWAYS!"

38. *Chalanga Katti Odi Odi Vaayo ...*

14-06-2015

Brahmi Chaitanya has been in the seva of Gurudev through serving and assisting Swamini Divyananda. She lives at Chinmaya Gardens, Coimbatore.

1993, when Gurudev attained mahasamadhi, Brahmi ji was a teacher at the Allepey School, where Brni. Shraddha Chaitanya (now Swni. Divyananda) was in charge. Brahmi ji wished to go to Delhi and Siddhabari but she was unable to go. Holding that thought, she requested Shraddha ji, "Amma, please take one garland and some flowers to offer at the samadhi from me."

Shraddha ji readily agreed and with a lot of devotion she took a garland of Chetti poo (Thetty flowers, Vedchi, Ixora) and Tulasi leaves.

Shraddha ji reached Sidhabari a few days early even as the procession with Gurudev was on its way. Immediately lending a hand in the huge preparations going on, Shraddha ji forgot the flowers and they remained in her bag.

Once the procession arrived, the ceremonies began in full swing under the instructions of Swami Purushottamananda. And out of the blue, Swamiji asked for flowers ... and for some reason there were no flowers! Swamiji asked many people and he also asked Shraddhaji.

Suddenly she sprang up in surprise. Yes of course, she had flowers! Flowers that Brahmi had given her for Gurudev! Running to her room she fetched the flowers...

Says Brahmi ji very touched and very happy, "Swami Purushottamananda said, 'Kerala Swami got Kerala flowers!'

How the Guru celebrates every devotee specially, yet makes it all seem accidental!

Two years after this, Brahmi ji was a student at Chinmayaranyam under Swamini Sharadapriyananda. Now Brahmi ji had always had a headache condition that recurred too easily. It used to be so chronic that once she even had to be hospitalised.

On Sivaratri day the ashram had entrusted Brahmi ji with many tasks. As she kept working on these, exhaustion took over soon after the day programme. Developing a very bad headache, Brahmi ji fell in her room.

In her words, "In that state I had a dream where I saw Gurudev giving me instructions. He was saying, ' Why are you sleeping? I am Lord Siva. Tomorrow you go to the temple and apply the vibhuti on your head and do this daily...'"

Brahmi did as she had seen in her dream and from that day on, the headaches left her completely, she says.

Her devotion and faith in Gurudev holds her up at all times. Once when she had joined Chinmayaranyam, she found there were no fans. As a result mosquitoes were the biggest nuisance. There was only one fan in the ashram and Sw. Sharadapriyananda gave that one fan to her.

Brahmi ji was disturbed and restless over this. Two days later to her surprise two devotees called from Hyderabad to say that they had felt inspired by Gurudev and wished to send 2 fans for Chinmayaaranyam. Brahmi was too stunned to see the two fans arrive one of which went for the use of Swmni. Sharadapriyananda.

1989 Trivandrum: Brahmi ji was teaching at a Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Allepey. Shraddha Chaitanya (now Swni Divyananda) took her to Trivandrum to attend a Geeta Jnana Yagna. The crowd was overwhelming. Every day there was bhiksha and so many people who came to offer prostrations.

One of the bhikshas was in the home of Smt. Lakshmi Hari Govind. That day says Brahmi ji, Gurudev had a leg pain. He had placed a woollen cloth on the floor, and placed his feet on it. Shraddha ji had taken Brahmi ji to visit Gurudev to Vazhuthacaud. Seeing Gurudev's feet on the woollen cloth, she asked Shraddhaji, "Amma why does Gurudev place his feet on a woollen piece?"

Either in reply to this or just a remark, Shraddhaji told her, "Don't prostrate all the time. So many bhikshas, at every bhiksha you don't need to prostrate. Once a day is enough." Clarifies Brahmi ji, "We would prostrate at every bhiksha unfailingly."

Now in Brahmi ji's words, "After the talk at Vazthacaud, we came back to Hari Govind ji's house. I entered Gurudev's room. He looked at me and said, 'You come and prostrate at my feet ....!'

"Then I knew he is Brahman....!"



Brahmi ji had sincerely wanted to study under Gurudev, but he attained Samadhi. Shraddha ji feeling that Brahmi may feel the loss of opportunity , took her to Swni. Sharadapriyananda at Chinmayaaranyam saying, "Sarada-amma is ditto copy of Gurudev, you study under her..."

It turned out that Gurudev himself had told Shraddha ji that Brahmi ji should study under Swni. Sharadapriyananda!

But this continuous revelling in Gurudev had its most spectacular origins before Gurudev's mahasamadhi.

Gurudev had visited the Chinmaya Vidyalaya at Pazhaveedu in Alapuzha. Says Brahmi ji, "We had decided to give him a great feast, everybody there was ready to serve him! So a complete Kerala sadya (the traditional multi course Kerala meal platter) was prepared. When Swamiji entered our school, we received him with poorna kumbham. I thought Swamiji will be thirsty, so I offered him tender coconut water. But I seemed to have annoyed him, for he looked at me and said severely, 'I don't want water now!'

"I shivered so much. But that was a difficulty I used to always have. I could never deal with anger, loud words, shouting, nothing. Presently people began to serve food. But wonder! Swamiji said No-No-No to everybody obstructing his plate with his hand so that they may not serve him. 'I don;t want food from you. I want food from that girl only!' referring to me.

"But in my fear and sadness, I had gone far away to the back of the building where the kitchen staff was cooking in the open. So many people tried to serve him but he rejected them all .

"Then the headmistress found me and said, 'Please come, Swamiji is looking for you, please serve him...!

"When he saw me, Gurudev said, 'Ah you have come!' And he started saying, give me payasam, give me parruppu (lentils) ,.... he asked for everything one by one and everything he asked I served him, then he would ask for another dish... and so on.

"He ate twice. Then he went to wash his hands and I went along with Gurudev and washed his hands for him with mine. After that I wiped his hands with my sari ...

" He was so happy! He laughed loudly, it was so nice to hear him. Nearby a group were standing and singing bhajans for him. I asked them to sing, 'Chilanga katti odi odi vayo Ende tamara kanna adi adi vayo...' and as they began singing Gurudev started dancing to that bhajan ! (This can bring tears to anyone.....the love of a bhakta is inexplicable...)

Not just this, Gurudev went one more step ahead. After lunch he would take his tablets. There was an American lady whose seva it was to ensure he took his tablets and hand him the medication. That day Gurudev would not take the medication from her! He asked Brahmi ji to give him the medication. "I put them in his mouth," says Brahmi ji!

She says, "I thought, first this Swamiji was so angry now he loves me so much....!"

The cue may lie in the song she sang for him. It is a song addressing little Krishna saying, ' Wear your ankle bells Kanha and come running to me... come dancing to me my lotus-eyed one...'

Like Krishna who got annoyed with Yashoda for alleging He stole butter and then drives her to tears but soon He was dancing around her to make up ..... that same bhavana may be felt in this episode....

The heart melts. Brahmi ji says, fittingly, "Our Gurudev is great,.... habba!" she ends sighing.

But she ascribes all her joy to Swamini Divyananda (Shradda ji) owing to whom she got to be with Gurudev.

In conclusion, she has this to say, " Physically Gurudev is not with us now, but I have understood, recognise, love and adore our Guruji as a replica of my Pujya Gurudev. He is taking much care for growth of my personality. Since we want to spend the life in a calm and quiet atmosphere of an ashram, Guruji gave us permission to go to Chinmaya Gardens at Coimbatore. We left Kerala and reached Coimbatore and live here under the care and protection of Pujya Swamini Vimalananda amma. Amma also loves me , takes care of me and help me to grow in my spiritual life."

39. One day at McDonald's over French Fries, I saw Gurudev ...

15-06-2015

Anil B. Kumar is the Principal of Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Tarapur. He has been with the Chinmaya Vidyalayas for over 25 years, as has been his wife, the vice-principal, with no desire to go anywhere else.....

One day in 1990, a young man joined the Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Ramaguntam, Andhra Pradesh as a teacher. A committed teacher by calling, he gave his all to his avowed profession. Logical and given to reason, Anil set about establishing himself at this school, when he noticed that the teachers lit a lamp before the photograph of Gurudev and prayed.

Anil knew this was a Chinmaya Vidyalaya, but he had not met Swami Chinmayananda. That was okay, but what was not okay to his mind, was lighting a lamp before a human being. He expressed his displeasure and even objected to it. "Why should we do this?" he asked of the staff members - more questioning than asking.

But no one objected to his objections. It was not a mandate.

Anil did not like all this. This was a school where children were brought up and they had to be taught to make choices, and making them bow to a saint, ,... no, he did not approve. So much so that when the kids flew past him showering him with a spray of 'Hari Om Sir...' Anil responded with, 'Good Morning'.

The Ramaguntam school had 2 acharyas, a couple, Vivek and Varsha. Anil got busy coordinating science activities of the school for a district level science exhibition among the Vidyalayas only, was in the offing.



Anil Kumar, Principal of Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Tarapur

One evening wanting to discuss the modlalities of the event, Anil ji went by to Vivek ji's residence. But Vivek ji was in class, he was teaching Vivekachudamani to a group of people. Anil ji was told to wait for him. Having no choice, Anil sat and heard the talk and discussions. Now in Anil ji's words, "The first day I went because I had the science exhibition to discuss. But I went on the second day too, saying I have nothing to do, may as well go and listen and see what happens next... slowly I was getting drawn into the talk... so I went on day three as well and soon I had attended all seven days and enjoyed myself."

What also happened was, Varsha ji was teaching the Upanishads in the evenings. Anil ji decided to attend that as well. While there once he asked Vivek ji and Varsha ji about Guru Mahima... why this prostration and lamp lighting.... and as they explained, he began to see how an entire school had understood far before he had!

In 1991, Anil along with others went to Hyderabad to meet Gurudev. Many of the teachers and devotees performed pada pooja. But Anil was setting eyes on Swami Chinmayananda for the first time. Unable to take his eyes off the Vision before him, yet his eyes flooding with tears, the hair on his body tingling as it stood... his heart a rush of emotion .. Anil could not speak. He just stood there looking, seeing, drinking of what his eyes had taken birth to see.

That day onwards Anil Kumar's head bowed and remains bowed for Gurudev. He had become a devotee. He carried an ever lit lamp in his heart where Gurudev had now found place.

Although he needed no assurance or affirmation, Anil ji would find experiences that

would stun him and take his devotion even higher, if that was possible.

In 2002 Anil ji was attending an 'International Conference of Principals of CBSE Schools' in Delhi. It was the 6th of December. Anil ji reached Bombay Central Station sooner than the train timing of 4.40 pm. The waiting room was water logged, so he decided to sit in the McDonalds there. He got himself a sleeve of French fries and a cup of coffee. He dragged that on for as long as he could when around 3.30 or 4 pm, he saw a newspaper and magazine trolley go past the cafe. It was at a distance from him, naturally, at least 40- 50 feet away. But his eyes fell on the cover of a book or magazine, he can't tell. It seemed to him the cover had Gurudev's photograph on it.

Anil was intrigued. Chinmaya Mission never sold books at the railway station, then how come? An article on Gurudev? But the photo stood out.

Anil decided to find out. Anyway he had finished the last of the French fries and there was nothing else to do, he may as well find out what Gurudev was doing on a cover and get it maybe? By the time he came out of the cafe, the trolley had moved forward. Anil walked briskly behind it as the trolley kept going forward. He had now moved some distance away from the McDonald's.

And just then he saw his train had come. Anil let the newspaper trolley go and got into the train. He could not find out who it was on that cover.

As the train started moving, he heard a bustle and excitement in the train. His co-passengers were talking in an animated manner.

They had just received a message - there had been a bomb blast at the McDonalds in the railway platform .... the same one he had been sitting in ... Some twenty people had been injured.... (Next day's papers would tell him that the bomb had been hidden in the AC duct.)

Anil had stopped breathing. He could still see that cover of the magazine or book... he was completely gripped and overcome. Gurudev ..... you came for me....

Anil ji has been teaching at CV for 25 years. He has received offers from corporate schools for higher pay and all that but he has declared he will work only for Gurudev's Mission and here he is. His wife is the vice principal of the school and she too has been in Gurudev's service for 25 years!

This husband-wife couple stay contented and at peace at His feet.

40. When Gurudev found the Addressee -- without even an address

16-06-2015

Somesh Bhargava grew up with the deepest anxiety and fear of ignorance. His mind buzzed with the existential questions such as 'Where did the world come from and where will it go? And when all this ends what will happen?'

So intense was the chatter in his head about this, that some nights he did not even sleep. Add to this some half baked answers he got to these questions, that added to his anxiety.

Work (he is a diamond merchant and jeweller) took Somesh ji to Hong Kong. He was just 20 then. A friend of his was a part of the Bochasawasi Akshar Purshottam Swami Narayan Sanstha. He watched Somesh's angst and told him, "Only a teacher can answer these questions. These are spiritual in nature, don't flounder, find a teacher."

One Swami Tadrupananda came to Hong Kong. The friend called Somesh ji and said, 'He is addressing questions such as yours, come, let us hear him...'

Somesh ji says, "For the first time I was hearing a swami talk in english! But it also opened to me the depth of our scriptures and their expanse. I saw how rich our scriptures are. He talked about how the world is a projection of the mind, an expression of 'God' and the theory of creation explained in Vedanta.

"Immediately after that I went up to that Swamiji and thanked him I wanted to know more, learn more and if he could teach me more. He said, 'I learnt all this from my Guru Swami Chinmayananda.

"That was the first time I heard the name Swami Chinmayananda. I remained very deeply engrossed in the thought when my friend said 'With the grace of the guru anything can be achieved. So just serve the Guru, keep him in mind, and don't drop the thought...'

"Just by his reminding me again and again of the Guru I ended by writing 2 letters: one to the pramukh Swami Maharaj of Swaminarayan Sanstha and the second to Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda ji. "

To Gurudev he wrote saying, 'I am extreemly interested in learning the scriptures. I need your blessings so I can study more. Please bless me that I accomplish this desire.'

"Nowhere in the letter did I mention where I lived, my name, my address, or any detail about my location Nothing whatsoever. I simply handed the letter to the air-hostess on a flight I was on and requested her to ensure it got posted ,"

says Somesh ji. And adds, "I am dying to tell everyone this -- the very next week, in the building exactly next to mine in Kowloon, Hong Kong, Chinmaya Mission started a Center headed by Br. Sushil Chaitanya ji (Swami Swaroopananda). "

Somesh ji was completely thrilled, excited, touched, overwhelmed and felt 'heard'. He now believed with conviction that the grace of the Guru was indeed so very strong and readily available to a sincere seeker.



with-Swami-Swaroopananda

But a small rewinding is necessary, for some quaint events had happened, all of which came to a rolling boil even as the Mission Center sprang next door.

Somesh ji used to visit the ISKCON temple regularly and being a bachelor he offered his seva there in the kitchen, washing utensils, cleaning etc. One lady used to watch him keenly. She would also bring him food sometimes. One day she said, why don't you come to our home and meet my son? He is also just like you, great desire to serve others, no expectations, you will be happy to meet him.

Somesh ji did not want to meet anyone. He had absolutely no desire to socialise in any way. So he thanked her and declined gently. But she persisted amiably, 'Come and have at least a cup of tea with us beta...'

When he reached her home, he met a young man in yellow clothes. The lady said, 'This is my son, Br. Sushil Chaitanya...' Immediately Someshji prostrated. They sat and talked. Someshji asked him two questions, ("Out of my ignorance," he clarifies). "Swamiji, I heard from my parents that Arjuna never got salvation even though he heard the Gita from Krishna himself. What do you think -- will we get salvation listening to the Gita from you?" Br. Sushil ji gave him a big smile.

"The second question I have is Krishna did so many things which we are taught is wrong. Like taking away the clothes of the ladies bathing in the river. How do we worship such a person?"

Sushil ji said, "Your questions are valid from your standpoint and you must get answers. [Answers not being posted here as it will be too long...] After he had stated the answers, Sushil ji said, "All these instances in the Bhagvat are just an advertisement to draw you to the teachings in the Gita...."

Someshji was thrilled. He felt completely boosted. [He says,
"See Gurudev's greatness! How he introduced me to the brahmachari, then to the possible complexities of scriptural texts so that I know it needs guidance to learn and then to the Mission!"]



Somesh ji and family with Pujya Guruji

Seeing his joy Sushil ji said, "We are going for a lecture, why don't you come along?" And as they went there, he told Somesh where the center was, "And to my utter surprise I hear it is in the very building next to the one I lived in!"
says Somesh ji.

In a disciplined series of study classes, lectures and so on, Somesh ji studied Self Unfoldment, Bhaja Govindam, then Tattva Bodha, then Atma Bodha in morning classes and the evening classes were on the Gita.

Someshji's life was fantastic. All that he had suffered to know all

his childhood, were now on a platter. What also touched him immensely was that Br Sushil ji requested the families who sent bhiksha, 'We are two brahmacharis here: myself and Somesh.'.

"As a result, daily I had the privilege of eating dinner with Sushil ji!" he says so grateful.

Somesh ji's life was full and completely satisfying. He says, "One afternoon Swamiji (he addressed Br. Sushil ji as 'Swamiji') called me and said, 'Leave everything and come to the Center.' And within seconds I heard him say, 'Somesh, Gurudev is here for very short time, I want you to meet him.'"

The memory is overwhelming and moving for Someshji as he recounts this. What he would give to bring that moment back....

Dropping everything he flew to the Mission Center. "There was such a crowd, " he says, "it was unbelievable. The Center was on the 11th floor, I was not waiting for any lift, I flew up the stairs. The moment I reached the 11th floor in a daze, a hand just grabbed me into the lift!

"It was Sushil ji! Gurudev was leaving and Sushil ji and others were all in the lift to go down, and I had made it in the nick of time. And before I could gather my bearings, or look up at Gurudev, He had put his hand on my head and all he said was, 'Betaaaaaaaaa ……' It lasted so long, I was mesmerised. That is all I remember!"

Somesh ji is overcome again, immensely. "His look changed my life forever. I could not believe I was standing before the One person I had wanted to ... the one person I had written to in complete surrender...."

Someshji later told Br. Sushil ji that he wished to give up everything and join the Vedanta Course. But Swamiji knew his family background and told him that he was their only support and he needed to fulfill those duties first. "The fruit will leave the branches when it is ripe ... till then continue doing what you are doing...", he had said.

Some years after this, Somesh moved to Los Angeles. Swamiji called him and said, 'Gurudev is coming to LA, I want you to attend all the lectures.' Someshji says, "I had no transport, I was just beginning to set up my life. Gurudev'slectures were at the University of California. The last transport out of the University was at 8 pm and Gurudev's lecture was finishing at 8.30. I decided never mind, I will go, I will take that risk. Solutions will come.

"Gurudev's lecture was electrifying. There was pin drop silence. I heard that the dean of the University had objected to Gurudev coming there, had resisted the lecture and so on. But the beauty is, after the lecture he was the first to prostrate to Gurudev!"

In his work too Someshji experienced such harmony and peace that it amazed him what a Guru's love can do for one. Listen to him.

"Once I lost my diamond pouch. It held diamonds that were equal to 80% of my capital. This was at the start of my career. (He was around 27 then). To account for it, since inventory has to be tallied, I made an invoice in the name of Sri Krishna (all goods lost were credited to Krishna Bhagawan).

But I was seeing that I was not shaken. Being with the Mission gave me the strength of inner courage to work with the remaining 20% capital and start all over again and continue working. This, without anyone finding out that I had suffered such a massive loss. The market never found out. I sailed on, peacefully. All thanks to Gurudev being in control.



Somesh with Swami Purushottamananda

"Meanwhile my insurance man came to me one day and said my policy has to be renewed. I had in the meanwhile discovered that for businesses such as mine there was another clause called 'Mysterious disappearances' which can be added to the cover. But my insurance man had not told me about it. So I told him, 'You failed me. You should have advised me to take this clause as well. And four months ago I lost 80 % of my capital. So why should I renew with you? I will go to another insurance company.'

"He was a Jew, he said, 'Why didn't you tell me when the loss took place? I would have done something.' But the next day he told me to go to the NYPD and report the loss. I told him it happened four months ago! He said no problem but you can go and report the loss anytime. I did that and he applied for insurance. The adjuster came to check my books of account. They work with the FBI and they know exactly how to audit your books and establish the veracity of your loss.

An intensive audit later they verified the loss and sanctioned my claim and I got a cheque for the loss in 2 weeks!!

I looked at the date on the cheque: it was exactly 6 months after the date of my invoice on Sri Krishna! The credit period to pay my invoice is always 6 months! And here, the payment had come 'within credit period'!

Gurudev taught me to work with positivity, to work WITH happiness, not FOR happiness. That is all I do!"

41. Janet's Journey

17-06-2015

Janet lives in the US. She has been a devotee of Gurudev since she was in her mid to late 20s.

Like many Americans Janet sensed there was a secret tucked in a real Saint, a real Swami. She sensed there had to be a real kind. But the generic had become the norm in the U.S., so from all kinds of claims to liberation (where even liberation had been given great meanings) the yogi, the teacher of yoga had become the Magic Man on the Flying Carpet and the recipient of gushing adoration.

Yoga was doing great things for Janet's sense of fitness, but to talk liberation (about which she knew not much then) was fantasy.

Then a few months later there was an ad in the local press. A Swami Chinmayananda would be speaking at a local church. The visuals were unusual, even intriguing. Salt and pepper beard, shoulder length hair, shapeless saffron garments and an accent that was charming. Jane who sat in back row on day one, inched to the middle on day 2 and to the front rows on day 3 - a behaviour pattern that has been seen in many.

A few days later she mustered up enough courage to meet Gurudev. As an introduction she said, “I am a student counsellor.” And then she saw him waiting as if he knew there was more to come. Meeting his gaze she whispered that she was in an unhappy marriage.

And the first thing he told her, holding her gaze, was this, "Your children need you till they can stand on their feet...."

Nothing more, nothing less.

And then she realized her heart had found the saint - a real saint -- who held the key to her peace.

Now in her words .....

"Those first few years were so exciting, I remember meeting Gurudev the first time. I came into the room where he was sitting with only a handful of devotees. And I started to ask all the questions that I had regarding Jesus. I was born and brought up in a devout Catholic home, and had many questions. One was, 'Why did Jesus have to die on the cross for us.'

Gurudev replied, “So that your stone hearts could soften and melt with compassion looking at that image.” I remember asking many more questions and the devotees

wanted to shut me up, but Gurudev said, 'No, let her ask,' while enthusiastically waving his arms toward me as though welcoming the questions. He let me get it all off my chest and when I was finally done he was happy. Later on I realized that this was a hallmark of a great teacher. Never tired of answering a devotee's questions, no matter how trite.

I remember going to camps and Gurudev would always say that after a few days the Westerners would all start glowing. I suppose it all had to do with freeing these heavily- burdened minds so that the natural happiness could shine forth. To be in his presence was at once awesome and joyous. I soon realized that the quieter I could keep my mind the better off I would be because he could sense the static!

Someone once asked Gurudev if he could read her thoughts. "Heavens no," he exclaimed, "why should I want to know about all that filth!" He would also get really annoyed if devotees did not tell him what was going on. He once received a letter from someone at a center in which the writer had not clearly explained a situation and he roared “What do they expect me to be, a mind reader?”

I had never heard anyone talk the way Gurudev did. The word orator is not used much these days but that word was appropriate for him. Everyone just sat spellbound. A hush came over the audience and one could hear a pin drop. Even when the lectures were held in the open ground and there were thousands and thousands of people, yet when he began speaking everyone became silent.

Amusing and relevant stories were used to illustrate the Gita verses. I remember appreciating the fact that Gurudev never said that these were his ideas as he used the exact words as written by the Lord Himself from the Gita as well as from the Upanishads. At times I could not figure out how the story connected to a certain scriptural passage, but if I did not get it the first time there was always the 100th time. I never tired of listening for it was always fascinating. One time a lady came to him and apologized for missing one night of the lectures and Gurudev said, “Oh whether you come or not makes no difference to me. I will just continue to sing His song and whoever is there can hear it, but even if no one is there I will still be singing His song.” Another time he said that the only reason he was lecturing was that his higher mind was just convincing his lower mind. He was certainly not concerned about how small or large the audience was. Another hallmark of a great master: total disinterest in the result.

I remember being lifted up into a zone of silence, which we all experienced now and then being in his presence. At one point noticing how quiet I had become he yelled, “Now stay There.” Another favorite saying was “Shut up and get out.” In the lectures He gave an ideal description of the mind as being quiet, alert, and vigilant. Sitting in front of him at lectures would always be like imagining sitting in front of Sri Adi Sankara as portrayed in the pictures. We would all sit there so enraptured.

At one time we were walking along the tarmac toward a plane. And Gurudev said, “The substratum of the universe is moving.” On the plane he noticed how some of us had taken fruit, nuts and other provisions with us. He just laughed and said that we should have more trust and that the Lord would always provide.

We were at a camp somewhere in the U. S. It was in the early years. A crazy woman was part of the registrants. She created havoc wherever she went and the organizers wanted to kick her out. Everyone shunned her because she was so off the wall. Even though we were all in various degrees of neurosis ourselves she stood out because one could tell she had really lost touch with reality. In any case the decision was made through Gurudev that she should stay. At the end of the camp she presented Gurudev with a wonderful painting of himself. He held it up proudly for everyone to see showing us that there is beauty in everyone. I remember all of us feeling thoroughly ashamed for treating her the way we had. He showed us the way of compassion, and that the teachings were for everyone.

Once, in one of the camps in Pennsylvania, I remember walking with him and we spotted a huge cockroach scurrying in front of us. When some of the devotees made signs of wanting to kill it Gurudev said that it also had a right to live just as we have. Yet he could be practical about these things also. He would lecture on how some religious sects take the idea of non-injury too far. To let your house be run over by pests is certainly not ahimsa, he said, and that true non-injury is really in our minds only, which is not to think ill of anyone or anything."

42. *All creatures great and small ...*

18-06-2015

Dr. Abha Shroff is a pathologist and an active member of the Chinmaya Mission South Mumbai. A committee member she helps organise workshops to carry the message of Vedanta to the corporate world. Abha conducts two weekly study groups (Breach Candy and Bandra).

Abha was born into the CM family: her parents were already devotees, hence Gurudev was part of the world that she was born into. "By the time I became conscious of life around, he was already there!" she says.

A very quiet and silent child, Abha was not given to noise or chatter. She was one of those who observed more, wishing not to disturb life with interruptions. By the age of 10, Abha was in boarding school and letters were the only means of communication with family or anybody. "Once mom told me why don't you write to Swamiji (Gurudev)?"recalls Abha. "I asked her what should I write about? And mom said anything you want, just about anything."

And then Abha began writing to Gurudev ... "And everytime I wrote to him, I got a reply back. Every time. That made me feel very special. No matter how insignificant my comment or letter, he picked it up with the care that only he is capable of, and replied. If I said I had this hobby, he would encourage it. It felt like I did not just grow up with grandparents, but also Gurudev who had at some point filled in for one of my grandparents who I lost early.



Abha and family members with Gurudev

"He was family, yet he was other than family for he felt closer than family itself," says Abha with the eloquence that comes out of an observant mind.

The tweens (ages 10 to 13) are very difficult ages for children when they begin to feel lost and also feel the need for the greatest attention. "At that age to have somebody acknowledge that you and your opinions matter - it was too much. The confidence it gave me, has gone a very long way."

What began as a suggestion from her mother to write to Swamiji had now become a full time hobby. Every reply from Gurudev boosted her confidence, also because his presence was real. And unobtrusive.

Says Abha, " I just had to mention something, anything, in my letter and he would pay attention. Like if I told him I am collecting stamps, he would immediately send me every stamp he had from mails from everywhere in the world (imagine how he must have painstakingly peeled them off envelopes and saved them for children) and send it with a note saying, 'Tell me which country stamps you don't have; I will get it for you!' At that age, for me it felt special to have someone hear everything I said."

He was the the support, the listener, the encourager, the ear that heard every beat of the heart --- and replied. "Today when I look back I see that it has really helped form me as an adult and I practise that same quality myself, " she says.



Abha Shroff with Gurudev

The quality that she now sees is Gurudev's ability to be that 100 % listener in anyone's life, to make that person feel cared about. (Needless to add, every other person who has had Gurudev in his or her childhood has said exactly the same thing. Says Abha, "He respected the fact that however small something might be, it means a lot to the other person. And this is the importance he gave me.

"When I was growing into a teenager, trying to find what I want to do in life, with the time I have, he provided me with the platform of Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK). It was the one platform where anyone was able to express their thoughts, exhibit their feelings and talent. In the CM, nobody criticizes or brings you down. And CHYK gave me an opportunity to actually discover my strengths. You may not be a great singer or speaker but nobody tells you that or makes you feel small. They simply celebrate you for what you are. So had it not been for Gurudev I would not have discovered myself.

"Don't you see that it is not just Gurudev in person but Gurudev within all that he has provided around us -- the BalaVihars, the extended Chinmaya family, the opportunity to meet so many people from different walks of life! That went a long

way helping me discover my strength - which may have stayed dormant had I not had this experience."

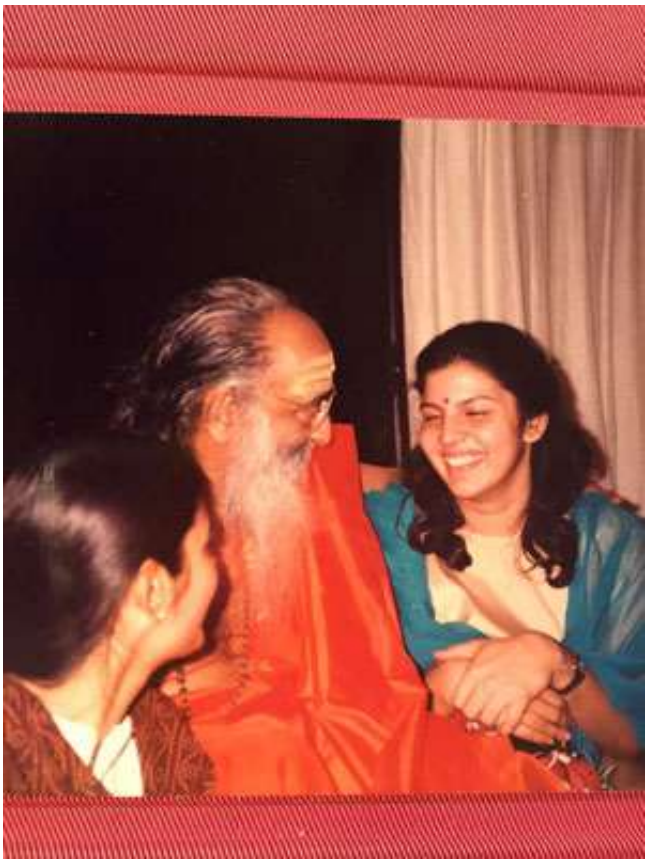
So what strength and what discovery?

Simple as it may seem, it was the opening of a huge door for Abha. Gurudev had gone to Ahmedabad for a yagna. One Sunday during a youth meet, 200-300 youth waited to meet Gurudev. And suddenly Abha was told to introduce Gurudev to the audience. "I had no preparation, but to me who was such a reserved, quiet person, I was very nervous and thought I would never manage to introduce him. But this unexpected chance that I got, taught me that I could do it.. In school usually the born speaker and born singer gets to speak and sing. But those with latent abilities buried under a mountain of fear and diffidence? What about them? I did not know I could speak... but I know the experience helped. Importantly, I was able to accept that request to introduce Gurudev because it came from the loving Chinmaya family who had proven to me again and again that they celebrate all youth. Today I go on international platforms and train 100s of people without batting an eyelid. I talk to large audiences with ease. Nobody will believe that I used to be diffident."

Abha Shroff is a pathologist, who completed her MD in 1993. As a doctor she has been able to look back and adjust her lenses and now stands tall with a better vision of Gurudev. This is what she says:

"When I look back, I see that he never said he was 'realised' or beyond the body. He always said 'you and I have to do it', 'you and I have to accomplish'; in every lecture he said "You and I". He never indicated that we were different from him, and I grew up holding that vision. Today when I look back, 20 years after his samadhi, having practised medicine for all these years I see with my medical mind that he was definitely beyond the body. The routine he had, the work he accomplished as an individual, his entire life when you read about it, I don't think medical science can justify or explain that volume. It is a vast quantity. (Om Bhumne Namah!) There are lots of people, no doubt, who have lived full lives, but having seen him from close ... I see now he was not of this world."

So observing him was the other thing she did. His eye for detail, for perfection, his punctuality... She says, "The punctual person I am today is owing to observing him. Maybe I have also (as a result) become demanding of respect for time but that has come from observing him."



With Gurudev

Once Abha was interviewed by a magazine. The interviewer asked her 'what is the most prized possession you have today? Photographs, something very dear to you, ...?' Unwittingly, out came the words, "My memories of my Guru – Swami Chinmayananda, which are priceless.."

"That is what came out," she says, "That is what struck me then. I did not plan it."

There are so many memories of him and together they make up her mind. Naturally, precious.

"There was something he said once. Not very sure if he said it or I interpreted it. Someone asked him once, so and so is ill-mannered and crude and you still entertain him...why? Why do you listen to them, indulge them? I recall thinking to myself 'this is a question even I have!.'

"He said, perhaps they needed my time more . (They needed to be here with me more than for you to not have them here with me) He did not differentiate between anyone. He had the same affection for everyone who came in contact with him. And thus, everyone thought they were most special in his life.... this very same enthusiasm he has shown 100s and 1000s and tens of 1000s of people... that is what he meant by saying that. Now, as a result I try to be more rational in my behaviour with people. I didn't know I could be tolerant. Now I know I can be."

So there is a lot Abha has seen in herself. Little things and big things. They lay somewhere inside, she mined them out and found she had these treasures. "He helped me discover myself. I thought I could never sing till I got a chance to sing a bhajan in his presence. I was in college then and he called me and said, 'Why did you keep this secret from me?' I felt like telling him even I didn't know! This is again about discovering your strengths...."

Another story that Gurudev once narrated in some context, stuck hard with Abha. It was the famous parable of the King and his minister who felt everything happens for good, nothing happens to cause pain or trouble. The king is saved from being used as sacrifice, thanks to an injured finger and so on.

"This story has stuck with me and I found myself become accepting of events. I learnt from Gurudev that if something goes wrong, and I don't know why it happened, I should not waste time wallowing in it. Sooner or later one will figure out, and I have learnt that in the interim, I have to keep moving.

"The other thing was he never allowed us to bunk college just because he was visiting. He would not hear of it. Once, my friend and I had prepared to chant during his Gita jnana yagna. We had spent all our time practicing the stanzas from the Gita chapter just to be able to be his chanters at that yagna. Gurudev found out that we had exams the following week. He said, 'No way! You both will go home and study for your exams.' We were disappointed, but you could not disobey him. I see that he reminded us of our responsibilities to ourselves - that comes first, he would say. Just to be with him you could not give up your responsibilities. Today that is the priority I give my work. You cannot shirk. If you are a wife you have a duty. If you are a doctor, you cannot give up duty in order to give in to a desire no matter that it is a noble one.

" Yes I have to make time for my work, my family, for my Vedanta, for my Guru, but I have to do them all, one cannot replace the other. One episode -- and all this became clear as day to me!"

43. The Cyclone and the Son-in-law

19-06-2015

Mr. Chidambaram is one of the earliest President of Chinmaya Mission Trichy. He is 86 years old.

In 1957, Chidambaram ji was a Honors student in Chennai. One evening while travelling by the local State Transport bus from Chetput, the bus stopped at the crossing of Sterling Road and Spurtank Road crossing. At the roundabaout, Chidambaram ji peeped out. It seemed like a marriage procession, for there were women in silks and men looking all fresh in their white crisp cottons ... .

He looked down into the car. It was an old model car and in it sat ... oh no, that could not be the groom, for the man had a flowing beard, and he was wearing saffron! How can there be a groom in saffron, he wondered

Nevertheless, the procession weaved away and the bus spluttered again into gear and sped on.

"The next day I read in The Hindu that one Swami Chinmayananda has come to lecture on the Gita. But there was no one to explain to me who he was," says Mr. Chidambaram.

Why this moment should stay so distinctly in his memory is difficult to say, but then every story has its own set of unusual visuals which cannot be all explained.

For the next 3 years Chidamabaram ji heard nothing about this Swami. Then in 1959 when he was teaching in the Government Arts College as an assistant professor of Commerce, his attention got drawn again. Next to the building where he lived, there was a hotel named Swarajya. Chidambaram ji heard some excellent english language lectures waft through the speakers. "I was not sure what it was. I went down and into the hotel. At first I thought it must be a marriage reception. But then why a lecture on philosophy?" he reasons rightly.



Mr. Chidambaram garlanding Gurudev

"I took courage and entered the hall. There were principals of colleges, doctors and educated personalities... I stood there for an hour almost...." The lecture on the Gita was breathtaking, after all! Mr. Chidambaram stood rooted to his spot till the lecture ended.

It was only in 1960 that Mr. Chidambaram was able to piece all these events together. Luckily his father-in-law was the vice president of CM Trichy. And father-in-law took him for a lecture at the community center in Tillai Nagar. Gurudev was lecturing on the Gita and it all came back to Mr. Chidambaram. This man was that saffron-clad man in the old model car. This man was that same man in Hotel Swarajya. "This man was fascinating for he was so easily bringing such a complicated subject like the Gita to the level of us common folk," says Mr. Chidambaram. "I never knew about the Gita and even if I had I would have thought it was out of bounds to the common man."

The next morning, his father-in-law took him to the Hindi Prachar Sabha at Tennur for more of Gurudev's morning classes. After the lecture, his father-in-law took him to Gurudev's room. Handing him some fruit he requested his son-in-law to pay obeisance to Gurudev. And in introduction, he added, "Swamiji, this is my son in law, he is working in Coimbatore."

Says Mr. Chidambaram, shaking with laughter, "From that day on he never called me Chidamabaram, he addressed me as only 'Son-in-law'. He would see me and say, " Oh son-in-law!!! Oh son- in-law! You are here!"

Thereafter Mr. Chidambaram enrolled for many study classes and had opportunity to study with some very eminent personalities - surgeons, doctors, college principals, and so on.

Mr. Chidambaram became an ardent sevak of the Mission. His joy is that he has travelled with Gurudev, but hear this, "Sometimes he would be in the car and we would be following him by bus, and he would stop our bus, get off the car and travel with us."



'Son-in-law' with Gurudev

Mr. Chidambaram says the greeting 'Hari Om' was probably first introduced during a camp at Tiruvarur. He says, " At the camp, Gurudev said nobody should talk or read newspapers. It was at the Tiruvarur sadhana camp that he introduced Hari Om. He told us that if you want more food, say Hari Om and show your hand. If you want something say Hari Om. But no other talking....!

"While going to Tiruvarur we arranged 4 buses. To identify our group, he gave us each a saffron towel as an identification."

Mr. Chidambaram's memories flow like continuous frames from a movie reel. The detail, the sharpness of his memory and his joy as he recalls Gurudev, are all heart-warming.

In 1962 Mr. Chidambaram left Coimbatore and his teaching profession. The class size was growing - now 300 - and making his voice reach right to the back of the class meant he was straining himself more than he should. Mr. Chidambaram returned to Trichy.

That was also when Kamba Ramayanam was enacted by CM for raising funds at Congress Grounds, Thenampet Road, Chennai.

Knowing Gurudev would be there, he went with his father-in-law to meet Gurudev. "But the volunteers did not allow us to go near him," he recalls. "When Gurudev was walking past us, I shouted out 'Hari Om' as loudly as I could. Gurudev turned around and said, ' Oh son-in-law you are here!!! Come Come !!' Only then the volunteers allowed me to go there and meet him."

CM Trichy then started the Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Srirangam. When Chidambaram ji mentioned it to Gurudev during his visit for a yagna, Gurudev said, 'How will you manage?' Chidamabaram said he intended to enrol 100 members as honorary advisors by taking Rs 1000 from each. "

"Gurudev said, 'Then it is a good idea. In that case I can give you Rs 25000,' and immediately on getting down from the car he went in and brought out Rs 25000 and gave it to me."

One advise he left for Mr. Chidambaram: 'Do not pay teachers poorly.'

"Gurudev wrote to my wife and daughters frequently. Once he asked my wife to organise a Bala Vihar in our drawing hall at our home and said, 'Soon this must become the head BV in Trichy District." It was encouragement like this to the older that brought investments in the lives of children and youth....

Once Gurudev wrote and asked Chidambaram's daughter Kaveri to come to Kodaikanal for his camp. Narrates Mr. Chidambaram, "She could not go as she was already ascheduled to go on a padayatra to Ooty with Swami Nidhyananda of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam. She shared this with Gurudev and he replied, 'very good, there is no difference between them and us.' Thereafter Gurudev gave her tips for living, 'During the summer, get up by 5, prostrate to you mother, wash your teeth and face, then help mother in the kitchen by sweeping, mopping the house. Simultaneously you must learn Purusha Suktam.'



With Gurudev

Within a week she had learnt to chant and wanted to chant in front of Gurudev."

But an opportunity did not present for long.

Mr. Chidambaram tried very hard to create the opportunity and that was how he went to Cochin with Kaveri to attend a camp. They stayed at the FACT Guest House. He decided he would have Kaveri chant before Gurudev after lunch that day. But what happened was a surprise.

Mr. Chidambaram recalls, "But that morning, during class Gurudev noted her presence. Completing the class 5 minutes earlier, he asked Kaveri to chant the Purusha Suktam, without my having to even mention it!"

It was at this camp in 1989-90, he clarifies, that it was decided to start Chinmaya International Foundation at Veliyanad Cochin. "Swamiji announced this decision and immediately he got up and auctioned the chair that he was sitting on! The first amount for CIF was collected thus!

The Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam , in Tiruparaithurai, Tiruchi district, was headed by Swami Chidbhavananda. Once at a yagna, Gurudev expressed a wish to meet Swami Chidbhavananda.

Says Mr. Chidambaram, "Swami Chidbhavananda was very elderly but he came down the stairs to meet Gurudev because he knew our Swamiji was a heart patient. Both of them talked for about 15 minutes."

On a different occasion when he requested Swami Chidbhavananda for a Foreword for a souvenir, Swamiji wrote a blessing letter, with these words, "Swami Chinmayananda is the modern day Vivekananda, (come) like a cyclone. Let the cyclone flow forcefully."

44. The Sceptic's Forgotten Prayer

20-06-2015

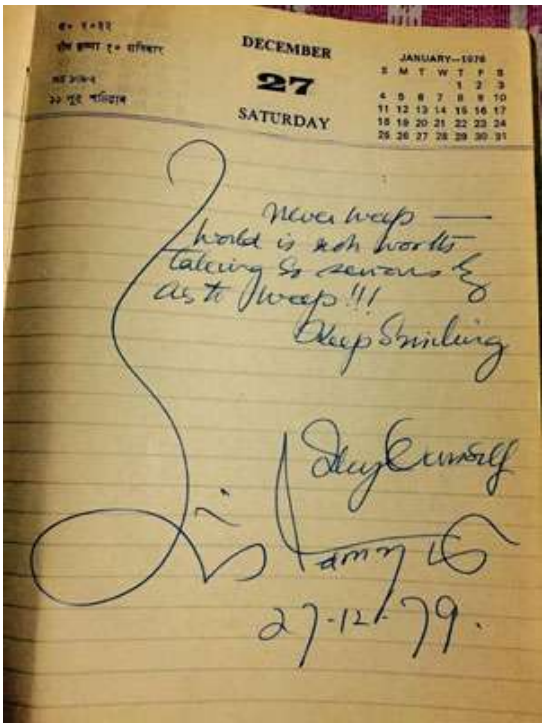
Suhasini Ramesh is a Gynaecologist and lives in Hyderabad

Suhasini had never doubted that God is real, but then she never seriously thought about the all-knowing and all pervading nature of God. She prayed by habit because it brought relief and peace of mind. Whether her prayers were heard or answered she would know in most unusual way.

When she later joined medical school in Guntur, there was a branch of Ramakrishna Mission nearby, that she attended periodically. Sometimes she would feel very sorry that she had not been born during their times. She often prayed to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa asking him to send her a Guru like Swami Vivekananda.

She first heard about Swami Chinmayananda from her mother, who said “If you are so impressed by Swami Vivekananda's lectures, then you must listen to Swami Chinmayananda ; If you hear him once you will be so enthralled that you can neither eat nor sleep for days !” But she remained skeptical.

The first time she heard Gurudev was in Hyderabad. She saw an advertisement in the paper announcing Gurudev's gnyana yagna and she requested her cousin to take her there. When she saw Gurudev on the dais and heard his lecture, the skeptic in her remained unimpressed. "I thought swamis should be serene and not be laughing aloud. But there he was, shaking with laughter!" says Suhasini ji.



A Message of smiles ... her first meeting

In 1979 Gurudev was in Guntur. Suhasini was in her 3rd year at medical college. "Smt. Laxmi Reddy who came to chant for Gurudev for his Gita Jnana Yagna, was known to my mother and she stayed with us."

This time, Suhasini ji did not hear just a part of a lecture, but she attended the whole yagna " I was very impressed by the clarity with which Gurudev explained the deepest philosophical truths and all my doubts dissolved one by one," she says.

"The first time Smt Laxmi Reddy introduced me to him, Gurudev said, 'Suhasini? But she never smiles!' But then I wondered why he said that, because I did smile a lot-in his presence! But actually what he said was true, because I was very emotional and sensitive. I would worry about so many things, which took my smiles away. "

During the yagna there was bhiksha organized by her mother for Gurudev. He later wrote to her thanking her. "This surprised me very much, " says Suhasini ji. "How could such a busy person take time to write a letter just to thank!?" Suhasini wrote back to Gurudev and said ' I am so happy and grateful you came; all my doubts are cleared.' But Gurudev wrote back saying "thanks for your kind letter, but don't think all your doubts are cleared, some more will again crop up and you will need more information to clear them, keep writing to me."

Suhasini ji replied to this and sent him three questions. And Gurudev wrote back a two paged letter explaining clearly and elaborately. And thus it went on for one more round. And when she mentioned that he had taken pains to write to her,

Gurudev said, ' ....that is my job...'

The next time, Gurudev came to Hyderabad was in 1981.This time, because of all the letters between them and his growing fondness for the young girl, Gurudev referred to her as ' My own....my own...'



A young Suhasini with Gurudev

A small turbulence took place in the mind of Suhasini's father. His daughter had always been clear about her priorities, and now seeing this letter exchange, this growing familiarity, he worried about her enthusiasm. So he would ask to read all the letters she received. And then he would be very apprehensive, and say, ' why would such a famous and busy saint take time to write elaborately to one person like you?' Her father feared Suhasini would turn away from her life towards the Mission.

"When father said that again and again, I began to wonder too," says Suhasini ji. (She didn't know that Gurudev wrote thousands of letters to thousands of people like her.)

When her medical studies were completed, the family began to look for a match. But Suhasini wished to be independant. "So I wrote to Gurudev about this. But a thought cropped: if he says 'Get married', then it means that he does not have any selfish interest in me for the Mission."

"At last I got the reply. In no uncertain terms. he wrote to me - 'You must marry. Marriage is natural and both of you can together walk the spiritual path.'

" My doubt was now cleared . But a fresh argument rose with renewed vigor. I wrote to him six reasons why I did not want to marry. I told him that among doctors and in my community to find a partner who wants to walk the spiritual path is rare. "So what you are suggesting cannot happen! And not everyone needs to marry. One can live without marrying!"



Suhasini, Family and Gurudev

"He replied: I agree to all your logic but not to the conclusion because- I can see!." That was it.

Yet again she wrote back "This is not fair Swamiji, you are striking out all that I said and saying I must marry!

"He wrote back and said, 'It is your life, the decision is yours, if you want to go ahead, get the raw experiences of life, and then decide. Why don't you surrender to the all- knowing God and allow Him to plan for you?' and ended the letter with -Jai Jagadeeswara!!'

"When I got that letter, I got scared. I introspected for long and realised the truth of his words. Then I wrote, Swamiji, yes I surrender to God let him plan for me. I will leave it to Him to decide.

"Gurudev was very happy to get my response and said, 'I am so happy, you have come to the right path. The highest is surrender. Don't alter Ram's plan for you (Rama was my ishta devata).' "

That year the family found a good match and Suhasini was married. After marriage she was taken aback to find out that her husband was part of a hindu organisation that was known for its very radical views. Suhasini soon wrote to Gurudev explaining all this, and he replied, "Don't discourage his enthusiasm; this will gradually turn into spiritual ardour."

The skeptic in Suhasini was uncomfortable, " I thought he would discourage Ramesh and write to him, but he did not!"

Then a few months later opportunity knocked. Gurudev had a yagna at Anantapur and the entire family met him. Dr. Ramesh introduced himself to Gurudev identifying with his hindu organisation and Gurudev said in reply, "You don't try to change her. "



Suhasini Kambhan, today

Dr. Ramesh, nodded and said, "No Swamiji no no, I won't try to change her."

Gurudev's response: "Four years I tried, not an iota of change!!!"

And that broke the ice, and everybody laughed and Dr. Ramesh also relaxed.

Suhasini ji was to soon have an experience that she would never forget.

What happened was Suhasini's father underwent a bypass surgery in the US in the year 1987. Within 24 hours of the surgery, he developed a complication and he called her from the hospital and said 'I am dying'. Whereas according to the nurse, he was fine- which meant that the complication was not recognized!

Suhasini began to cry bitterly. And in her anxious state she prayed incessantly. " I was crying so much. I was virtually holding Gurudev and demanding, 'You have to do something NOW otherwise I will never forgive myself, I was the one who convinced him for this surgery! Now you have to take care, do something.. save him!" and she

was weeping.

In three hours she was at the hospital with her brother-in-law.

"When we reached the hospital, my father was sitting up comfortably in bed and talking! The nurse later explained to me that he needed 3 bottles of blood which they did not realize. Once they gave him blood he was fine. Immediately all my stress and tension was relieved and I forgot all about it".

All along I was corresponding with Gurudev and he had replied 'I am sure he will recover fast and be as young as ever!' "At no stage did I mention to Gurudev that my father had had a complication after surgery. Once he was ok, I had forgotten all about it. Prayer gave me relief - so I prayed... I never thought of prayers being answered.

" I met Gurudev five months after the surgery in Tirupati. He was being hosted at Bhimas Hotel. Usually he would enquire about my children and Ramesh. This time he asked about my father first. I said he is fine.

Gurudev: Absolutely fine?

Me: Yes Swamiji

Gurudev (Pauses...then) Did he have any complication after the surgery?

Suhasini was surprised; it seemed irrelevant six months after the surgery. And neither could she remember anything. So she said, "No Swamiji ..."

Gurudev: (Pausing) Mmm, no complication at all?

Suhasini was puzzled. "I had written so many times and told him father was fine so then why is he asking about his condition now? Then I remembered father had swelling of feet. So I said yes Swamiji he had swelling of feet.

Gurudev said, ' Oh that is a minor thing. '

Suhasini was even more puzzled. What was he driving at?

Gurudev: Anything major... a little after the surgery?

"Instantly I remembered all that happened, how I had prayed, how desperate I was..., and how I had demanded holding onto Gurudev, that my father be saved...

"I felt extremely guilty, the moment I remembered this! Before I could say anything, he patted me on my hand and said, "It is alright, it is alright."

"I was bursting to express and convey to him what actually happened, but to my utter surprise he completely changed the topic, and did not allow me to explain! He talked to others who accompanied me and thereafter turned back to his work.

"I came out puzzled and dazed, wondering why Gurudev had questioned me persistently and when I finally remembered... he would not let me tell!! I decided I must find another opportunity and explain to Gurudev, but that never happened. Time passed. Gurudev attained mahasamadhi."

" Some time later I was once having a chat with a friend from the US -- she is very spiritual. I narrated all this to her. 'Gurudev insisted so much till I remembered and when at last I remembered why didn't he let me tell? " I asked her.

"She said, ' It is not that 'he' wanted to know... He wanted 'you' to know that he knew!. (That your prayer was heard.)

"Then it dawned on me. So he heard my prayer and had been hearing my prayers all along... reaffirming the three divine qualities- omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence."

45. "Will you listen to me this time?"

21-06-2015

Rose Ann Blau is one of the oldest devotees of Gurudev living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. She is 83 years old. Her story is being told in two parts. Today we present Part One.

I clearly recall, in 1951, (the same year that Swami Chinmayananda gave his first talk in Pune, India) I was mopping the kitchen floor at home. All at once I clearly heard a kind, but firm inner call to enter the convent. It seemed that this voice was very familiar. It was an easy move to enter the convent because of the strong Christian vasanas I had at the time.

About 19 years later, I received the same firm inner call to leave the convent. After this I moved to Milwaukee, to a condo near a small meditation chapel owned and operated by a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda. A few months before his death in 1978, the owner, Dr. George Gay told me that I was going to meet a very, very great person. He placed great stress on what a great and holy man he was. That person proved to be Swami Chinmayananda.

In 1979, we learnt of a Vedanta Camp in Olivet, Michigan. My friend Mavis and I paid up and just before leaving for camp, we learned that the camp was going to be taught by Swami Chinmaya.,

Several times I had heard that when the “student is ready, the teacher comes.” Dr. Apparao Mukkamala met us at the airport and asked us to wait there because Swami Chinmayananda’s plane will arrive shortly and we could help to welcome him. Mavis and I laughed because we did not know who he was, but we did stay to welcome him on 28th July 1979!



Rose Ann with Gurudev - 1981

When Gurudev got off the plane, he looked down and did not look at anyone. Seeing him for the first time, I was attracted to him like a strong magnet. I know he was the person that I was seeking and that he had answers to questions that I wanted to know. Years later, I hear Gurudev say several times that when you meet your guru, it is love at first sight.

I decided that I wanted to talk to Swami Chinmayananda. I had no idea what I wanted to talk to him about but felt it would be wonderful talking to such a great master. Soon after this, I saw him walking on the sidewalk and went out to meet him. Before I had a chance to talk to him, a lady came with her six month old child for Swamiji to bless. Swamiji was playing with his tiny fingers and toes, etc. The child did not react at all and just kept staring at him. Then Gurudev turned and looked directly at me and said, “This is the way I like them.”

When he left them, I was going to ask Gurudev if I could talk to him, but he quickly said, “Come.” When we got to the door of the building where he was staying, I walked a little faster so I could open the door, but Gurudev said, “No.” As he opened the door, he did not tell me in words, but I clearly understood that he would open many doors in my life. When I look back over these 30 years, he has truly opened many doors in my life.



We got to his room and a young fellow was sitting on the floor, waiting for him to come. Gurudev sat on the davenport and I asked him if he would sign the Geeta book that I purchased. He said to come and sit next to him. Instead of just signing the book, he wrote a full page on how to study the Geeta. At the end he signed it, “Love, Love, Love, Chinmaya.” I told him that I really liked this. While all this was going on, the young fellow was telling Swamiji that his girlfriend wanted to start a cosmetic business. In order to prove his love for her, he would financially pay the whole bill for the business. He wanted Gurudev’s blessing on this business. I was

eager to hear Gurudev's reply, but he did not respond at all.

Later at this camp, devotees could have their pictures taken with Swami Chinmayananda. We all lined up and when it was my turn to go for the picture, Swamiji asked me who my spiritual director was. I told him, and in the same breath I asked him, "Who are you anyway?" Very slowly he told me that he was a "great writer" and placed much emphasis on the word "great." Then he asked me, "Will you listen to me this time?" From this question, I was certain that he had been my teacher in a previous lifetime.

Once at a camp, Gurudev asked me to write to him. I told him that I would love to, but he is so busy, I did not want to bother him. He told me to let him worry about that and he would like to have me write to him often. (After his Mahasamadhi, I counted 64 letters that he had written to me. I gave most of the hand written letters by Gurudev to Bombay for the archives and made copies of them for myself.)

In 1982, Swami Chinmayananda asked me to travel with him for three months in India. There were about six or seven others guests who travelled along with him. Generally, we stayed at a different home than he stayed. One day, the lady of the house where Gurudev stayed, came to me and said that Gurudev told them that he picked me out from nowhere. I grew up on a farm and the only religious contact was Catholicism, and I was in a convent. There were no Swamis and no vedantic exposure whatsoever. She wanted to know how I could make this big a transition. Many people in India want to travel with Swamiji, but did not have the blessing of travelling with him.

It must have been my good karma from past lives. I did get a lot of help from Gurudev to make this transition, and it was not easy. For the rest, Gurudev would know.

We attended a camp in Sidhabari. This was absolutely wonderful. While there, Gurudev asked me about taking the two year course in Sidhabari. Later after returning home, I wrote to Swami Chinmayananda and declined this opportunity. Gurudev wrote back and said that if I cannot come to Krishna, Krishna would come to me.



I made this for Chinmaya
Birth Centennial Celebration
3-2015

At the end of the Sidhabari camp, a group of us were waiting for a bus to pick us up. I decided to say “Goodbye” to Hanuman along with some other prayers. Then I went back to the group waiting for the bus. All at once, Gurudev came out of his kutia, which is next to Hanuman, and said, “Rose Ann, could you come over here?” All I heard was my name, so I did not move. One of the ladies waiting asked me if I was Rose Ann. I said yes. She said that Swamiji wants you to come over to him. I asked her, “Why?” She said that I would have to ask him about that. When I got there, I was about to ask him what he wanted, but he gave me a big hug. I think this was a response to the prayer to Hanuman.

Another great place we stopped at was Kurukshetra. As soon as I got out of the car, I sensed a whole different feeling in the atmosphere. I asked the Indian lady who was travelling with us what this holy atmosphere was and she proceeded to tell me about the Great War that was fought there.

We also stopped at the birthplace of Sri Adi Sankara. Chinmaya Mission members from that area strongly encouraged Gurudev to purchase the property. Swami Chinmayananda put both hands on his head and asked where he would get the money and who would run it. He then had a meeting with the mission organizers and the owner of Sri Adi Sankara’s birthplace.

The guests were given a tour of the place by a tour guide. The teakwood ceilings were as awesome as the day the home was built. I loved the “water well” on the first floor which was still working. We also saw the room where Sri Adi Sankara was born! Seven years later, Chinmaya Mission purchased this property to become home to Chinmaya International Foundation..

While travelling with Swamiji, one day he told me that he was my Guru and if anything is unclear or wrong, he wanted to know about it. I wondered why he told

me this, because I already knew he was my Guru. That evening the President of Chinmaya Mission from that area introduced Swami Chinmayananda before the lecture series started. At the end he added, “I remember the year, day and hour that Gurudev told me that he was my Guru.” He continued what a great blessing this was when the Guru tells you that he is your own Guru.

(..... continued)

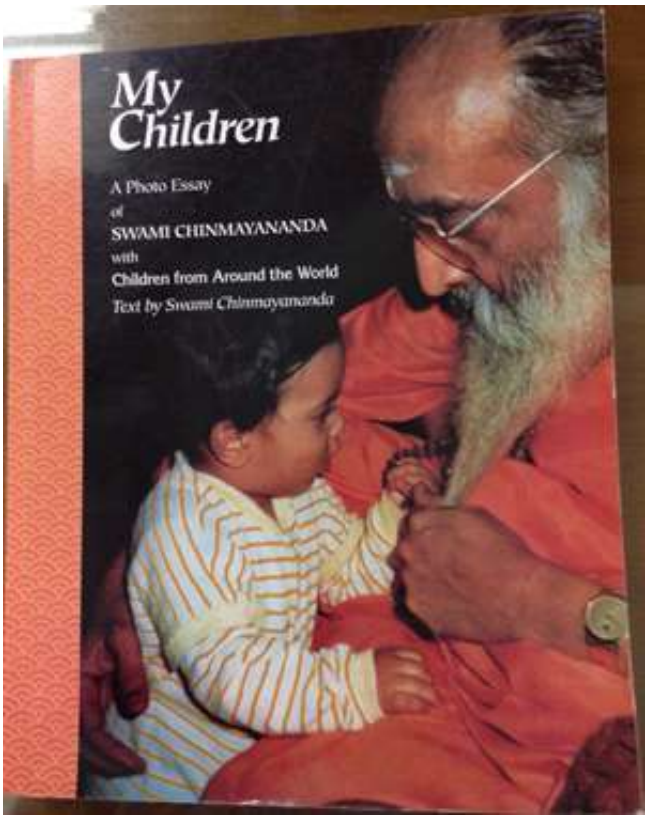
46. "Am I not here right now?"

22-06-2015



Rose Ann Blau is one of the oldest devotees of Gurudev living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. She is 83 years old. Her story is being told in two parts. Today we present Part Two.

One day when traveling with Gurudev, I asked him if I could obtain a pair of his sandals. He said yes. When I got the sandals, the oil on the bottom of Gurudev's feet left an imprint of the bottom of his feet on the sandals. All his toes and arches were clearly delineated. Over the past 30 years, the oil was apparently absorbed into the wood of the sandals and is no longer visible.



Cover image 'My Children'

I had often wondered if Swami Chinmayananda gave me the instructions to enter and leave the convent. The way it happened before I actually met him on July 28, 1979. As time passed, it became clear to me that he did indeed give me these inner directives. Entering the convent gave me time to exhaust many Christian vasanas. Not long after I left the convent, I met Swami Chinmayananda and then I could benefit directly from my Guru's teachings. He also told me that he was my Guru which may not have worked out very well in the convent, so my Guru had a plan and direction for my life.

Chinmaya Mission Chicago purchased property for a new centre. It was about this time that I moved to Illinois, near the centre and attended the classes taught there. I worked at the VA Hospital in the Department of Radiology as a Registered Radiologic Technologist.

I loved to watch Swami Chinmayananda interact with children. He really loved children. I asked him if I could compile a book with pictures of him interacting with children and if he could give a title to this book. He said yes and named the book, 'My Children'. With Gurudev's blessings and through Anjali Singh, I was able to get many of the pictures of Gurudev with children from around the world.

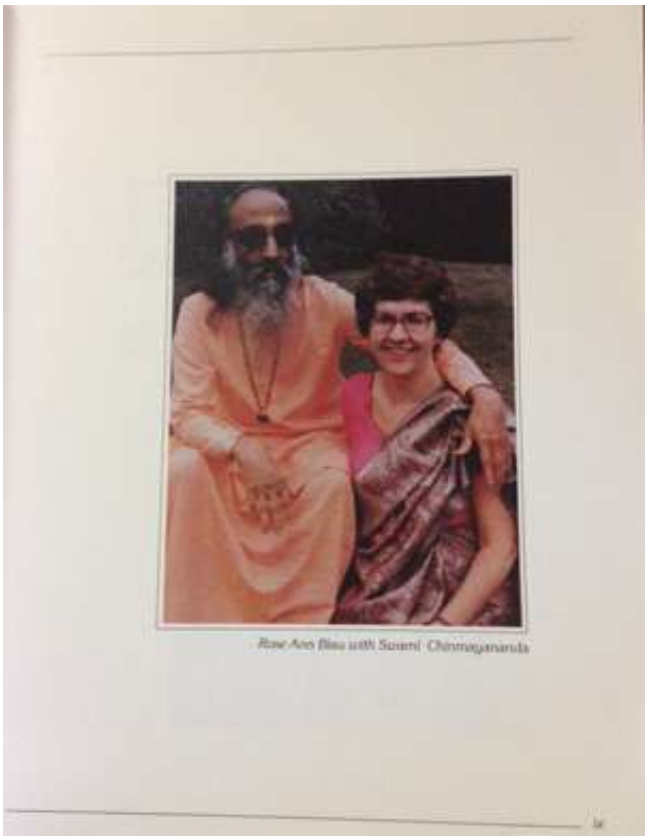
Once at a camp, as we filed up to get Gurudev's blessing, putting the chandan-tilak on my forehead, he told me that in about two years I would be leaving Chinmaya Mission Chicago. I was shocked and did not believe him, but Gurudev told me

several times not to worry, that all would be okay.



'My Children' inside ...

During the last camp before Gurudev took Mahasamadhi, I was given an insight of how serious his health really was. I kept thinking about how awful this was. He picked up my thoughts and told me that his devotees did not want to leave him. He asked me if I would forgive him if he left. I said, “Yes, but...” He asked, “But what?” I asked him what my relationship with him would be after he left his body. He said, “Look at me, am I not here right now?” I said, “Yes.” He then asked me to close my eyes and asked me if he is not there now. I told him, “Yes.” He said, “It is like that.” I learned later that this great master gave personal goodbyes to many of his devotees before taking Mahasamadhi. The manner of all the goodbyes was different. Later, I retired from the VA Hospital and returned to my home state in Wisconsin. Before moving, I recalled what Gurudev had told me two years earlier about leaving Chinmaya Mission Chicago, Illinois. After that I attended many of Gurudev’s annual camps in the United States.



The Lady who compiled the book Rose Ann Blau with Gurudev

In 2014, I attended the Mahasamadhi Camp in Michigan. Before leaving, two members of Chinmaya Mission Michigan approached me and said that their daughter had moved to the Milwaukee area and was wondering if I wanted to join her and start a Chinmaya Mission Milwaukee. I did try after returning home but nothing seemed to work out. Finally, I told Gurudev that if he wanted a Chinmaya Mission in Milwaukee that he would have to make it happen.

Sometime later, I called Ashok Bhatia, a very senior sevak from Chinmaya Mission Yaminotri, the largest Chinmaya Mission Centre closest to Milwaukee about to help starting a mission here. I made an appointment with him for November 9, 2014. A few days before leaving, I got a call from a lady named Sujatha Aswath, telling me that she would like to start a Chinmaya Mission in Milwaukee. I told her that I had an appointment with Ashok Bhatia to discuss exactly this. After communication back and forth, our first organizational meeting was held on March 2, 2014. The first Bala Vihar class started March 16, 2014.

In February 2015, Swami Sharananda wrote to Sujatha Awasthi: “Hari Om. My heart is filled with unfathomable joy and immeasurable gratitude of all you are doing for

Gurudev Paduka Puja in the holy presence of our most beloved Acharya Dhirenji. CM Milwaukee has a great future. It will be a very powerful spiritual energy in that area. I pray for Puja Gurudev and Pujya Guruji's Blessings on all of you."



With the blessings of Gurudev, Chinmaya Mission Milwaukee today is doing very well. The padukas that Gurudev had given me in 1983, I bring for the paduka pooja. The hosts of the home where the Paduka Puja's are held felt it was like having Gurudev in their home due to the fact that he wore these sandals.

I am grateful to my Guru, H.H. Swami Chinmayananda, for all the love, guidance and blessings he had so generously given to me all these years.

47. The Jyoti at Kumarakoil

23-06-2015

Swamini Divyananda is one of our oldest swaminis. She lives at Chinmaya Gardens in Coimbatore.

Kamala was 16 and a very proud nationalist. Serving society was a very important aspect of who she was. And with time these feelings have grown stronger and sharper under the mentorship of Gurudev.

Today as Swamini Divyananda, and at the glorious age of 75, her handwriting very legible and perfect, she patiently pens down in long hand her memories, her thoughts, her feelings. But chief among these are those about our country, India.

'Our motherland is Bharat, the land which values Knowledge, the knowledge of one's own self. We have our Guruparampara starting from Sadasiva. For us Guru is Brahmam Itself. There are Rishis who move from place to place to spread the knowledge of the Self. In the same way, Swami Chinmayananda, our Pujya Gurudev, is a Rishi of the present century. He spread the Knowledge of Bhagavad Geeta to the modern people who had forgotten their culture and spirituality due to the continuous influence of foreign rulers. The Father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi was able to save India from foreigners but the culture of our Nation could be revived only by sages as great as Gurudev. He moved from city to city, state to state addressing the youth. English was his medium and the method was Geeta Gnana Yagna; the flow of his speech and language were compared to the Niagara Falls!" Even her eloquence comes from he Guru.

In 1957 when Gurudev came to Trivandrum for his first Geeta Gnana Yagna, Kamala was then secretary of the local Balika Samaj, an organisation that served the society through feeding the poor, and related social service. The patron of this Balika Samaj was the wife of the Chief Minister - Mrs. Pattam Thanu Pillai. Calling Kamala she told her that the young need to have cultural inputs as well; social service would get meaning thereby. For Kamala, 'cultural' only stood for the Geeta. Thinking about how she must do this, she noticed this yagna sala that had come up next to the local Sree Padmanabaswami Temple. She learnt it was a Geeta Gnana Yagna. Just what she she needed! Going up to the saffron clad Swamiji there she introduced her Balika Samaj and said, 'Can you help us? We need to have cultural classes.' Gurudev told some officers there to help her out. But he watched for a few days...



Swamini Divyananda

Sure enough, attracted by the Geeta anyway, Kamala and her friends decided they too would attend the Geeta Gnana Yagna.

The next day Kamala found her spot in the front row near the bhajan singers. She recalls now, "Swamiji entered the yagna sala exactly at 6.30 pm. and sat on the Vyas peeth. He was looking straight at me. I was stunned for a few seconds, and felt a deep transformation taking place." That one gaze was enough to fill her with great energy! Amma says, "Slowly I became normal and realized that some change has taken place in me. I still remember this incident."

Other transformations also began to happen. The Balvihar classes began at the Balika Samaj as also Study Groups for the older members of the Vanitha Samaj. By and by, she says, 'every home in that locality was reverberating with Gurudev's bhajans.' Soon that Balika Samaj became a full fledged Bal vihar and soon, also the Chinmaya Mission Center!

Before long, Kamala had applied for a job in the public sector and had to attend a job interview. There was a written test component and one of the questions asked was, "Name one famous Indian philosopher." Kamala was clear, there was absolutely no doubt; she wrote 'Swami Chinmayananda'.

"That pleased my interviewer far more. I also got that job!" She says gleefully.

As time passed, her performance in the government department where she worked, was highly lauded and she says, "With Gurudev's blessing I progressed and even got a medal from the President of India for my good work. "

Soon Swamini amma was working actively towards Gurudev' Mission and vision. The

Balika Samaj had already become a Mission Center and she and her team were holding Balavihar classes in various parts of the city as well as Study Groups and so on. Once a month, the satsang would be held at the women's organisation that she ran. There she would invite scholars from the city and Swamis of Sri Ramakrishna Mission to talk on philosophical topics.

Amma now recalls another visit by Gurudev. "During this visit Gurudev asked me to accompany him to Kollangode for a Balavihar meet. I told Gurudev that my office will not sanction leave for 5 days. Swamiji gave an example in family life. “A girl’s brother’s marriage has been arranged. Her father in law is seriously ill. The girl has to give importance to duty and not sentiment.” Swamini amma heard this and understood that her attention to duty was appreciated by Gurudev.

But the balavihar children were adamant. "They said that unless I accompany them, they will not go for the balavihar meet!" explains Swamini amma. The parents of the children also insisted that I should go. I went to the meet along with the children.

" Of course Gurudev asked me how I managed to get leave. I told Gurudev that I told my officer that I have to go to test my eyes, and got leave. Gurudev broke into a laughter and started playfully acting out, 'Oh my eyes are paining...!' Everybody around got concerned and were about to call a doctor.

"Swamiji smiled and continued to tease me. I said, 'Swamiji I came here to

get my inner eyes tested, not my physical eyes!' Swamiji laughed loudly and patted me on by back."

The group that was now actively establishing all grassroot activities in Trivandrum now started a Chinmaya Vidyalaya too in that city. Gurudev remarked “Swami Chinmayananda has not taken sanyas to start schools!”

Swamini amma says, "I answered – 'Swamiji has told us often, – 'catch them young to impart culture and dharma.' We have Dhruva, Prahalad etc., in our puranas and we must give the purport of their stories to the Chinmaya Children as a moral education'."

Gurudev agreed and Kamala helped begin the Chinmaya Vidyalalyas and in the rural areas.

It was this time that Gurudev told Kamala to resign from her job and join the Vedanta Course in Sandeepany, Mumbai and become a full time worker of the Mission.

She was now Brni Shraddha Chaitanya. "After completing the course I organized Gurudev’s yagnas at Kollam and Alappuzha. Many devotees helped us extend the Mission work in these places. We also started vidyalayas at Kollam and Alappuzha. Gurudev gave financial support to purchase land for Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Alappuzha. I was able to get the support of the local people and fulfill my work only due to His grace and love."

Swamini Divyananda lives in the memories of Gurudev -- nothing more. She recalls vividly her last vision of Gurudev at his mahasamadhi at Sidhabari. "It was most touching," she says. "I had taken with me a tulasi-thechi mala (made of thetti flowers, Ixora) with me (specially made for Gurudev by a teacher, now Brni.Brahmi Chaitanya, see Story 38) when I went. When this mala was offered, Sw. Purushottamanandaji remarked “Kerala mala for Kerala Swami. ”

(It was the year after the mahasamadhi that Shraddha ji received sanyas diksha from Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. She was now Swamini Divyananda.)

But for this Kerala Swami, Swamini amma saved up the best birthday gift for the Centenary year.

How a devotee carries a sankalpa through her life till she has the wherewithal to accomplish it, is the Guru's grace.

Way way back in the mid 60s, when Gurudev conducted a yagna in Nagerkoil, Swamini Divyananda wished Nagerkoil would have a Mission center for she always held the feeling that wherever Gurudev conducted a yagna a Mission center was a natural outcome. And she had said as much to Gurudev.

But owing to the reconstruction of the Madras Presidency during those days, the status of Nagerkoil (Kanyakumari district) was not known. Those days it was with the Thiruvananthapuram district (Kerala State), four of whose tehsils were to be later pulled out to form the new district of Kanyakumari and they were made a part of the Madras Presidency. (Today Kanyakumari is a part of Tamil Nadu)

But all these goings on also meant no new establishment, including no new Mission Center was being formed those days.

But Amma however was made of sterner stuff. She says, "My ambition was to have a Mission in Nagerkoil, and with that intention had purchased a small piece of land (27.5 cents) at Kumarakoil a small village in Kanyakumari district where the famous Subramanya Swamy Temple is celebrated.

"When my health deteriorated I tried to sell the land, dividing it into 3 parts" – to be allocated to family and Mission and her own expenses. But she was unable to sell the land. She then spoke to Pujya Guruji and expressed her difficulty and asked if she could instead donate it to the Mission, specifically the Chinmaya Garden Trust, where she now lives, under their care. Pujya Guruji agreed.

This Centenary year, her wish came full circle. The decision on the land also reached culmination. The Jyoti was also coming and of course it was the 100th year of Gurudev. Swamini Divyananda is very pleased that the Chinmaya Jyoti made its first Tamil Nadu halt in Kumarakoil! It felt like Gurudev came to grace the land with his divine feet. Her delight is in her words, " The Jyothi was received by Swamini Vimalananda along with me, Brni. Brahmi Chaitanya and many local devotees. All the Tamil Nadu Acharyas had accompanied the Jyothi. The function was well organized by Chinmaya Garden Trust. Brahmi did the Paduka Puja.

"I feel happy that my desire of a Mission Center in Kumarakoil, Kamyakumari district will soon materialize as a part of Chinmya Mission's continual growth."

Swamini amma often thinks about Sidhabari, the place of Gurudev. " I do not have the courage to go to Siddhabari anymore. My back bone is now damaged (physically as well as spiritually) with the 5th bone worn out. Even walking is difficult for me now. But from the memories of the work with Gurudev I derive energy....."

And of course he will grace the Mission Center coming up at Kumarakoil....

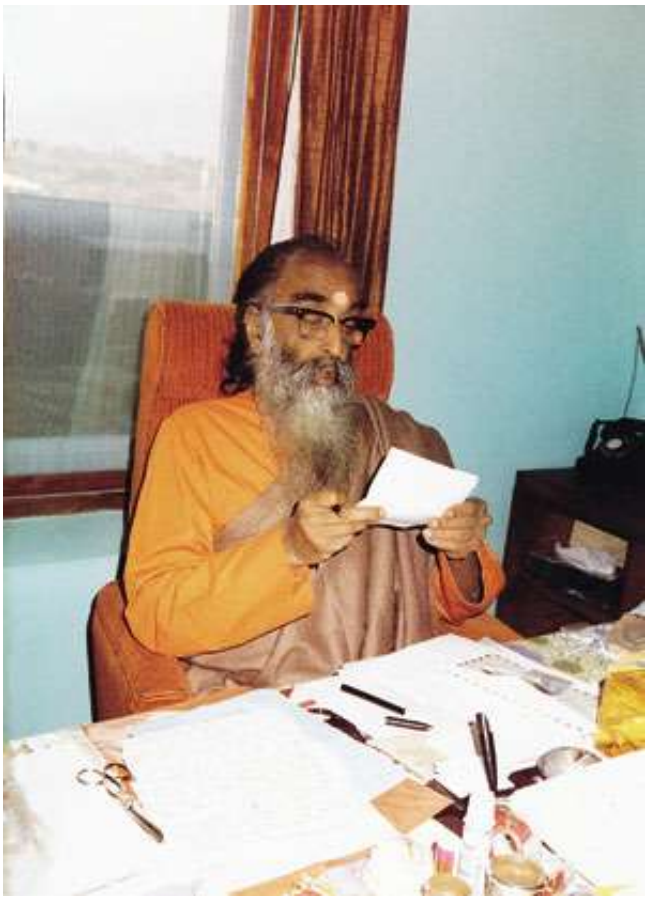
48. One Day in the Post ...

24-06-2015

There have been so many days and so many devotees and each one has witnessed his leela. Some they have claimed as their own, naturally. Some just took place as they watched. This is one such. We call them Stories of His Leela

It was any other day at Sandeepany Sadhanalay, Powai, Mumbai. Gurudev was sitting at his desk in his kutiya attending to his mail.

Gurudev was a stickler for methods and process. Almost everyone knows that by now. He would open a mail, read it, then if there was a detailed reply due, as in the case of queries, he would write it out in long hand, then fold it in two places so neatly that ends met ends and the mail fitted just precisely into the envelope on which Gurudev would handwrite the address. Then he would stick the envelope and drop it into a designated pile near him on the floor for Jairam ji or Sivaram ji to take it to the post office.



In conversation with his devotees...

There were some mails which needed a yes/no reply, in which case Gurudev would say so next to the para in the mail and sign it. Or reply on the mail and post it back to the sender.

As he did all this watching him keenly were Jairam ji (brother of Amar Jaisinghani), Sivaraman ji, Keshav ji and one other devotee. They unblinkingly watched Gurudev's movements with every mail he opened, with the same interest and intrigue.

Once in a while he would look up and say something. There was a glass of sweet lime for Gurudev to drink. He would sip from it once in a while. Then he would return to his mails.

And then he opened one more mail. It was an invitation which had come to Gurudev anyway. He opened and read it out to the four wide-eyed foursome sitting there. It was from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Then to his keen audience of four, he read out "Kulpati Munshi Award - Medallion with Cash Prize of Rs 1 Lakh -- To Nani Palkhivala —.. To be Presented by HH Swami Chinmayananda...."

He followed this with a long sigh. Then Gurudev said, "Yes, I remember Parameswaran telling me.. Good!"
Then he put it down and started smiling, a wry kind of smile that was followed by a low laugh. The foursome only watched him.

He said, "Here we are looking for money and what is this man going to do with all this money when he does not even need it...!

"One lakh...! Exactly what we need for the ashram and look at Him passing it through the Swami's fingers! Swami needs it just as much... look at Him teasing me..."

Then he raised his arm, his fingers curled in, and only the little finger lifted. Then he said, "If Krishna could lift the mountain with His little finger should not this Swami also try?"

Then another pause and he said, "Nevermind ... it goes on, it goes on...as long as He wants it to...."

(From the collection of Shri M. Keshav)

49. From the back of the room ... to his heart

25-06-2015

Dr. Apparao Mukkamla is a radiologist from Flint, Michigan, who would normally not have anything to do with Swamis until he met Gurudev. A devotee very close to Gurudev , this is a story of how the Guru took him upto his heart.

May 1977. Apparao was doing his residency in Radiology in Flint, Michigan. One day, some of his seniors who had been his teachers at medical college in Guntur, asked him to drive them to Ottawa in Canada as they wished to attend the lectures by a swami named Chinmayananda. Apparao had not met this swami ever but he had heard of him. Why, he now recalled seeing posters announcing lectures by this Swamiji, when he was in medical school in Guntur.

Today 13 years hence, well ... he might be even meeting him. Apparao was not greatly excited. He was merely playing chauffer for his seniors over the 10 hour drive.



Apparao ji, extreme right with Gurudev, Guruji and family

It was 2 pm when they reached Ottawa. Swamiji was holding a satsang at the Sheraton hotel and his seniors who he had driven here, went and prostrated to him. They were familiar with this Swami's work, with his study groups. Hence they were naturals. That included his wife, Sumathi. But Apparao stood afar, by the door.

The group sat and Gurudev asked them where they were coming from. Sumathi replied with joy, "From Flint, to see Swamiji!" Apparao was the man ferrying the group, he knew his role and he just played witness.

Presently Gurudev initiated his famous Q&A session. "The discussion they were having was way above my head," says Apparao ji. "Jivatma, paramatma prarabda,

vasana.... and the swami was responding eyes half closed, his answers shooting like bullets."

A small moment of humour brought a little change of flavour when the Swami asked Apparao's wife where are you from? She said 'from Guntur ... I saw you there the first time'. And she added, ' Later you came to Kakinada when I was a young student.' And Gurudev said, ' I was also young that time.' Apparao smiled. Funny retort, nice, warm, friendly, logical.... he liked this Swami.

The satsang ended. That was first day of yagna.

Then they went back for the evening lecture. Apparao ji played chauffer again. It was at the University of Ottawa. The yagna was inaugurated by the Indian High Commissioner. Gurudev's introductory talk was on karya karana siddhanta - cause-effect relation. Says Apparao ji, "Hilarious jokes and very animated lecture!"

He was clearly warming up. But he was yet at the back of the room, the others were in the middle. The hall was half full. Yes, he had warmed up, for he says, "I was thoroughly impressed, for it was a logical explanation of cause and effect and Swamiji was explaining all this without taking the name of God! Same consciousness pervaded every being, whether it is animal plant or human. Gurudev was saying when that Consciousness is gone we become inert." For the medical man he was, logic was the key to gaining his acceptance.

The next morning the group went again. "This time I went and prostrated," says Apparao ji matter-of-factly. "Gurudev asked me, 'Why were you sitting at the back?' I shrugged my shoulders.

Gurudev: What do you think of the lecture?

Apparao ji: Thoroughly impressed.

Gurudev: I hope you are going to attend the lecture today?

Apparao ji: No Sir; we are leaving today.

Gurudev: You drove 10 hours to attend one lecture?

Apparao ji: We have to get back to work on Monday.

After 30 minutes Gurudev went into his room and called Apparao ji. " I went and stood in front of him. He opened his briefcase and pulled out his diary. "Next June I am coming to Flint...."

Apparao ji: For what?

Gurudev: For lectures on Bhagvad Gita. Since you are here for just a short time you can hear a full week at Flint. I will be in touch with you, give me your address.

Recalls Apparao ji, "I came out and told my senior colleagues that Swamiji had told

me that he was coming to Flint and so on. They said, 'Give us a break!' They simply did not believe me.

Within 7-8 days Gurudev wrote to Apparao ji confirming the Flint Geeta Jnana Yagna on Chapter 12 in the evening and Kenopanishad in the morning.

Now Apparao ji felt Detroit had a larger Indian community and suggested to his friends that the yagna should be in Detroit instead. The yagna was well attended by 150-200 people.

Gurudev stayed at the Northfield Hilton in Detroit. Flint, where Apparao ji lived, was 60 miles from Detroit. The day there was bhiksha at Apparao ji's home, the group went to receive him. Gurudev was in one car and Apparao in another car that followed Gurudev.

This is what happened. In Apparao ji's words, " On the way I stopped at a supermarket closer to my home to buy paper plates. When I reached home Swamiji was already seated. He asked me, where did you go?

"I told Swamiji - to buy paper plates.

Gurudev: You have no plates at home?

Apparao: We eat non-vegetarian food as well, so I thought it would not be correct to serve you in such plates....

Gurudev: You don't wash the plates?

That same logic ....accepting, unobtrusive ...

"That time Mrs. Girija (Giselle) Sugarman was accompanying him. She said we have to give a cheque with the bhiksha. I was handing the cheque to Swamiji but she stopped me and said get a plate with fruit, place the cheque on the fruit and then give it.

" While receiving the plate Gurudev said, 'This is not for me, there is a School of Vedanta in Mumbai called Sandeepany Sadhanalay and this money helps that school. Wherever I eat and whenever I eat I make sure that all students eat. This money goes to feed them all.'

"My son was 7 and daughter was 4 and my nephews were 9 each. Gurudev made them sit in front and told then a small parable about who is God, where is God and what does He do. It was a story about a King who had a question and he said whoever answers the question will get half his kingdom. And concluding, Gurudev said to the children, 'God is he who makes white milk out of a black buffalo that eats green grass!' much to the wide-eyed delight of the children. Then he also added, 'He is like a candle - candle in one place but light is all over.

"I was thoroughly impressed by how marvellously he communicated with such small children!"

But Apparao ji was to soon witness the prowess of the Guru with grown ups too. What happened was Apparao ji was driving Gurudev back to Detroit after bhiksha. It was a Friday evening. There was a lot of traffic all going north.

Apparao ji recounts, "He asked how come so much traffic? I said up north is where people go fishing over weekends hence most traffic on Fridays is north bound.

"Then we reached the yagna place and the yagna was all set to begin. I gave a brief intro and the lecture began. Within minutes of beginning the lecture, Gurudev said, 'By Friday evening, happiness is up north, by Sunday evening happiness is home. We all depend on outside events for happiness; we need to know why we are happy or not happy and we think objects and things and people make us happy...! We go up north on the weekend and we return all weakened. Because we spent our energy up north.'

"And he had thus used a very current, local example to explain the essence of Chapter IV - the subject matter of the yagna!"

Apparao ji was slowly but surely in the thick of Gurudev's grip. Since Apparao ji was working full time he could only attend evening lectures. But he was surely not out of His mind even if he was out of sight for the day. For, this is what happened.

Gurudev asked him, "Doctor how about organising a camp next year?"

Apparao ji: What is that Swamiji?

Gurudev: A family retreat where friends and family will spend a whole week, we will have guided meditation, Upanishad classes, Geeta class, group discussion, satsang in the evening. I will give details if you are interested. Let me know."

Says Apparao ji, "I had no clue if this was going to work. I went back to work and asked my secretary to type a note and in the evening I posted it where it would be seen by everyone in order to get their response. Twenty Five people called in to say they were keen.

"I went back and told Gurudev that I did a survey and it reflected the views of the small community to attend the camp next year. Gurudev said OK, and gave the date for the camp: 1979: July 27 to Aug 3rd.

The camp was a super success with 250 people who eventually attended. He says, " I got to know Swamiji very well. And a lot of people became devotees of Swamiji at that camp. Now Apparao ji had grown closer to Gurudev.

Gurudev then left for Chicago for a lecture and within a week Apparao ji received a letter from Gurudev: 'I am coming in 1980, this time I want the jnana yagna in Flint not Detroit. I am not staying at the hotel I will stay at your home, the morning talk will be in the basement of your home.'

The Flint yagna went very well. But by then the good doctor had begun to notice that this Swamiji who he was growing very fond of, was not looking well. His blood

sugar was going up, he was breathless after walking a few steps. He was not as bright as the last year.

But after the Flint yagna Gurudev had an event in Chicago and the members in Flint put him on a flight. Apparao held the image of a 'not-looking-bright' Gurudev.

Six days later a doctor there called Apparao ji "Swamiji is having ischemic pains (blood vessels to heart were getting blocked). Anginal pains."

"I was wondering what to do. I spoke to colleagues and Dr. Prasad in Chicago and felt it was best to bring him back to Flint. I told him this. He obliged kindly. (What a statement!) Gurudev flew out of Chicago to Detroit. We went to the Detroit airport and brought him to the hospital in Flint. We had an EKG done and it showed more problems with the blood circulation to the heart. I spoke to Dr. Misra who did the coronary angiography. He looked at the results and said, 'Oh oh this is not sounding good ..... ' "

(to be continued)

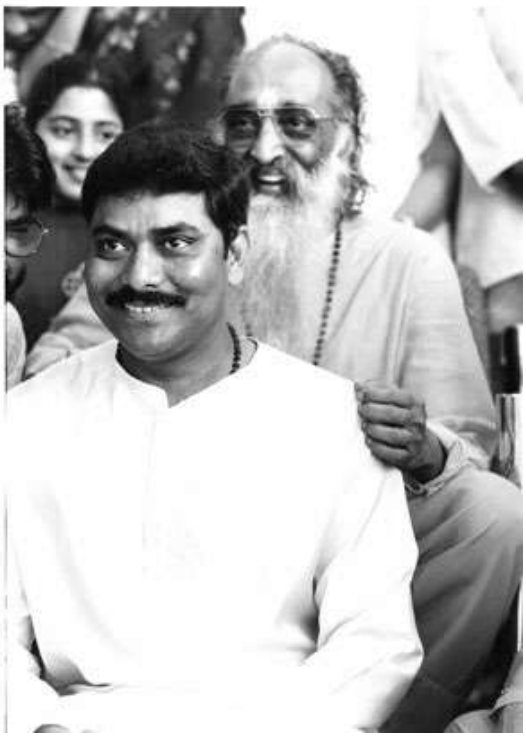
50. heart to Heart .....

26-06-2015

Dr. Apparao Mukkamla the radiologist from Flint, Michigan, had tried to keep arm's length from all things 'Swami' and 'saffron' but this Swami Chinmayananda was growing closer to him. So close that he let the good doctor treat his heart!

This is the second part of Apparao ji's story. Part One (Story 49) was carried on 26th June.

APPARAO JI looked at the angiography results. Verily he was looking at the heart of the Swami he had grown to like as his very own. In just 3 years the Swami was putting Apparao's emotion to test. No, he was not emotionless, not so. But he had just begun to connect the lessons of the Geeta and the lessons of the Upanishads to the love of this Swami. It struck Apparao ji that he himself had done nothing to invest in the Swami. Whereas it was this Swami who had systematically planted himself into his heart and life.



Apparao ji with Gurudev

The angiogram images caused Apparao ji concern. He says, "Basically I had no one to talk to or consult. The angio results did not look good, Swamiji's heart was functioning at 20% efficiency. His ejection fraction was at 18%. Then I asked Dr. Misra what should we do? He said open heart by-pass surgery.

"I was taken aback. I asked where? He said Flint, "But we must take him to a better place. Either Cleveland Clinic or to Houston to Dr. Denton Cooley.."

"News had to be broken to Swamiji. After the tests he came back. My eyes were wet and I went to Swamiji.

Gurudev: What?
Apparao ji: I think Swamiji needs an open heart surgery.

Gurudev: No, no surgery. I am fine.

Apparao: We need to spend one more night here, we need to make sure there is no problem.

The next morning they went home. Apparao ji showed Gurudev the images that revealed the blockages. They discussed for three hours after which Gurudev said, "OK, let's do it."

At that time, there was no CM in Houston. Says Apparao ji, "We used personal contacts and took Swamiji to St. Lukes hospital in Houston, Texas. Dr. Cooley did the surgery. But before that he came by on Saturday evening to see Gurudev - or, the swami with beard and orange robes. The conversation between them went like this:

Dr. Cooley: What is a good day by the hindu calendar to do the surgery?

Gurudev sat on the bed and said, "As long as Dr. Cooley is operating on me, any day is a good day.

Dr. Cooley: How about Monday morning?

Gurudev: Let me repeat Dr. Cooley, if you are operating upon me, any day is a good day. I want you to operate on me; not your students or assistants.

Dr.Cooley: I will operate on your heart.

"Once the decision was made to go ahead with the surgery, I was in dialogue with Gurudev how to handle the public relations; who needs to know who need not and so on as I was new to all this," says Apparao ji.

"Another acharya was teaching at Sandeepany west then. Gurudev said he is teaching, I don't want students to be disturbed you can tell him after surgery. I followed instructions. Then Swamiji dictated a letter which went under under my signature. He wanted me to write to all devotees to convey very briefly about his health. It was a letter that detailed in simple words that this is what happened,

surgery was done in Houston and surgery was successful. He dictated this letter at Flint and said this is how the letter should go, adding, "Send this letter after the surgery is done." Amazing!



With Gurudev - 1989 Sidhabari Camp

Adds Apparao ji, " As soon as the surgery was done I sent out this letter by snail mail to all CM centers. What was more, Swamiji also gave me addresses of all the people who had to get the letter! Because I was so raw and didn't know the global network!

"Then came the issue of finances for the surgery. I said we will raise the funds, but Gurudev's instructions were clear - he did not want CM to pay for his personal expenses; Swamiji considered health care needs as personal in nature.

"I said ok. We raised donations from various devotees, and gave it to the Rotary Club who then made the payment to the hospital. We did not want to use Mission name for this surgery. A lot of people contributed and the surgery was successful. Dr. Cooley himself took a picture of Gurudev's heart and we circulated it to all donors."

Gurudev stayed at the hospital for a week, and recuperated in the home of Dwarkanath Reddy's nephew. Adds Apparao ji, "Then he came to Michigan and spent a month with us recuperating, after which he went back to Mumbai. "

A huge function was held at the Shanmukhananda Hall in Mumbai, where a public reception was held for Gurudev's return. Within 2 months of the surgery Gurudev

was back to yagnas and lectures.

In 1980 during the Flint yagna, the members asked Gurudev if they could build a temple in Flint. Says Apparao ji, "He said, 'go ahead but don't do it under CM name. CM is not involved in building temples.' We built the Pachhimakasi Sree Vishwanatha temple - this is the 3rd temple in the US -- a temple that was encouraged by Gurudev and he also himself performed the pranpratishtha. Swamiji came for a day from Lucknow then went to Philadelphia and went back," and adds, "By then he had a lot of love for me, so he came on my calling."

The association with Gurudev had been strengthened by the heart surgery. "It was like a surgery I got done for my Father, that is how I felt . "

The first time Apparao ji was introduced to Swami Tejomayananda (now Pujya Guruji) was during the camp of 1986. He gives a sweet insight to an incident.

"Gurudev just wanted Guruji to watch and absorb. Thirty-five people came to the US and we sent them on a sightseeing tour. Guruji too went with them. I distinctly remember Gurudev giving Guruji 200 USD to spend on his flight! Then what happened was on the way back Guruji came a day late. We had no cell phones so we had to come back from the airport without him. Next day he and another acharya took a taxi and came to the camp. But his baggage had not come. Gurudev gave him one of his kurtas to wear."

And so on and so forth... little things, big things, happy things, sweet things, and things that move the heart.... Apparao ji's memories now only chant his love for the Swami he had once kept at arm's length ....

51. A Master Plan

27-06-2015

From time to time, devotees relate anecdotes and stories that emphasise Gurudev's precision and sharpness. Anecdotes that drive home a point ... here is one.

Gurudev's earliest yagnas were in Pune and they were 100 day yagnas. The first yagna had three people - of which Gurudev says he himself was the third! Thus began the Chinmaya movement on 23rd December, 1951 in Pune.

It seems there was a lot objection from the Brahmin community over a Menon taking the glorious Upanishads to everyone (when they were meant to be secret knowledge) and worse, in English. Their objection was in fact rather mundane: the Upanishads are in Sanskrit, he cannot teach them in English.



The Teacher Incomparable

Nevertheless, Gurudev continued teaching. What started as 100 days in Pune became 80 days in Delhi, then 50 days in Madras to 21 days in Mumbai's Indian Gymkhana. For, Gurudev had yet to go all over the world taking the glory of Vedanta to the millions who waited.

The people who sat and heard him wanted to continue their studies beyond the yagna. They said they would form an organisation. Gurudev asked, "What will be the name of your organisation?" They said 'Chinmaya Mission'.

Gurudev said , 'No no nothing in my name. I don't want to leave anything in my name. '

People: You have taught us that Cit is awareness, chetana. In the last 50 days we learnt that chinmaya means full of awareness, so we have chosen this name for the organisation - chinmaya mission, where there is awareness.

Story goes that Gurudev could not counter it. They said this is not your name but about a Mission that is full of awareness.

CM was not formed; it was founded in 1953 by some brahmins in Madras who started a Study Group. That was the irony.

But how would this Mission grow?

Now in 1968 Gurudev held a 21 day yagna at Ahmedabad's Law College Grounds. On the 19th 20th and 21st day of the yagna, he announced in the yagnashala that workers have come from Bombay and we will have a demonstration of a 'Study Group' in the yagnashala. (Now Gurudev wanted it to become a means ...) The three workers/sevaks who would give the demo were: HP Eswar, PV Krishnamoorthy (an engineer who worked with Diamler in the US and then went on to become an acharya in one of the Mission centers in the US) and the third was Somalal Vyas. All three were present at this Ahmedabad camp.

Then Gurudev explained what a Study Group was. At this yagna he was marketing the idea of a Study Group and these were the elements of his plan:

*a meeting of like-minded people,

*not exceeding 15 in number,

*strictly of 1.5 hours,

*every week,

*meeting in the house of one of the members where the other members of that house are not antagonistic to the study of religion,

*discussing the portion that has been allotted to them,

*which they study at home

*for 30 minutes every day

* before breakfast

* and no fees is charged (for the group study).

And when the number exceeds 15, split it into 2 study groups, he added.

These were the instructions that Gurudev enumerated.

And having spoken these instructions in one long sentence, Gurudev repeated yet again. Then he paused, looking at the audience keenly. Resuming, he said, "I am very clear that none of you have understood what I want to clarify to you, no matter how elaborately I have said it."

Then Gurudev mentioned the sevaks from Bombay who would be present the next day, between 4 and 4.30 pm at various spots in the yagnashala; "they will demonstrate for you how the Study Group works."

Gurudev laid a lot of emphasis on Study Groups as he felt Study Groups were the backbone of the Mission. It was also via Study Groups that more and more sevaks were developed for the Mission. .

As time went, the Study Group developed its rules. Whenever there was a lecture in a town, all Study Groups were suspended for the time being so that sevaks could 'recharge their batteries direct from the main power station'.

Gurudev's conviction was that religion is not optional for man but compulsory because it is the operating manual for this sophisticated human equipment. Religion cannot be part time.

(From the collection and memories of Shri H.P. Eswar)

52. Mind Over Matter

28-06-2015

Dr. Madhuri Sheth is a pediatrician by profession. In 1968, when her younger child was in nursery, she began working at a Child Welfare Centre and continued for 40 years. She has also assumed medical responsibility of two schools for the challenged along with an orthopedic surgeon and continues serving thus till date.

Dr. Madhuri Sheth is entirely given to hard logic and science. She is not (as a result) disdainful of emotion, but she understands logic best.

At a camp once when Brni. Shruti ji was discoursing on Gurudev's Ashtottaranamavali, she asked Dr. Sheth to narrate one incident experienced with Gurudev, every day. Dr. Sheth did with the sharp incisive logic of a scientific instrument. At the end of the 108th naam, the campers felt parched and dry - they declared there had been no bhava (emotion) in her words.



Dr. Madhuri Sheth serving Gurudev

But to those prone to logic and scientific analysis, Madhuri ji made perfect sense. Just as when she had first heard Gurudev in 1959 and met him in 1961, she was clear she had arrived at the right doorstep - "It was his perfectly scientific approach that drew me to him and so it has remained."

Madhuri ji owes her introduction to Swami Chinmayananda, to her father. But how her father met Gurudev, is interesting. In Madhuri ji's words, "When Gurudev first came to (then) Bombay from Rishikesh with 'a trunk full of books and some loose change in his pockets, he went to the house of a Mr. Manilal Desai. He had been told in Rishikesh that Mr Desai helped sadhus. The lady of the house was doing something on the veranda. Gurudev asked in Hindi- 'Manibhai hai?'

"Used to all kinds of sadhus dropping in, the lady said with practise, 'upar hoga. Jao.' We do not know if Manibhai helped him and to what extent...." But Gurudev did follow as the kind lady instructed.

This Manibhai's son and Madhuri ji's father were great friends and so the son Rasiklal, took Madhuri ji's father to Gurudev's talks in 1959. (It stands to reason that the good man Manibhai did do something for Gurudev.) Says Madhuri ji, "Rasiklal ji organised a yagna in Vile Parle (a suburb of Mumbai) in 1961 and made my father the chairperson."



Pujya Guruji with Dr. Madhuri Sheth (on his right) and Mrs. Sushila Acharya (to his left)

Now what follows is a slow coming together of events, that ties up all this together. Says Madhuri ji, "Twenty three years later, in 1984 during the First International Yagna, I heard Gurudev say he had to go and see the widow of Rasiklal (he had passed away recently).'He was my oldest devotee', he said.

"The following year, my father passed away. When Gurudev came to meet my mother, Mrs. Desai was also there. With his characteristic twinkle in the eye, he said to her in Hindi,'Do you remember when I first came to your house, how you told me to go upstairs!' and he roared with laughter!"

Madhuri ji narrates all this with the mirth of a geometric theorem gone right.

But one thing always leads to another just as a Manibhai led to her father encountering Gurudev and then she too, at a later stage. For Madhuri ji, Gurudev was a spiritual scientist, (in her words), "a teacher par excellence who knew more about the workings of the human mind than Freud and Jung put together. Our generation saw him as that and that alone- a spiritual scientist. But over the years devotees have embellished their experiences with their emotions (so that a scientific occurrence acquires a mystical flavour.)

"He also said that this knowledge was for the discriminating few and not for the

masses.

"It is a noble endeavor that we want to propagate this knowledge worldwide but in Gurudev's own words, please hasten slowly," she says. Madhuri ji feels that in the process of experiencing Gurudev, there is risk of interpretation and that can be extremely damaging.

She continues, "I first heard Gurudev as a medical student. He came to our house for Bhiksha twice in 1961, once before and then after the yagna of which my father was the chairperson. After this I attended all his talks."

In 1979, her 13 year old daughter began bleeding in both her eyes. "I was told to take her immediately to the US as laser technology was not available in India then. The day before we left, Gurudev was in the ashram and we went to see him. Apprised of the problem he took us inside and this is what he told her, 'You are going to the best of doctors (he knew who she was meeting)' and then he gave her examples from history of how people had conquered obstacles. He narrated how Helen Keller had dealt with life and what Franklin Roosevelt achieved! Not a mention that she would be ok.

"She dealt with it and though the vision is not normal, true to the spirit of the examples he narrated to her, she has gone on to do her Phd and put this behind her."

It is not prevention or cure but the courage to meet life head on, that underscores her view of life. In her words, which clearly come from years of listening to Gurudev, "Each one has to work on himself/herself. Only stories will become mythology with time, as have anecdotes of all other saints so far, without making a dent in the behavior of the society. Gurudev' greatest gift to us has been the Vedanta course (at Sandeepany). We are changing some lives (not all as we have seen) and hope they in turn, by practice and precept change more lives."

Another incident that Madhuri ji points out is again one of grit and the right kind of encouragement —

"At the school for challenged children where I work, we had a stirring talk by a Mrs Jalaja Narayanan who has an autistic son- Krishna. When he was a baby the family was in Boston. Gurudev had come for Bhiksha and Jalaja asked the proverbial question, "Why me?"

He replied, "Because you are capable of being a 24/7 nurse!"

Krishna spoke his first word at 16 years! Jalaja's struggles are narrated in a beautiful book "From a Mother's Heart". Krishna has gone on to read a lot of Gurudev's books and has written an autobiographical book titled, 'Wasted Talent' typing with one finger!"

This is the spirit that Madhuri lauds. This is the same grit and fearless spirit that Gurudev sought.

One more beautiful flower from His garden...

53. ' I want only My signature to be there....'

29-06-2015

Jahnavi is a devotee who revels in Gurudev's works ... her abidance comes from years of wanting nothing else but Gurudev.

Jahnavi (not her real name) had just finished class X and, as she says, "I was suffering from Arjuna's disease unable to face the challenge of life." Challenges that were created by inept and inefficient adults, irresponsible educationists.

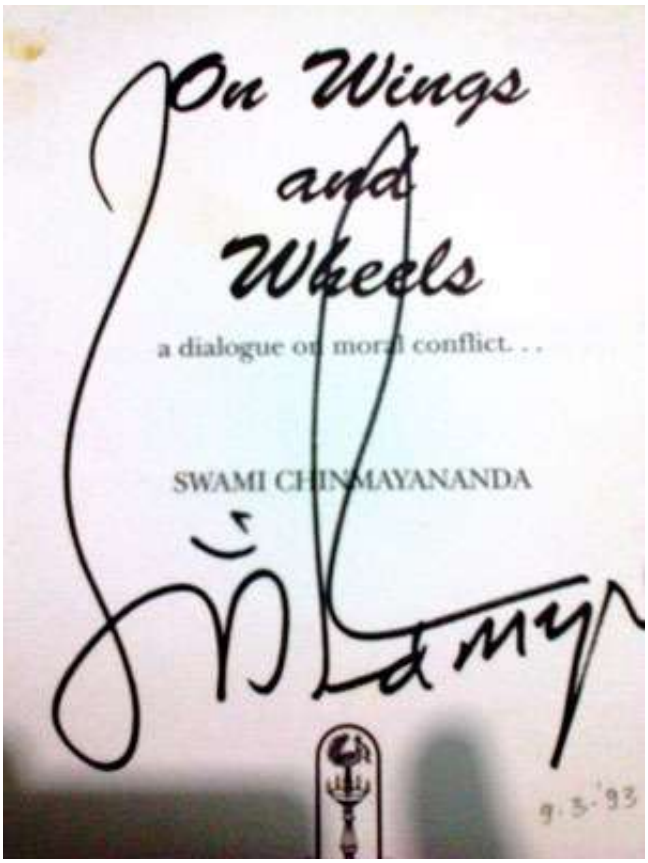
A 98 percenter at school, she naively entered college only to discover that nothing much is taught at college unlike in school! Nor had school teachers prepared her for a life ahead where you would pay for education only to be left to study alone. So what would happen was when she had to face exams at the end of her first year at college, performance anxiety aggravated by fear, and imaginations of failure seized her, compounded by an inability to study on her own.

Jahnavi says, " I would throw up, cry,...and be nervous all the time."

Then she met Gurudev....

Jahnavi would like to end her story here for in her opinion, this most auspicious day is the best happy ending to her Arjuna weakness-ridden story; But we shall move on ....

In her words, "I remember vividly that early morning darshan in 1980...My brother who was already attending Swamiji's talks, took me along to the residence where Gurudev was staying. I was told that Gurudev had just recovered after a bypass surgery and was now visiting all centers to meet his devotees.



Gurudev's autograph that filled the whole page

"When I prostrated, He kind of played tabla on my head. He must have done some inner adjustments for me!"

Life took a turn for the better and Jahnavi chugged along with college and dealt with studies with ease. She would go for Gurudev's yagnas and when he transited throuhg her city, she made it a point to go offer prostrations -- even with exams round the corner.

"Then, He came in Feb 1981 for a yagna. It was Chapter XI - Viswaroopa darshanam straight away!" she says. " Though it was the first time I was attending, I felt so comfortable...I was a first bencher from day one," she says. "Even now I remember almost everything that He taught in 11th chapter. Those days He would announce 'You should be a Mission member to attend the morning class'. And since I so badly wanted to attend every class, I became a Mission member at 16! Of course, I would have understood nothing much of Kaivalya Upanishad or Ramageeta or Aparokshnubhuti..."

The schedule was tough on the 16 year-old. She would wake up at 4 a.m. to reach the yagnashala that was very very far from her home, by 6 am and be miserable when sleep crept upon her. " But it was agony not to go for the class!" she says.

But much as she enjoyed everything and refused to miss a single class, she did not

muster courage to go up to Gurudev. "I only attended His yagnas and any other public talks. I never got involved with the Mission," she says. And so it continued for 13 long years.....

Somewhere in February 1993, Jahnavi came across a letter in an old issue of Tapovan Prasad, written by Gurudev to a Study Group member -- “See in your Study Group sevak a distant image of me....admitted, he will speak from his limited understanding, but remember, he is being watched over my Me”.

Various gears shifted and doors opened in her head. She thought to herself, if He is watching over a Study Group sevak, then how much more He must be watching over the ones in yellow and saffron! And with that she started attending other talks and lectures held by other acharyas. She says, "Until then I was not attending any talks because (in hindsight) I was simply happy and content knowing Gurudev. That contentment seemed enough for me. But now ... I began to attend other lectures in the Mission.

"He was likely saying to me that now I am physically leaving you, so get into the organisation / Mission -- you will need it. Then, I would have had no way of knowing, hence this is again hindsight...

"Slowly I got to know Mission people. Gurudev was to come for yagna in March 1993. By January 93, I was free from my professional tasks and home was not my responsibility, so I was free to go for the yagna. I would go every day to the Mission office asking for volunteer work! I would travel for an hour to stick stamps, write addresses, seal envelopes!!

"I found out where Gurudev was staying and I was told that it is ok to go for darshan. I did not know the hosts, yet I went. I had made up my mind that I would be in His presence as much as possible. I was there when He arrived and I remember His look from top to bottom...It was like a cleansing bath! And in this visit, I as if got EVERYTHING -- since He knew there is not going to be next time.

"Though the hosts did not know me the child of the hosts, probably guided by Him, came and invited me for Paduka puja the next day as she was performing it. I had never attended a paduka puja, till then. I was blessed to have a picture taken with Him, His protecting arm around me. .That photo is my strength, my powerhouse. I have captioned it: I am safe in His hands.

I had a sudden desire to have a japamala blessed. So I bought one and offered it to Gurudev and He blessed it by running His hands on all the beads ...He stroked my chin and put it round my neck while chanting Om Namah Sivaya... I sat in His presence every day from 7AM to 1.00PM, all the seven days. I offered Him a Garland – I was lucky to have had that opportunity. ”

And then Jahnavi also asked Him a Question. This is what happened. But first a small background. Jahnavi had written some letters to Gurudev since she became His disciple. She says, "Since Gurudev’s health had become delicate, there was a request in Tapovan Prasad that devotees may abstain from writing to him. Thereafter, whenever I felt the need to write to Him, I would write,, but not give my address. I

would apologise for the same and also mention, 'A letter from you is a treasure Swamiji, but you are much more.' Another such letter-without -address, was one where I had expressed my wish to have a meditation class with Swamiji. That was of course very long ago."

With this background now we come to the Question-Answer time. Everybody was quiet at first. Says Jahnavi, "Gurudev broke the silence by saying, 'In a discourse, it is my duty to talk on my own but in satsang it is your responsibility to start the conversation with your doubts, provided you have one. Sitting quietly at the Master's presence is called Meditation and not satsang.' (so even my desire to have a meditation class was fulfilled. In this yagna, there is not even a single desire of mine that He has not fulfilled). Having got so many manifest and unmanifest desires fulfilled, I felt courageous to start the satsang, (she quotes all below from her direct notes after the satsang)

Jahnavi: Can Swamiji say a few words on the quality of forgiveness? [And instantly she remembered the finger-poking-eye example ... he had cited that once before..]

Gurudev: Nothing to say. Forgiveness is talked about only when you see someone other than yourself. Once you realise all is one, they are all different manifestations of that Higher Consciousness - then forgive whom? If your finger hurts your eyes, will you want to cut it off? No. Why? Because the sense of 'I' is all pervading within the body. But if it is my finger? (Laughs). When you are eating hot Chutney, will you punish the teeth for hurting the tongue. See that? Why does the question of forgiveness arise? If I say, 'what a stupid question' - you will get angry - why? Because your ego is hurt. So to forgive is necessary because as a spiritual student you have to eliminate your ego. How many times the Lord must be forgiving you. Think. Just remember, "Even this will pass away" (A Pause)

Jahnavi's mind processed all this. She had asked about forgiveness because it had relevance to her life. She had been grappling with a relative who was giving her a lot of grief. She says, "Forgiveness did not make sense to me when the other person was not sorry. And looking at Gurudev I thought in my head, 'Come down to my level Swamiji ...!!' Don't say something that I can't apply ...' And now she asked:

Jahnavi: How is it different from passive indifference? (Gurudev had made mention of this in an earlier lecture)

Gurudev: Ha....in such a case, the helpless fellow - outwardly he says I have forgiven but inside he is boiling - full of anger. Whereas a man who has the strength and yet forgives - there is no disturbance.

"And looking me in the eye, he repeated the finger poking the eye example and said, 'As a spiritual student it is important for you to practise forgiveness, for you to do your sadhana effectively; if not the mind will always be disturbed in agitation.'

"He was lifting me to His level .... of course.

"Later, I had a copy of Wings and Wheels. I asked Swamiji for His autograph. I could not locate my pen and so I borrowed a pen from a bystander. Swamiji said 'I

want my pen. If I sign with this, there will be so much space, you will take 3 more signatures. With my pen, I'll occupy the whole space," He said with a chuckle.

."He then asked his secretary for His pen - She got Him the thick pen He always used ..... and he filled the entire page with one signature."

Not just that, he also filled Jahnavi's life and mind and heart with the imprint of His own Self.

54. The Porter

30-06-2015

Gurudev had begun to keep some money in his pocket as a rule. This came about after an unusual episode.

What happened was once in the mid 1970s, Gurudev was going abroad. His flight was at 12.30 in the night. Everybody who had gone to drop him to the airport in Mumbai, came back as Gurudev told them he didn't need anyone.

There was some technical problem and the flight was delayed and would now leave only next morning at 9 am. Gurudev called a taxi and came back to Sandeepany Powai.

At the gate the taxi man honked several times for the guard to come and open the gate. But the watchman refused to open the gate. "Who is it?" he shouted from inside, unable to see the passenger. The driver said, "It is Swamiji."

The guard made a sound of ridicule and said, "What Swamiji! Our Swamiji has gone abroad!" And he turned to go back to his den, when Gurudev came out of the taxi to look at him. The horrified guard quickly opened the gate.

Now came the moment to pay the taxi. Gurudev had not a cent on him. All the people at Sandeepany were asleep and Gurudev did not wish to wake up anyone. He called the gateman, to find out where Jairam ji was, woke him up and after all this drama the poor taxi driver was paid. It was only after this episode that the Mission decided that till the plane actually took off, nobody will leave Gurudev and the airport. But then Gurudev also decided, whatever it be, he will keep some money in his pocket.

In later years when he used the wheelchair to cover the distance from the exit gate to the plane on the tarmac, he would use parts of this amount to tip the boys who wheeled him.

This happened in the early 90s. Gurudev was travelling to Port Blair for a yagna, ex-Chennai. When he had reached the aircraft, Gurudev took out some money to give the young porter who was wheeling him.

But the young man refused to take any money in an arrogant sort of a way saying he does not accept tips. So Gurudev put the money back into his pocket.

On the way back from Port Blair, at Chennai airport, what do you know! The same young porter was present. Another porter was assigned the duty to wheel Gurudev's chair, but this young man went up to him, said something in his ears and took on the job.

Rajan ji was walking behind Gurudev's chair carrying his bag. Unknowing that this Swami understood or heard him, the porter told Rajan ji in a blend of Tamizh and Malayalam, "The last time I did a grave mistake and refused to take money. When I went home and told my family, they scolded me severely for not taking what was offered. This time I will take what he gives .... You please tell him he can tip me," he said sheepishly.

Rajan ji was quiet, but Gurudev had heard.

When they reached the terminal, Gurudev took double the amount and gave it to the man., and said, "This is also for the last time you refused ...."

The man prostrated to Gurudev, right there in the public hall for all to see --- including his seniors in the airport. And he took the money.

-- from the collection and memories of Shri K.K. Rajan

55. Thus was born a Sevak

01-07-2015

Vijay Kumar has been a member of Chinmaya Mission Washington DC since 1987, where he has started and nourished Chinmaya Study Groups. He also started a Study Groups in Kabul, Afghanistan while he was there on official duty for a year. He works with the Department of Defense.

It was in early 70s. Vijaykumar was working with the Navy in Mumbai. He had heard of Swami Chinmayananda, read several books of Gurudev, felt a sharp interest hit him, but work reined him in. He was not able to run free with his attraction for Vedanta, because his defense job kept him on the move. '

But whenever Gurudev came to Mumbai, Vijaykumar went to attend his discourses. Not only to hear, but to see him as well. .



International Camp, Frostburg, Pensylvania 1991

In the early 70s, Vijaykumar had a close encounter with Gurudev, an encounter that sort of zoomed in and bookmarked itself, with a promise to come back again many years later. And this is what makes his story unforgettable.

Vijyakumar had gone to attend a yagna in Mumbai, at a huge maidan, a public ground. Bombay of those days too was a city of large scale. Yagnas could not be held in the confined small halls of schools or colleges. The public attendance was

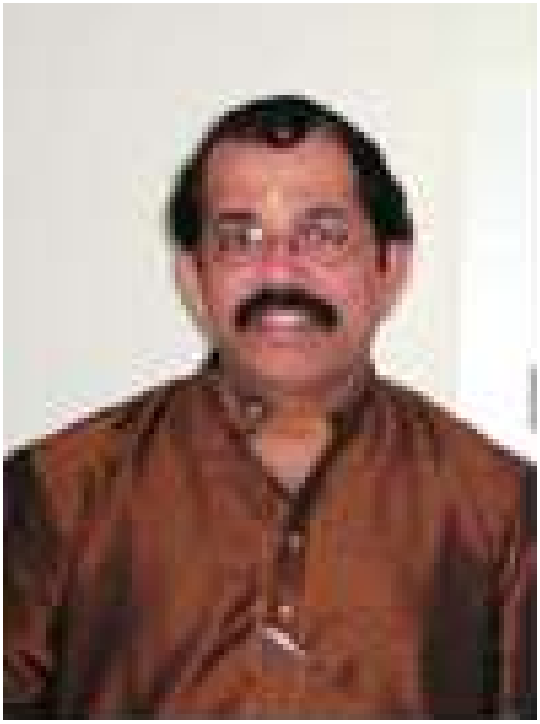
invariably overwhelming and hence Gurudev's talks were held in huge grounds.

This was a very large crowd of over 1000 people. Vijaykumar saw Gurudev's pictures hoisted on pillars and posts. There were ads everywhere in the city, announcing the Swami's lectures. He sat in this audience gripped by the mesmerising demeanour of the saint, exactly as he had sensed it every time he had heard him.

When the talk ended, the people filed out and some filed towards Gurudev. Vijay also moved forward, almost propelled by his joy, wanting to get a closer look.

Gurudev came down the steps of the stage. Already some 20 people waited to smile at him, see him, prostrate to him, greet him... Even as Gurudev climbed down, they inched closer and formed a neat circle around him. Says Vijay ji, " Swamiji was now in their circle and I slowly pushed myself to become a part of the circle." The circle now grew bigger. But while each one in that circle was talking to Gurudev, introducing themselves, praising his talk, ... Vijay ji simply gazed at Gurudev, "I was looking at him, I was not hearing him, I was drinking him... all the way starting from his padukas."

All too suddenly somebody cut into the circle from outside; he ran inside the centre of the circle and cutting through, cut out of the circle as if Gurudev and the people around did not even exist.



Vijay Kumar

Vijaykumar was startled first, then angry. His eyes now left Gurudev and followed this silly person who had cut through. The man was still running. What was wrong

with him? Did he not see that Gurudev was standing there talking to devotees? Says Vijaykumar ji, " Everybody was still looking at Gurudev. But I was looking at this man, thinking, 'Does he not know that Gurudev is standing there? No Hari Om, no reining in... How can he be so careless? He was near the stage working at something ... . My eyes were completely following the running man and I was annoyed. May be it showed on my face.

"As I plucked my gaze from the man and brought it back to the circle, I was stunned: Gurudev was looking directly and only at me. And now, he smiled at me." That eloquent smile.

"That smile confused me," continues Vijaykumar ji. Why was Gurudev smiling? I didn't know if I had done right or wrong looking at the running man. A little sheepish, I smiled back and nodded and said Hari Om. After the chat ended people left and Gurudev left too. I was glad that I had met him."

That was early 70s. In 1982 Vijayji moved to Dubai and started attending Study groups there. He assisted other sevaks in arranging Gurudev's Yajna in Dubai in 1986.

In 1987, Vijay ji had moved to the US and although he had not yet found a job, he quickly went and started a Study Group as his anchor point. " All else will follow, I felt," he says.

The very next year, there was a Camp in American University - Washington DC. I was sooo glad to see Gurudev again ," says Vijay dragging the 'so' with effect. "But there was no Mission center in Washington then. We were a small group of people. Because members were few, each one had to multi task: receiving Gurudev, setting up bookstall, organising camp, setting up the stage and so on. I was helping with the bookstall and also the stage arrangements. ... "

On the day of the lecture, the hand full of sevaks tied themselves in knots, running between tasks, ensuring every detail and to perfection. Grace was high, the lecture went off well. Now in Vijay ji's words:

"When the lecture ended, Gurudev came down the stage. A circle formed near the stage. The circle was small, about 10 people. Someone was introducing his relative, someone was telling about himself.... Again Gurudev was part of the circle, Akhanda mandalakaram vyaaptam yena sacharaacharam ...more people were joining.

" I was in a hurry. The talk had ended, the University premises had to be handed back. I had to take the microphone and things off the stage and hand them over. The University had clear rules. We had to hand back the premises exactly as they had given it to us -- no litter, no nothing. Oh the bookstall had to be wrapped up, at the same time, books gathered and tucked into crates and the makeshift stall folded up, the stage decorations to be removed.... And the posters had to be peeled off ... there was so much to do, I was all over the place. I had to run over to the other side where the book stall was. I hit the circle of people and realised I had no room to go to the other side. Gurudev was near the stage, the other part of the circle was flush with the wall. I could not have done anything but cut across the circle.

"And I did just that.

" I cut across, through the middle of the circle, and went past the crowd and Gurudev. . after 5-6 steps, a sense of deja vu seized me. Oops! I cut across! I remembered a long time ago somebody had also done the same and I had thought it was incorrect, disrespectful to Gurudev. Now I had done the same. Oh dear!

"I stopped and looked back in very slow moves, only my head moved I remember. I felt something is happening. Eight or nine steps later I stood there my back to the circle as I had come out of it by then ... I stood there for a few seconds. Something made me look back.

Gurudev was looking at me.

" I froze. He smiled the same smile he smiled 15 years ago. I also smiled at him. People are wondering why Gurudev is looking outside the circle. For he had to turn fully to look at me. I too was looking back turning my head . My steps became slow and I stopped finally.

"He smiled and I smiled.

"It was a devastating moment. Was it the same Mumbai thing happening again, I was asking myself. The only difference was 15 years; then it was Mumbai, now it was Washington DC. Then it was somebody else, now it was me. Then I had felt angry with the running person. But now I remembered Gurudev had not taken cognisance of that running man, but I had. He had not been disturbed, but I had been.

" Then, Gurudev knew exactly what was going on in my head, my annoyance and so on. And he had smiled at me.

"Today too he was smiling at me, maybe telling me, you remember the person who crossed the circle, 15 years ago? That person, a sevak of Mumbai Chinmaya Mission, running to complete the yagna work, to wrap up the yagnashala, to hand back the grounds exactly as he had taken charge of it. Mumbai too then did not have enough hands to help. Fifteen years hence in Washington we all had to run because we did not have enough sevaks. .

"Thus a sevak was born in me , initiated and blessed by Gurudev's great smile.

"A sevak runs, he may have to cut across, he may or may not see Gurudev, but he will have to run and keep working without saying Hari Om. For an outsider looking on, it will seem like Vijaykumar ran across without saying 'Hari Om', without touching Gurudev's feet, without any respect ... but that was how I had felt 15 years ago about the running sevak."

Iin these actions alone lies Hari Om, lies Gurudev, lies the very action of touching his feet! The Guru lies in the seva . Vijaykumar 's mind had encapsulated all this in a fraction of a second and delivered the realisation to him in a moment. He recalled Gurudev's yagna talk: Karma bhakti and jnana are in the action and all are rolled

into the seva which you do.

Vijay kumar continues, "Tears came because other than Gurudev none can remember with such precision what happened 15 years ago. Only a realized master can bring that learning by bringing about action replay. .

"He was teaching me the signs of a sevak, the life of a sevak and the value of a sevak of Gurudev. He taught me with a smile. The lesson had begun years ago in in Mumbai. It ended in the University grounds in Washington DC.

"After the yagna we sevaks normally sit together and have bhiksha with Swamiji. Again he smiled the same smile. Swamiji thank you for the lesson."

"I cried that day," says Vijay ji, " I cried because he taught me in silence, with a simple smile, and it took many years for me to understand what that really meant!

56. 'I Will Take Care of You ...'

02-07-2015

Savi Mull, an ardent devotee, was born into a family from Lucknow that has been blessed by Gurudev. She is an international development professional living in Delhi and is Gurudev's "Little One".



Savi and younger sister with Gurudev - Kanpur (1978-79)

When Savi was born, Gurudev was already a huge part of her family, beginning right from her grandparents. What is even more glorious is that Gurudev was very close to her paternal grandfather! So this was one family where Gurudev pervaded generations.

As Savi says, " Gurudev was already part of conversations and thoughts and actions, when I came."

The eldest of four siblings, Savi was a happy-go-lucky sort, just the kind of personality that can unnerve families who wish to see responsibility in the first born. Her mother chanted for Gurudev's yagnas in Lucknow and always took Savi along. But Savi who was in class 6 then, found it drudgery.

"Those days there was a very nice brahmacharini in Lucknow," says Savi, "and she was an inspiration." Savi who was in Balvihar had the 'duty' to help this brahmacharini during Balvihar to make sure the kids were seated, materials provided and so on. Her Balvihar classes were enjoyable as she taught them Mother Pooja, Guru Pooja and so on. Sometimes Brni Poorna ji also stayed at Savi's home.



Putting a tikka on Gurudev's forehead during the family pada pooja, Sidhbari October 1992

Meeting or visiting Gurudev was not an 'event' as such as it happened rather naturally and often and it was a part of her life. If her father went to Kanpur to see Gurudev, he would simply take little Savi along. In her words and very poignant words, she says, "I have just lived under his chhaya not realising that I was living under his umbrella!"

In 1990, Savi entered univeristy. She got admission into Jesus and Mary College for Sociology. "I remember going to meet Gurudev in Sheela Sharma's house in Greater Kailash, Delhi. That was when the real chemistry happened," she says.

"There were lots of people who had come to see him. My parents told Gurudev, ' she is going to stay in Delhi to study Sociology.' I remember he was very happy that I was going to study Sociology and he said I would do very well. He clearly said I would do very well. I was not spectacularly surprised or anything. I took this subject because it was being offered to me. I was very carefree and also singularly lazy. It is important because the confidence that came happened because of him."



Little Savi (one year old), with Gurudev, grandfather and her mother in Lucknow

Savi's parents went back to Lucknow and Gurudev was yet in Sheelaji's house when Savi went to meet him again. That evening, he was sitting at the dining table. 'I went to do pranaam and he just looked at me and said "you are mine, you are mine, I will take care of you, I will take care of you...' twice.

"Everything came to my understanding much later. But this was the time when I started to realise that he was reaching out to me. I could not make much of it. It continued to happen. Now -- because I was tardy, and the general perception was that I lacked direction, I was always told by my family to emulate others, be like others. So I had to do what my peers did, or at least be like them."

In 1992, we went for the Vivekachudamani camp in Sidhabari. My brother was to have his thread ceremony on this same occasion. So we all went to the airport to receive Swamiji. Gurudev saw me standing there and he screamed, ' MY LITTLE ONE!!'

"What??? He is talking to me? Me? Me who lacks direction? I who am always being admonished, told I am good for nothing? I was naturally taken aback because I was not the sort who stood out for attention. Nor did anyone think I merited attention!"



Wiping Gurudev's hands after the family bhiksha, Sidhbari October 1992. ("Gurudev had asked me to wash his hands and wipe them")

"We came to the ashram and whenever he would see me he would say, 'My Little one!' That is when I began to pay attention to Gurudev as my need, a core part of my existence.

"We were there at the VivekachudamaniC camp for just one week,for the thread ceremony... we also did a pada pooja. I remember there were 2 coconuts that were being offered. In the prasad one coconut was given to my father and one to me.

"Thats when I started to see him as my Guru.

"I went to him and had my Vivekachudamani book signed. He told me 'Three verses a day till we meet again.' And you won't believe me I read the whole book cover to cover. I now began to consciously take long dips in the spiritual stream.

"In 1993 there was a youth camp and he still called me His little one! The whole family was standing with a lot of others, but he pointed to me and said 'she is the best'! That is the part where my confidence came back.

"My Little One / I will take care of you/ You are the best - the last one was tough to take. I could not realise that. But because I had read the Vivekachudamani, my thoughts had attained a small amount of purification. I had become more spiritually inclined. I was able to think of Gurudev wherever I was. I didn't need to go to any particular place to reach Him."

After Gurudev's mahasamadhi, Savi and her family went to Sidhabari for Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's first yagna post the mahasamadhi. Sitting at the samadhi sthal, she began to feel a great sense of presence and belonging. Her identification with Gurudev increased.

Until then she was working in Lucknow. Then she joined a large international NGO. Three years after she had worked there, her responsibilities grew with her boss going on maternity leave. Her boss' boss - the president, asked her to join some strategic meetings and even made her a part of some serious restructuring of the organisation. And then suddenly one day he decided to promote her. But that came with a prerequisite: she must make a presentation to the Board of the company.

"I was extremely nervous and stressed out. I was yet only a program officer. But the president wanted to tell the Board that he was promoting me as head of monitoring and evaluation." She had rehearsed all night, worked at the content a lot but by morning she had lost her voice. To make matters worse, just before her turn there was some tenuous discussion about something else, so that the air was very troubled for Savi.

"And when my turn came, I felt a great sense of presence and encouragement from Gurudev. Like a prayer answered. I found I was able to handle the entire discussion and presentation with great aplomb."

"There have been many moments of great accomplishment, great victories, great

possibilities when I have clearly felt Gurudev's blessings and presence. To elaborate upon them would take away their divinity and instead vest them with a supranormality, defying science. The point is simply this: “Gurudev has been gracing my life in many ways."

As in this case -- One fabulous moment occurred not too long back, and Savi elaborates,

"I was suffering from vertigo and just not getting well. My father took me to a neurologist. We are both sitting across the table from him and this is what the neurologist says: 'Dizziness is an illusion of motion, just like you see the rope and think it is a snake....'

"My father and I look at each other, stunned! My father is a great devotee of Gurudev.... What doctor explains medicine via Vedanta? ! Never heard anything like this ever!

"I come back hair standing on ends. It is experiences like these that seem as if they were scripted by Gurudev and I remember with ease his words, 'I will take care of you...'

"The fear of dizziness has now vanished. Now when dizziness comes I know it is illusion and I have not had that fear again. It is gone. That deathly fear which used to overwhelm me is gone forever."

57. An Officer and a Swami

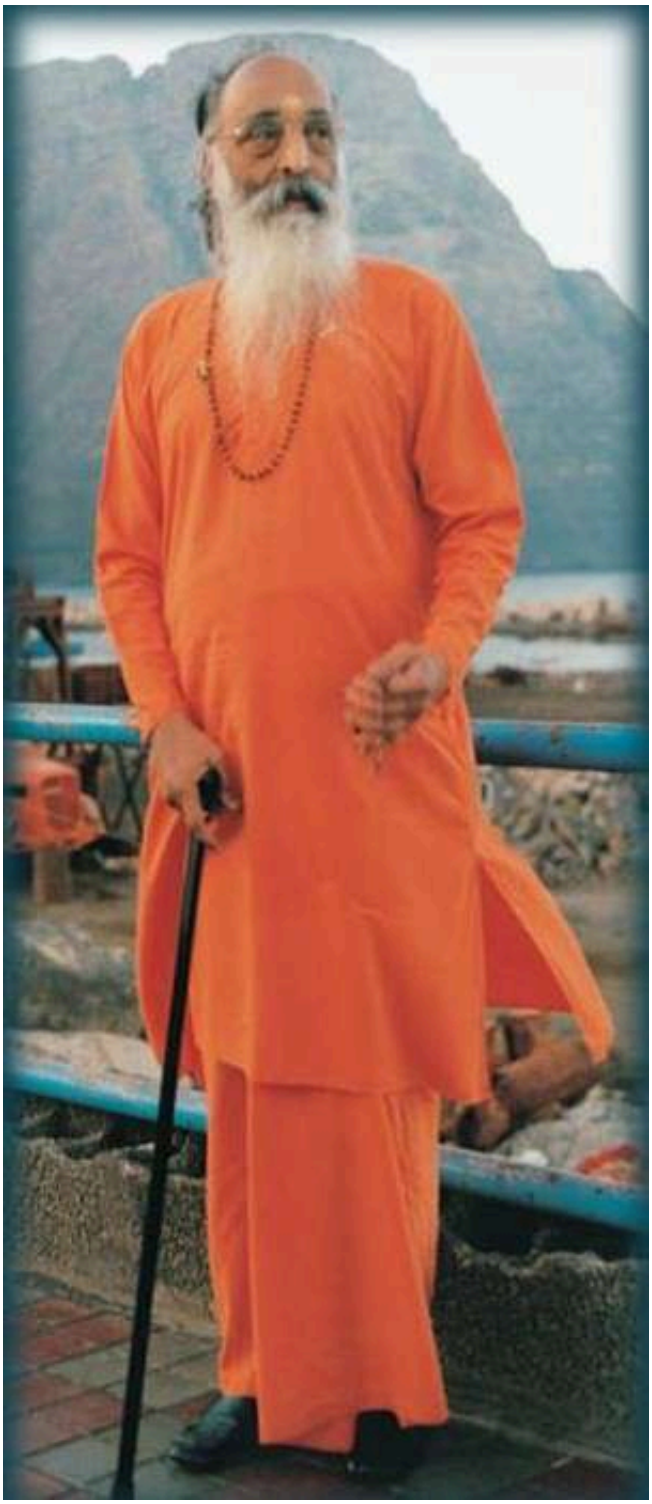
03-07-2015

Shri. R.N. Ravi I.P.S was on an official visit to Calcutta (now, Kolkata). One morning as he sipped his tea, he was reading the news paper, when his attention fell on an interesting news. His happiness knew no bounds -- Swami Chinmayananda was visiting Birla House on Mukherjee Road!

Shri Ravi decided to go to Birla house. There was a nostalgic memory that returned to him now....

At the appointed hour he reached there and joined the huge crowd waiting at the entrance.

On the dot of the appointed time, Gurudev walked in, protected by the members of the organisation and some security staff. As was destined, Gurudev's eyes fell on Shri Ravi as they did on many other people and things. Ravi did a 'Namaste' and followed it up in words as well.



Gurudev took three or four steps forward and came back and looked at Shri Ravi and asked, "Are you not the Superintendent of Police, Kannur?"

Shri Ravi was speechless, he couldn’t move or speak.....

Later that night he called Shri K.K. Rajan in Kannur and narrated all that had happened and added, "I never thought he would recognise me! I have met him just twice in Kannur and it is seven years now!" Shri Ravi had revelled in his joy for a bit then said, "You know there were so many VIPs and VVIPs in all their finery .... yet he saw me? I can't believe it!"

* * *

Seven years ago...

Gurudev was visiting a devotee's house for a Bhiksha in Kannur. That day there was a bandh (from the hindi to mean 'closed'; a complete shutdown of all services including transport, in protest over some matter, often with the support of some aggrieved political party) declared on Kannur and the neighbouring areas too, so that no vehicles were allowed on the streets.

Shri R.N. Ravi, the Superintendent of Police, Kannur, came in his official blue car and took Gurudev to the house of Shri N R Nair, a long time devotee of Gurudev from Kuwait, in whose house the Bhiksha had been arranged. The police officer told Gurudev, ' I will come later to take you back.' At 4 pm, Shri. Ravi came as promised and ferried Gurudev in his official vehicle back to the Western Indian Plywood guest house, where Gurudev was staying during that visit.

And Ravi was telling Rajan ji, 'That was the only occasion I came face to face with Swamiji. How can he remember me?'

But life is strange in the way it stages little acts and brings people together in unexpected manner.

The11th National Camp was at Kannur, Kerala from 24th Dec 1985. Shri R.N. Ravi's son Rahul was studying in class 7 at Chinmaya Vidyalaya. For the National Camp, delegates, the CM Kannur had arranged the dining hall of the Ladies Club, Kannur for bhiksha. To ensure authenticity of visitors, badges had been issued to delegates/camp members which they had to wear. Admission into the dining hall was restricted to those wearing badges.

A wicket gate separated the Ladies Club building and the Chinmaya Vidyalaya building. Instructions had been given to volunteers that only those with badges should be allowed in.

When Gurudev arrived for the bhiksha, Rajan ji who was to escort him had for the moment been engaged with another person, and was thus looking away. The schoolboy who was volunteering at the gate put out his had authoritatively, and said, "Swamiji badge?"

Shri C M K Marar, Chief Sevak, CMECT, Trichur was right behind Gurudev and in an instant he jumped in to salvage the terrible moment. He mildly scolded the boy. But Gurudev said, "He is right, he is doing his duty."

That boy was Rahul, son of Shri R.N. Ravi, Superintendent of Police Kannur. Today,

Rahul, a Doctorate in Economics is a Professor at a prestigious university in Canada.

(from the collection and memories of Shri K.K. Rajan)

58. The Offering

04-07-2015

One day in 1991-1993: Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai. Maltesh Joshi was studying at the brahmachari course, one among many.

It was around 11 am, and the whole bunch of white-clad young men and women students stood eagerly outside Gurudev's kutia. They were awaiting Gurudev's arrival. He was at Asha Kamdar's residence and was expected at Sandeepany any moment now. Prostrating to Gurudev was the best thing a brahmachari could get!

Presently, Gurudev's car drove in right outside the alcove where his kutia is, and even before he could step out a crowd just gathered from nowhere, like rain clouds - thick, strong and heavy with emotion. Jairam ji, with studied patience and practise, parted the crowd, kept them away and began to wheel Gurudev towards his kutia.



25 paisa coin

Jairam ji did not want Gurudev to be disturbed in any way and told everyone to keep away.

But God knows from where, a lady somehow wormed her way through the thick layers of human wall that gathered there, and headed for Gurudev.

Everybody looked at her - some were aghast. Some recalled seeing her here and there, now and then. Maltesh ji (now Swami Dattapadananda, CM Chokahalli, Karnataka) was then one of the students standing outside the kutia. Yes! He had seen her before! She was most nondescript, most forgettable kind of personality. But he recalled seeing her in the Jagadeeshwara Temple on some days.

"On some days we brahmacharis were told to sit in the Jagadeeshwara Temple for our group discussions or for self study. She would be there at times " says Swamiji.

"Sometime between 10.45 am and 11.30 am. She would distribute prasaad to whoever was there. But that was all."

They would have not met her on most days as they would all be in class. But some days they would all be either together in discussion or scattered here and there in the temple hall. This lady - garib aurat (poor lady) as some of them may have described her, in her green withered nine-yard sari, worn Maharashtrian khasta style, bindi and a very impoverished and forgettable appearance, haggard in appearance, would flit through the temple hall, and offer prasaad to everyone there -- a bit of shengdana-saakhar (peanuts with some jaggery bits or sugar crystals). After a few sessions in the temple, her presence was not even noticed.

Today when she slid through the crowd and went towards Gurudev, the crowd gasped. That lady! How could she! A harried Jairam ji rushed to stop her, when Gurudev said, "No, let her come..."

The frail, unkempt lady offered pranaams in the style of maharashtrians, bending to touch Gurudev's feet three times, in a dipping fashion. Then she offered her shengdana prasad to Gurudev and prostrated fully.

Gurudev accepted the peanuts and sugar candy and put it into his mouth reverentially.

The next moment, the lady unravelled a 25 paisa coin - a quarter of a rupee -- likely kept knotted in the corner of her sari for this great day, and she offered it to Gurudev. Sabari and Sudama come to mind...

What happened next, broke every heart that watched that day. Gurudev took the tiny coin - no more than a centimeter and a half in diameter - and touched it to both his eyes as tears streamed down his face. No one was able to watch this straightfaced.

Devotees usually gave him envelopes of money, some are known to have given him blank cheques.... he never kept a penny for himself. He would receive the money with his left hand and put it into the left pocket of his kurta, says Swami Dattapadananda ji, and then call out, 'Jairam!!!!' and hand the pocket contents to him.

This time he received the money in his right hand, recalls Swamiji, and through blurred, tear filled eyes, he said in a tone that did not roar as it was known to, "Jairam .... this is not for you. This is for me ...' and he put it into his right pocket.

Maltesh ji watched this, completely overcome. Today, so many years later, after graduating as Br. Vamdev Chaitanya, Swami Dattapadananda says, " I was new to the Mission those days. I directly joined the course. So I didn't know him so well. But this one instance touched me immensely ... I realised what makes a mahatma a mahatma! "

59. When the Lion Roars, the Jungle shakes...

05-07-2015

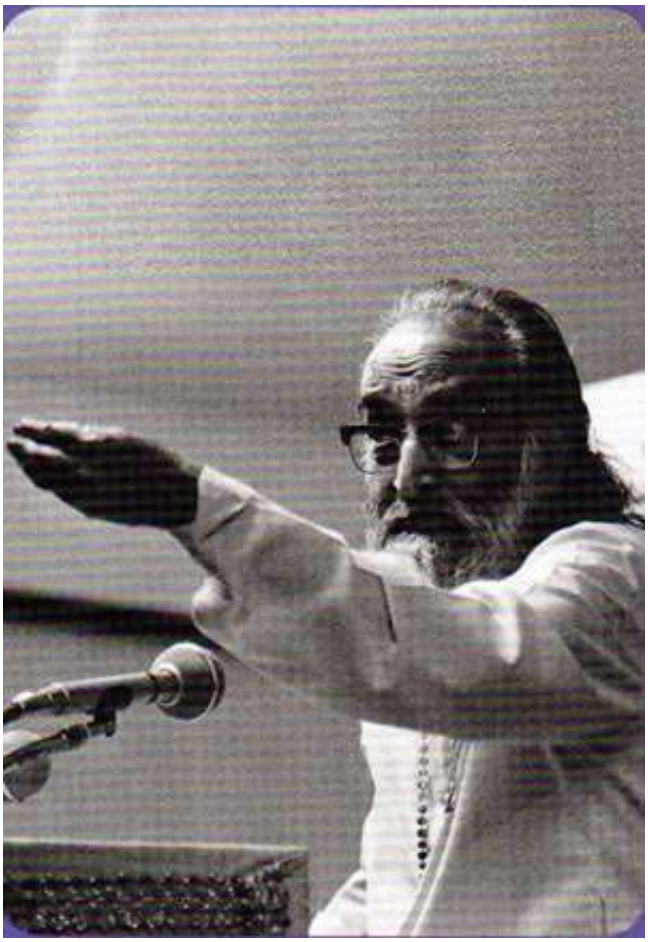
It was in 1969-70. Gurudev had a yagna in Ernakulam and was staying at the home of Smt. Janaki Menon -- she was his college batchmate.

Shri K.K. Rajan ji had the day off at work being a Saturday and so he had gone from Trivandrum to meet Gurudev.

One morning while they were there, the principal of Sacred Heart College, Thevara came to invite Gurudev to address the students of the college. He wanted Gurudev to come the next morning.

The same evening a group of students representing some kind of Students' union came and said 'Swamiji you are not welcome to our college we will not allow you to address anyone.'

They sounded menacing and everybody advised Gurudev not to go. It used to be a notorious college, known for rowdyism. Gurudev said, I know there is rowdyism in this college.



But to the students he said, 'I have been requested by your principal to address you. And I will cancel the program only if the principal tells me to. Otherwise I have accepted the invite, so I will come. So if you want me to not come, then go get me a letter from the Principal or have him call me.'

CMK Marar was the Secretary, CM Ernakulam. A nervous Marar and others said again, 'Swamiji it will better if you cancel the program. '

Gurudev said," Yes yes, Patayeppa College in Chennai and Sacred Heart - Thevara -- I know very well, but you leave it to me.'

Next morning, Gurudev set out for the college. The college was just a short walk from the Menon home. He said to everyone, "Nobody need come with me."

Then he saw Marar ji and Rajan ji look at him with baleful eyes. Gurudev relented, 'Ok come,' he said and all three went.

A short distance from the college gate, they could hear the howling and shouting at the college. At the gate the principal was standing with a garland and he was nervous. Despite that garland, the principal went up to Gurudev and said, "Swamiji

better to cancel the program ..."

Gurudev did not listen to him at all. He knew this college well as he was a resident of Ernakulam and he would have visited it many times. So he would have known where the auditorium was.

Once again the principal and the staff members requested him to not address the students.

But Gurudev did not listen to any of their pleas. He was walking so briskly, his tall frame, his long strides, his pace was so brisk that the others were verily running to keep pace as he headed for the hall.

He walked into the auditorium and got on the stage and taking the mic, he began mimicking the howling of the students that sounded like that of a jackal, for 3 long hoots. Ooooh ..... oooh... exactly as the students were doing.

Then he said to them, "I can do it better than you!"

With the first howl, the crowd had become virtually silent and still. They did not expect a Swami to do all this. Now who would have!

Gurudev was very good at mimicry, says Rajan ji; in college he was known for that. And here he stood heckling exactly as they did.

A thick silence fell on the overcrowded auditorium. There was pindrop silence, says Rajan ji. Then Gurudev spoke: "I have also covered this period during my college days ....." and beginning thus, he spoke for one and half hours and everybody heard him in rapt attention. Says Rajan ji, "He started talking in Malayalam - he said on the way I saw a buffalo which has its mouth, belly and anus in the same line and till this moment you were all behaving like that buffalo. ...."

For one and half hours there was such silence as he spoke and spoke and spoke. Says Rajan ji, the way Gurudev had grabbed the stage straightaway, the welcome speech happened only after his speech ended!

The same boys, came and apologised. They surrounded him with such eagerness, talking, chatting, and engaging with him with such joy. "Forgive our mischief," they said. 'We thought it will be a religious talk but you have mesmerised us with your speech. The next time you come to this town you must come here again.'

Gurudev's courage in facing this crowd rendered young Rajan ji and Marar ji speechless. All they could do was walk close to him as he inched towards the car. Yes 'inched' because the students were all around him, talking, smiling, cheering him. Many were touching his feet, many were prostrating....

Says Rajan ji, 'It took 30 minutes for Gurudev to reach the car that had come to drive him home! And what a speech... fully embellished with jokes in Malayalam, quotes, metaphors..... never heard him speak like that ever!'

(From the collection and memory of Shri K.K. Rajan)

60. " Can you see what is going on in my heart?"

06-07-2015

Shobha and Raju Chidambaram have been associated with the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center since its inception in 1988. Shobha is a practicing Neurologist and took special pride in being able to serve Gurudev as a devotee and a physician.

Shobha was a premed student living her with family in Nagpur. Her brother and sister Shanta were visiting Bombay , when their uncle took them to to see Gurudev at one of his yajnas there in the early 1960's. Shobha's sister came back and reported most glorious stories and she insisted that Shobha be doubly committed to attend lectures whenever Gurudev comes to Nagpur.



July 1991: At their home: Shobha ji to Gurudev's right, younger daughter Vrinda, Raju ji and far right is Shanta ji, Shobhaji's sister.

In 1962, Gurudev came to Nagpur University for a yagna. Shobha was 15-16 and lacked the spiritual drive then, even if the inclination was not absent. The morning session was on Bhaja Govindam and evening lectures on Ch. II of Gita. At the end of the yajna, Gurudev would sign a copy of the text and give it as a souvenir. " I recall distinctly, he sat at the end of the stage while we did our prostrations and received the signed book as a prasaadam," says Shobha. The seed was sown at this yagna, she feels.

The second time was 1978 when Gurudev went to the US to the American University in Washington, DC. Shobha attended the talks there too and she adds, " I showed him the book that he had signed for me in 1962 and he was very surprised. 'My goodness! You kept the book so long?' And again he signed the same book a second timeout of his love! He has in fact signed the Bhaja Govindam book several

times...."

Uniquely, what also happened was whenever Gurudev came to Washington DC, Shobha ji felt greatly driven to meet him and she says, "Every time I wished I actually got the opportunity!"



July 1991: Gurudev with the Chidambaram daughters Sharada and Vrinda at their home

On 4 July 1991 Gurudev stayed with the Chidambarams and had breakfast and lunch at their house. That afternoon was also when he was scheduled to go for an eye check up and heart check up.

Says Shobha ji, " Along with Dr. Limaye who was an Ophtalmalogist at the Georgetown University Hospital, I took Gurudev to the cardiologist. I was inside the room and Gurudev handed me his mala, then his kurta as he was getting an EKG done. He was lying on the table, as the echo cardiogram was going on; he then turned to me and asked, "Shobha, can you see what is going on in my heart?

Shobha: Swamiji I see that the heart rhythm is fine and it is pumping well.

Gurudev (looking at her with a mischievous smile): Is that all you see? Don't you see how much love there is for you in my heart?

"Tears came to my eyes ... how he asks these questions! They come back to me with so much feeling after all these years... ...."

How he expressed fondness, love and especial attention to each and every devotee is amazing. Each one's story has one or more expression of his special love! Shobha ji too has been startled by his unconditional expression of love. An event in Philadelphia around 1990 is a case in point.



July 1991: Raju Chidambaram in white tee, and Shobha ji with Pujya Guruji and Gurudev. The person behind in suit is Mr. Balachandran, a close relative of Gurudev who was at that time a senior dipolmat in the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC

In her words, " Gurudev had come for a yagna, to Philadelphia. One day, Swami Dheerananda had a class at our home and I expressed the wish that I want to go and see Gurudev. But I had no idea if I could make that happen. But it so happened that there was a young engineer in our class, Nagulapalli and he unconditionally offered to drive me to Philadelphia.

"He took me to see Gurudev. A lecture was in progress, and as soon as he finished his talk, Gurudev saw me in the crowd and asked me to come near to where he was. He was so happy to see me and said I must join him at the bhiksha that day. This was at the home of Gulu's sister. And there he made me sit with him during the bhiksha."

That extra special attention and love, again! And thus he has given to everyone a special moment to remember him with.

Adds Shobhaji, "My daughters were very fond of Swamiji and he reciprocated. He would not let me discipline them. 'They are my children' he would say; my younger one Vrinda believed it and would say “He loves me the most!"

Raju Chidambaram her husband adds, " Gurudev really took care of our children. We had to once leave Vrinda in the Michigan camp in 1991 in Allendale but were a bit apprehensive about it. Gurudev assured us, ' Leave her with me and I will take care of her.' We did that and later Swami Tejomayananda gave us a picture of Gurudev feeding Vrinda! That is when she said Gurudev loves me the most!"

There is of course not one person who has not felt this special and close to Gurudev.

Raju Chidambaram continues, "In 1989 at a satsang at the Mount Vernon camp, Vrinda asked Gurudev, 'Why is Lord Siva shown in meditation; why does He need to be in meditation?'

"Gurudev replied, ' You know, somebody maybe the world's best wrestler, but he has to wrestle with somebody in order to keep his standard of wrestling high. So too Lord Siva has to maintain that status of Supreme Yogi. A Yogi cannot take his prowess for granted; he has to keep sustaining it. "

In 1993 Raju ji was the president of CM Washington. It was Gurudev's last yagna, at the Massanetta Camp. One afternoon during the camp, there was a Board meeting during which he informed the Trustees that he had just received an invitation to be the representative of the Hindu religion at the 1993 World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. This was the Centenary of the Parliament of the World's Religions of 1893 that had been addressed by Swami Vivekananda, a 100 years ago!

In Raju Chidambaram's words, "Gurudev revealed to us that this is what he intended to do: I am going to accept the invitation of course. But I am going to dress in a flowing robe and turban and go to the Parliament Hall looking like Swami Vivekananda did a 100 years ago. I am going to tell the audience, 'My friends I came here a 100 years ago and at that time I requested all present here from all religions, to give up their differences. I requested you to work in unity in the service of Humanity. But I regret to see that you have not done anything in that direction ...' --- words to this effect."

Just this play acting thrilled all those who heard him.

Raju ji had a personal experience at this camp, which he narrates, " Gurudev used to watch TV in the afternoon to relax. He would sit in an arm chair, his legs raised on an ottoman, watching tennis. He would watch silently the players volleying back and forth. Sound would be turned off and there was about him and the whole room, a strong sense of peace and deep meditation.

"One on of these occasions I simply could not resist the urge to walk in and sit on the floor next to him on the left. His left hand was resting on the armrest. And I don't know what happened. He took my right hand in his left hand and held it for I don't know how long. May be ten, may be 20, minutes passed, but can't tell how long. I was as if in a daze. To this day I can't tell how long I was there. All I know is that after sometime I walked out of the room wondering, as I do even today, what had just transpired. Significantly, this was just a few days before Gurudev's Mahasamadhi ."

Now Shobha ji takes over:

"His love for people was phenomenal," she says, really happy recalling everything about Gurudev. "In 1992, he was staying at Isabel Taylor's house in Washington, DC. Gurudev had been under the weather with the flu. When we went to see him, he was recovering. That day we were trying to serve him bhiksha. On that occasion Swami Tejomayananda was staying at Nanik Lahori's house. Guruji had made kheer which he brought for Gurudev. Vilasini ji was standing there. As the food came on to the table, Vilasini said, 'Swamiji is diabetic he may not want to eat so much kheer.'

"Gurudev was sitting at the table. He saw the pot of kheer and he pulled it towards

himself and said, "Tejomayananda has made this kheer? Then I must eat it!!" The kheer was kept at arms distance. But he took the whole pot towards himself.

"We were spellbound...

"After this Gurudev deputed Guruji to Northwestern University as he was unable to travel and give that talk. He said to Guruji, 'You go, I cannot come.' Guruji prostrated to Gurudev and Gurudev kept his hand on his head and said 'You will do well..'"

On another occasion, during one of the camps, Shobha ji was pressing Gurudev's feet. A question had been buzzing in her head and she felt compelled to ask him this: "Swamiji, I keep on disciplining my kids and sometimes this makes me so sad by night that I cannot sleep. Whereas my husband always has only loving words for them. I feel very bad about this."

Says Shobha ji, "Gurudev put me at ease and said, 'One person has to be the disciplinarian...!'

One unique incident that illustrated for them Gurudev's love of children happened at the Massanetta camp. The children in the camp must have gone to Gurudev and complained about the food quality or the quantity of food available for them.

Says Shobha ji, " He was angry with everybody in charge because he loved the kids the most. The children knew he was the only one who was always accessible and who would take them seriously. That was amazing - they knew he would hear them and so they did not even share their angst with any other elder! "

Who said what to whom was not clear or known, but Gurudev called Shobha and said, 'The kids are not getting fed properly'

"I was wonderstruck," says Shobha ji." The kids never told any other elders. How come they went to Gurudev? And why didn't they tell anyone else? So I asked Swamiji, 'Who told you this Swamiji?'

"Gurudev's reply? 'I know everything.' "

Yes ...!

61. Tvameva Mata cha Pita Tvameva ...

07-07-2015

Radhika Jesrani comes from a family that has been completely in the seva of Gurudev - starting with her parents. Today she runs a Balvihar in Mumbai.

* * *

Radhika was born into a Gurudev home, as they say; it was a home already blessed by Gurudev, where there were strong devotees in her parents and a home where Gurudev was the source of all joy and the pivot of all actions and doings.

Some in the Mission have been fortunate to be in this slab.

So Radhika grew up with the common denominator of Balavihar, Yuva Kendra and Study Groups. They were as natural as kindergarten and college - an integral part of life.

After marriage, Radhika moved to Mumbai and as she says most eloquently, "I continued taking a Balvihar class. The volunteering may have decreased but I always remember Gurudev saying, 'Even small things done in a great way make the difference!' and that’s what guides me today.” "



A blessing ...

While the Mission was the essential fabric of the life she was born into, Radhika also went through the teen phase where she questioned whether the spiritual path was really necessary and what her peers would think of her involvement. “But when I look back, I realise that Gurudev never voiced an expectation to always be involved. I think he allowed me the freedom to grow and negotiate my mind and my beliefs and deal with it.

"It was when I started a Yuva Kendra class at home - I must have been around 14 – and I saw my friends and family enjoying it, that I realised the doubts were a creation of my own mind and nothing else! And since then, I have never looked back."

Growing up with a saint who embodied perfection and who only loved, is a completely unique experience. Says Radhika, "He had no prescriptions for us. That is what made him so attractive to me. He gave us the freedom to make choices. “To this day my mother tells me, 'You are Gurudev's child; He will take care of whatever you wish to do. It will work out, and you will figure it out.’ Without a doubt, He will always be the strongest influencing factor in my life.”

Radhika narrates two experiences from her life with Gurudev that stand out in her memory. "They have had a lasting impact on me," she says.

As a child Radhika was fond of singing. But she mostly sang in a group and enjoyed it. "We used to go to Sidhabari as children, " she narrates. "Every evening Gurudev used to have a gathering in the garden. Everyone would sit around him and sing bhajans. He would enjoy, and we would enjoy being in His presence.



Gurudev cossetted in love. Radhika in red

"One such evening we all gathered and he said, 'So now Radhika Mehta will sing for us.' I kept quiet and hoped someone else would start and a few seconds later somebody did. When she ended somebody else tried to start but Gurudev said,' Stop, now Radhika will sing.'

"I had no choice. I was always afraid I would forget the lyrics, but I had to start! I sang 'Aao Gurudev' which remains my favourite bhajan till date.

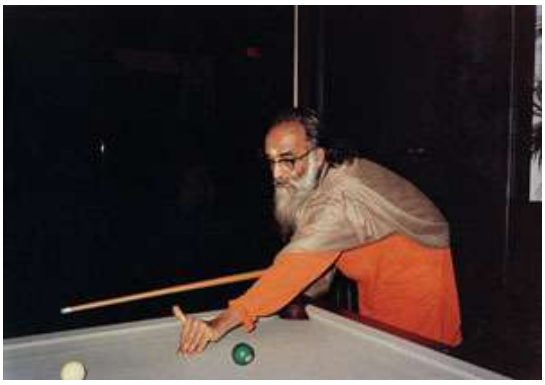
"I sang 2 lines and sure enough I forgot.

"Gurudev looked at me and smiled. And then the nurses from CORD who were also there, just picked up from where I had dropped and the bhajan ended successfully. He even took care of that! That is what his smile was about. What could have become an embarrassment for me, he took care of it so wonderfully.

"It was a defining moment and that one episode made my nervousness go away forever. From that day on speaking in public was never a difficulty."

The second amazing experience came after her 12th Board exams.

"My parents gifted me a trip with Gurudev after my exams – a gift I will cherish forever! I travelled with Gurudev to Singapore and Hong Kong – my first foreign trip on my own and that too with Gurudev! I couldn't ask for anything more.



"I stayed with him at the homes of his hosts. It was the first time I saw him from morning to night, observed his precision, his dedication, his detail. And the amount of love he showered on me during that trip was amazing. Reaching Singapore he told me, "See, for this trip I am your father and your mother: for everything you do you have to take my permission. Because they sent you with me and I am answerable to them."

And he always kept an eye out for me. So if I was going with some devotees to the yagnashala earlier to help out, , I would have to inform him. If we were going to someone's house for bhiksha, he would want to know which car I was going in, (in case I was not travelling with him) and who was taking me. I am blessed to have been in His care that whole time."

One of her most precious moments was an evening she spent with Him in Hong Kong. Gurudev had been a bit unwell so he decided to thin out his evening satsang and rest instead. Radhika sat with him as He was watching a billiards tournament. Says Radhika, "I knew he liked tennis but billiards was new. For 30 minutes while I was sitting with him, He actually sat and explained to me the game, the rules, what the objective was, what the scoring is and how it is done. And in such detail! He talked to me with patience, with care, with love. Those 30 minutes are a precious memory, one I will always cherish. And I know I am blessed to have had the opportunity to grow up under His Grace."

Today Radhika runs a Balvihar in Mumbai. Her son is 5 years old. And she says, "He has the Mission connection undoubtedly, he has met Pujya Guruji which is a great blessing and he will soon start Balvihar!"

And thus the parampara nourishes.....

62. A Bouquet of Memories

08-07-2015

Discipline, Dedication, Devotion, Drive

DISCIPLINE

It was 1984. Place: Chennai, during a yagna. A bhiksha was organised for Gurudev at a devotee's home. Just as Gurudev was finishing his meal, the hostess in her compassion, decided to bring a mug full of water and a broad basin for Gurudev to wash his hands in, without having to get up from his chair and walk to the wash basin.

Vijayalakshmi was there and she went naaah...! Don't do this; he will not wash his hands in this manner.

But the hostess persisted. She felt in her wisdom this was helpful and due satkaar (hospitality) as well.



Gurudev's Hanuman in Sidhabari. Note the platform at the top, behind Hanuman ji, for abhishekam.

As this hushed whispered debate went on, Gurudev's ears picked up the turbulence in the airwaves and he roared, "What is that?"

Viji explained.

Gurudev said rather stiffly, "I am a sanyasi; I don't wash my hands in a bowl. I can walk to where there is running water and wash my hands there!"

This is the nature of discipline. It is tough on the disciplined. And is also tough and unbending in itself. And if it is a Gurudev discipline then it is verily like Shiva's bow.

This is one quality people have always talked about in Gurudev, how he did what he had to do the way he wanted everyone to do it. He did not negotiate discipline. What was more, he had the spirit to stay by it.

DEDICATION

It was 1987, in Sidhabari when the mastakabhishekam was to happen. It was a very hot afternoon. While many stayed indoors waiting for the Sun god to tone down his fury, Gurudev, thought he must come out and check on the preparations.

Spotting Viji, he called out in his characteristic roar, "Come here! Let us go check what is happening with the construction of the platform."



1982 when the idol was installed, Gurudev carrying waters from the holy rivers for

the abhishekam

For those who may not know, the mastakabhishekam is held once in five years, for the Veera Anjaneya in Sidhabari. To perform this abhisehkam, (see picture) the priest and others helping him, including Gurudev then, and Pujya Guruji now, need to climb to the top to perform the abhishekam. A platform is constructed to enable this.

This is the platform that Gurudev wished to check on.

But in the mid afternoon sun? wondered Viji. One look up and she was alarmed at the height, but even before her eyes could come down, Gurudev was already climbing and reached all the way up in one breath, and there he was talking about ropes to be tied, something else to be done ...More instructions later, he sped down.

Of course Viji also trundled up and then down after him. "If I had not, then I would have heard for the rest of my life that I was unfit and that I need to do something about it. Oh no, you don't get let off without being shown your lack of discipline!"

DEVOTION

Another time, it was touching reverence. After a yagna there would always be a sadhana day, when Gurudev would take Mission members for a day trip to a place of worship. This episode took place in the sixties. The devotees went to Tiruvannamalai with Gurudev. It was cold, it was December. One devotee's child had fallen quite sick. Gurudev wanted the father to come with the child on this pilgrimage.

When they reached the hill top, Gurudev told the father ' take the child's clothes off and let him lie on the sand here.'



1982: Devotees carrying holy waters to perform abhishekam, as Hanumanji looks on...

Everyone was shocked: child was running a very high temperature, it was December and now this? But Gurudev knew what he was saying. "Don't worry, he will be

alright soon," he said. 'These sands have been walked on by mahatmas like Ramana Maharshi ... that is why I am suggesting this.' And sure enough in no time the child was well and up and about.

After every yagna Gurudev would personally give the prasad pustika to the devotees. But there was first an order and a structure to the ceremony. When the talk would end, Gurudev would say, 'Now only last row will stand up and come up in an orderly line. Then the second last row...'

Meanwhile a group will begin singing bhajans. All this was planned, organised well in advance so that everything happened like clockwork. That clockwork comes from discipline. And the bhajan group will also keep changing, says Viji, since the pustika handing ceremony would take quite a while. So a new group would take over. And there never was any pushing or pulling. Everyone would walk in orderly manner. If any noisy buzz happened, Gurudev would simply look up and instantly silence would fall on the crowd!

DRIVE

In 1962, when the Chinese aggression happened, Gurudev collected blankets to give the army folk on the front. He was at the 515 army base in Bangalore. The moment he put his foot on the threshold of the hall.... there would be pin drop silence. Gurudev went there to address the army as the war was on. He spoke beautifully about patriotism, about defending the motherland, about Kshatriya dharma ... 'It was so nice ... he entered and the army people were as if hushed into silence. Oh and the ovation he got! His talk was breathtaking ... They all stood and clapped for him for so long ... they were so thrilled by the talk he gave!" says Viji.

From the Collection and Memories of Vijayalakshmi Vijayakumar (Viji)

63. "Oonu Kazhicho?"

09-07-2015

It was in Kanpur. And a very long time ago. Those days there were no acharyas or brahmacharis, atleast not enough to spare. A few sevaks hung on to Gurudev and ran with him everywhere and did everything - from everything to everything.

They say Gurudev was like a shadow to them. Where they went, he went too. Where he went, they went too. Difficult to imagine this. But the same attention to detail, the same controls and checks, the same precision, the same discipline, the same respect for time. For it was Time that was celebrating Gurudev's coming to the plains to give to the people what he had learnt at the feet of his master.

There was a yagna in Kanpur and Shri. H.P. Eswar was the running-around-boy. Post the yagna he was also in charge of counting the Gurudakshina. Everybody had left, the audience definitely, but also the committee members. There he sat on the ground, a cloth spread out before him and the coins and notes all strewn, counting.

Presently Gurudev came and asked him, "Oona kazicho?" Malayalam for 'have you eaten?'

Eswar ji looked up with a number put on pause in his mind and the glorious face of Gurudev looking down at him with an expression he didn't want to ever lose. And by that time Gurudev realised he had not eaten and he said, "Go and eat first otherwise the kitchen will shut and you will stay hungry."

Just an hour ago this Swami was extolling the glory of the Geeta, letting the meanings fly at the audience that remained spellbound throughout the talk. And an hour later, here he was asking a small sevak, 'have you eaten?'

Amazed, wonderstruck and thoughtful, Eswar ji scurried to the makeshift kitchen, ate his fill and came back and resumed the counting. One and half hours later Gurudev came back. He had not left! He could have.

That same expression now looked down at the young Eswar tying up the bag of gurudakshina. Gurudev asked, "Is the counting done?"

"Yes," said Eswar ji, "17223 rupees."

Gurudev chuckled in most Gurudev-like manner and said, "If I was to do this counting it will take me two and a half days!"

" That is how he encourages us," says Eswar ji indulgent of a boss and Master who pervaded his every breath right from those days.... Om Utsahavardhakaaya namah!

From the Collection and memories of Shri H.P. Eswar

64. The Souvenir

10-07-2015

In the mid eighties, souvenirs were sometimes a means for raising funds to support a Mission Centre. Typically, a souvenir began as a collection of advertisements from sponsors with a goodwill message for the event and the host, from Gurudev or a Guest of Honour or other dignitary.

Slowly these evolved into choosing a theme for the souvenir (such as Meditation, Prayer, Vedanta...) and then select articles on that theme with an article from Gurudev as the lead article sometimes.

Later in the 80s Gurudev got an idea that the Mananam series that was popular in the west could be brought out as a souvenir by a yagna centre in India in the same format - with the advertiser's message at the bottom of every page.



As it happened those days, in India it was difficult to publish and sell the Mananam series. Yet, it was a spectacular journal of the most thoughtprovoking thoughts essayed by the finest thinkers and philosophers. The souvenir theme route was the option before Gurudev. He made it possible for a centre to select one of the thematic Mananam books as approved by Gurudev, for their souvenir and bring it out with strip ads.

The Center would then collect ads for the book use them as strip ads, or at the end of the book.

Now one thing was always very clear: the center or the organiser had to write to Gurudev and get an approval from him before the yagna. And that included discussing the souvenir with him, its theme and the content, and obtaining his

approval; hence all this had to precede the release.

Once printer-ready, the book had to be shown to him. So typically, the organiser or the center would take the book to him to where he stayed; he would go through it page by page, then suggest changes, then the corrections are made. The final printed version is then gift wrapped for stage presence and eventual release.

So there was a yagna in Chennai. The editor was a well known academician. A good worker, a good sevak, the man was unable to attend any of the committee meetings because someone in his family took very ill and he was dealing with daily crisis. What also happened was he was unable to inform anyone about the status of the souvenir. But he was working on it alone, in his time. The organising committee had no information and even after the yagna began, they had no information. Nor could they contact him as the landline was the only means those days.

Just when the committee was resigned to the idea that there was to be no souvenir, and in any case it was the last day of the yagna out of the blue and without a warning, a person arrived from the printer with a 'final copy' all wrapped and ribboned, for Gurudev to release.

This was 30 minutes before the yagna ended.

The secretary of the Mission was startled and now very confused too, for, the Mission which ran like clockwork for every action, was now faced with an unusual situation for which the poor man had neither solution nor script.

In a panic, he decided to send the book on stage to Gurudev to release. That was the best he could decide.

Keshav ji was the stage announcer for that event and also the secretary of the Yuva Kendra. Like all enthusiastic, bright and happy yuva kendra workers, he readily took the shining packet, not knowing its story or background, save that it was the yagna souvenir to be released, and cheerfully took it and went to give it to Gurudev, just as the yagna ended and Gurudev was about to get up from his vyaasapeetha.

Flashing a broad smile, Keshav touched Gurudev's feet and gave him the packet. Gurudev turned his chair towards the yuvak, smiled back and turning away from the mic, asked, "What is this?

"This is the yagna souvenir to be released by you Swamiji," he replied.

Gurudev picked up the packet, and holding it in his hand, he smiled and said forcefully but softly, "There is no yagna souvenir for this yagna." And with that he tossed it aside.

He then stood up, turned back to look at Keshav and said "Never mind ...," and taking long strides, he left for and out of the exit door.

For a yuva kendra worker, Gurudev's word was law. So Keshav readily straightened, picked up the packet and went after Gurudev to see him off at the car.

Gurudev saw him come. As he got into the car and pulled the door shut with him, he smiled through the rolled down window at Keshav and said, "'Never mind, it was not you..."

Keshav ji smiled back and offered his Hari Om. As the car rolled on, Keshav too we went about his other tasks.

Per procedure, later in the night, Keshav went to the host house to bid Gurudev goodnight. Gurudev was about to enter his room when he saw the young man come in. As Keshav bent down to do his pranaam, Gurudev patted his back with his walking stick and said, "Some people will never learn, but don't worry it was not you."

This time Keshav was genuinely confused. But Gurudev added, "The person who needs this, knows how to follow process... "

Keshav would find out what Gurudev was saying and what the story was... much later. But there, then... he nodded a brief firm nod bending slightly at the waist. But that day he got a quick guide to discipline and the art of ensuring process.

From the collection and memories of Shri M. Keshav

65. The Birthday Gift

11-07-2015

In giving, he taught; in teaching, he gave

It was the 18th of March,in the year 1990 or 1991. It was young Shefali's birthday. Her mother Prarthna Saran was in Sidhabari with Gurudev. Her father was on a business call in Jagadhari in Haryana. Shefali herself was deeply immersed in her studies.

Prarthna ji woke up remembering her daughter and praying over her. But she also wondered if her husband would remember the child's birthday and call her. And she felt he would not remember it was her birthday, and naturally not wish her. So she thought that the best way was to offer a dakshina to Gurudev and take his blessings.

Quick and eager steps brought her to Gurudev after breakfast. He was sitting with devotees joking and laughing as usual. After doing Pranaam Prarthna ji offered him her heartfelt dakshina saying, "Swamiji, today is Shefali's birthday."

Not for nothing did Guruji also name him Utsahavardhakah. For instantly Gurudev shone like a million suns and great excitement filled his voice as he opened out both his arms wide and hugged Prarthna ji very affectionately, and he asked (to her surprise), " Where is her father?"

Prarthna ji said he was away on work to a place called Jagadhari in Haryana. To her great surprise and astonishment, he asked, " Has he wished her yet?" How did he think of that?

"No Swamiji," said Prarthna ji, "He generally forgets."

Gurudev said summarily, "Ring him up from the ashram office,(pre-cellphone days) and tell him that I have asked him to wish her."

Prarthna ji said, "Yes Swamiji, " and went on to do as she was bid.

Those present that day at Sidhbari had noticed Gurudev wearing a huge gold ring set with an amethyst. This ring had been an offering of love and gratitude by a French psychiatrist who had come all the way from Paris bringing along a French lady who was a patient of deep depression. Two days of listening to the Geeta from Gurudev, she had been had healed completely.

In sheer humility she had gifted this ring to Gurudev that same morning and insisted that he wear it. Gurudev, that utsahavardhaka, was always very indulgent

with his devotees so he donned it on to please her.

And now, having just told Prarthna to call the father and ask him to wish his daughter, Gurudev, took off the amethyst ring from his finger and tossed it to Prarthna ji saying, "Since morning I am thinking where to throw this. Give it to Shefali, Happy Birthday !!"

Prarthna ji was overwhelmed, but she did not miss the great lesson in his words: 'Even one object that we value can bind a seeker's attention, and a sincere seeker has to practise aparigraha (non-covetousness, non-desire for hoarding, non-possessiveness) and always keep the true value of everything firmly in his mind,learning to value only the Real!'

Prarthna ji's ears clearly highlighted the words he had used for an expensive metal and the precious stone, unmistakeable, with no room for doubt, even if seemingly harsh: "Where can I throw this?"

More was to follow. At night, after the talks for the day were over , he called her and asked, " Has the father rung up Shefali and wished her? "

Of course he had, Gurudev's orders ! Prarthna ji's heart flooded with love for the father Gurudev who always said: "They are my children."

Photographs will be uploaded soon.....

66. ‘Don’t Leave Asha …’

12-07-2015

RuchiVasa ,nee Nanavaty, is the niece of Darshana and GaurangNanavaty of CM Houston. Her own mother runs a Balvihar in South Mumbai.This is part one of her story.

Ruchi's introduction to Gurudev happened via her uncle and aunt (kaka and kaki) - who run the CM Houston center. The Nanavaty couple studied Vedanta at Piercy, and as Ruchi puts it, "after that my family has just been all about Gurudev and Gurudev alone!"

So it was not a big deal for Ruchi when she was taken to meet Gurudev at the age of 9. Her uncle and aunt took her to visit him at the home of aMission devotee. She bowed to him as everyone else was doing, and then looking at him as only a child can, she asked, "Will you come to my house?"

Gurudev smiled his most beautiful smile and said, "How can I say no to such a sweet child?"



Ruchi with Gurudev.... seeing God

Says Ruchi, "He came to my house. He was coming on a week day. I did not think my mum would tell me to bunk school to meet Swamiji. But that is exactly what she

did and I said, 'You are asking me to bunk school for a Swami?'

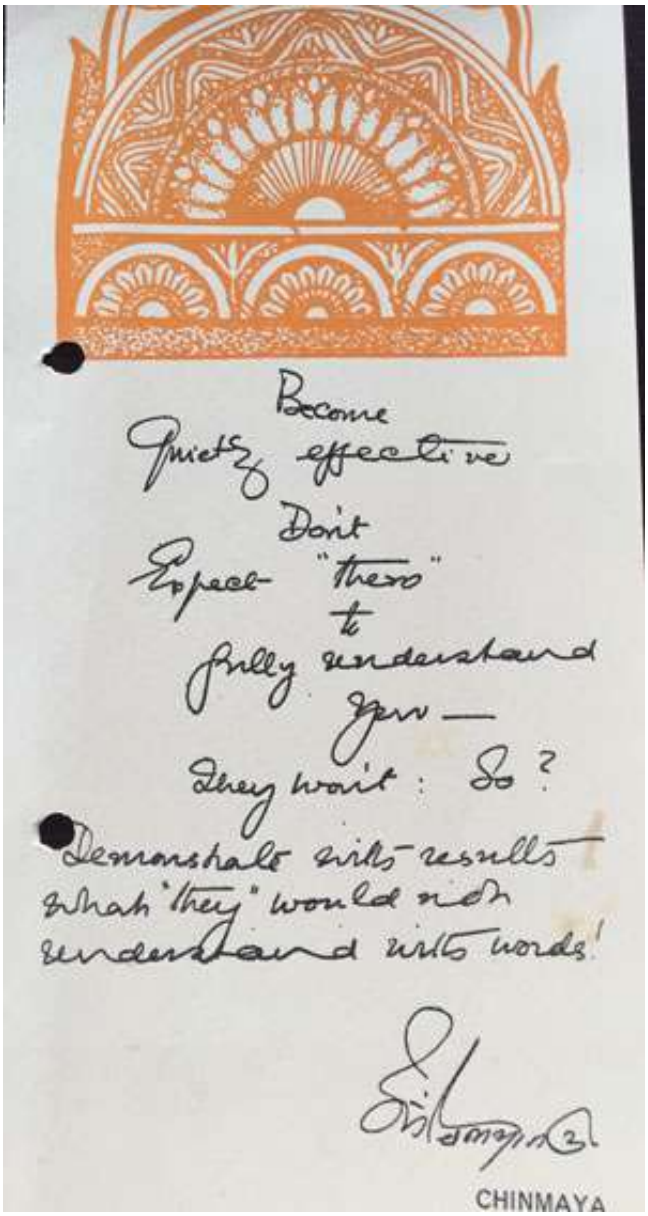
"He came through the door, PujyaGuruji was with him, Asha Kamdar was with him ... through the one and half hours he spent at my home, I was there. He addressed the balvihar kids, and sang a bhajan - khaatebhi ram kaho, peetebhi ram kaho....."

So what did the 9-year old Ruchithink? She says," I did not directly interact with him but the fact that such a great holy person could be so attentive to everyone, not just the host, but everyone who had come, making each one feel so special ... that stayed with me. That stood out in my mind as 'wow!'"

Ruchi went to Balavihar till she was 13. Thereafter peer pressure built up. "If my friends were not going why should I? That was the reasoning in my head," says Ruchi. So age 13- 16 she was not involved with the Mission. "My mom tried to force me in every which way but my mind was not receptive.”

"One day I was at some Mission function because mom was going. There I met ReshmaKhemlani. My mother said, "See she is the same age as you, she is at Xavier's College, you are at HR College, you both should get together ... no?' "

That was the turning point in Ruchi's life. She chatted up Reshma and they got along so well! "We were talking of college and things, but not about Mission work. I hit it off so well with her. It struck me that hey, CM people are not just those who talk about BMI, the Gita and what not, all the time but there is a group I could connect with and through that I could get to a CHYK class."



Her favorite quote from Him

Reshma was one of the most influential persons at that crucial stage in Ruchi’s life. "She would drag me to CHYK class, we would meet at the Moorjani house in Malabar Hill. We would meet every Sunday. The first time I was uncomfortable, but I wasn’t going to give up either, and I went a second time."

The text they were studying was Self Unfoldment. Says Ruchi, "This was a text where you actually unfold, you come face to face with who you are; if you are a true seeker you begin to reflect. I became very interested in knowing who I really am.”

"In Grade 12 at HR College, Reshma called me one afternoon and said, 'I know in HR you are just standing on the road, eating vadapao, doing nothing, hanging out with friends,... why don't you volunteer your time to the Mission? I know this lady

who needs really help.'

Who?

AshajiKamdar.

Reshma said, "Ashaji is managing the ChinmayaVideo Dham (CVD).She is looking for volunteers who can help with everyday work. And there is a LOT of work … "

Ruchi agreed. “OK, I will come; I will spend some time during my weekdays.”

This was the second turning point in her life. Says Ruchi, “ Ashaji and Reshma have been 2 people (other than kaka and kaki) who have really helped ingrain the Mission in me.”

Ruchi started volunteering 3 hours a week. “And this was in the beginning of my twelfth grade. By the end of class 12, I was going there every single day for 6-7 hours.”

“My parents by now were convinced I was giving up the world and wouldsoon join the brahmachari course....

This was also the time when the preparations for Tulabharam were warming up. Ashaji was going to organise the whole event. I loved working with her and spent all my waking time at CVD. . She liked the way I worked and she gave me more responsibilities.

“On the day of the Tulabharam, she had given me the job of an usher, showing people where to sit and so on. She said to me, 'After the ceremony Swamiji will be brought down the ramp in his wheelchair and taken to his car. I want you to be standing right there because I don't want the crowd to come and prostrate there. I want him to get to the car as fast as possible.' I was all powered up.

"And lo and behold! The ceremony is over, he sits on the wheelchair, and he tells the person wheeling him to stop and he stops right in front of me. I am not even noticing that he has stopped before me, but simply that he has stopped.

"Gradually a feeling grows on me --- have I done something wrong? Because no more did I not notice that he had stopped for me. He looks straight into my eyes and smiles at me. I was really scared, ok what wrong have I done, pleasetell me!

“He says to me just 3 words - Don't leave Asha.

“Up until that time he had always referred to me as ‘Gaurang's niece’. That day was the first day he said RUCHI. That meant, till that time, because I was not truly involved, I was merely somebody’s niece. That day he recognised me.

“Working with Ashaji made me extreeeemely organised, I became a perfectionist and I really started valuing people’s time - not that I was not punctual; but I learnt something more.”

Cut to 1991.

Gurudev had taken ill in Sidhabari and he was flown to Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai. Ruchi was to get the gift of exclusive time with Gurudev!

Recounts Ruchi, “Swamiji was a big time tennis fan. He was getting bored in the hospital room. He told Asha ji I want to see the old matches of Sampras, Navratilova, McEnroe and Agassi.

“For some odd reason Ashaji gave me the job. ‘I want you to go through all the video libraries, and find as many as you can.’ So there I was, combing through the lists of Shemaroo at Malabar Hill and Breach Candy. I also called many friends and finally managed to get a good selection.

“I thought I will deliver these at Jaslok and I will be done.

“But Ashaji said, ‘He is calling you upstairs.’ I was surprised, ‘Really?’

“The next 3 days, 9 am to 6 pm in the evening I watched tennis with Gurudev.

“Now Swamiji is always known to set the temperature of his airconditioner to close to freezing point. The first day, his room was so cold, I was not interested in watching tennis. ‘He is so engrossed, he is not going to care whether I am engrossed or not, watching or not, interested or not … ’, I reasoned, and I began to day dream. So I am looking at the TV and daydreaming. And suddenly he looked at me and said ‘what is the score… ?’ I say I am sorry Swamiji, I am not paying attention.

Gurudev: Why have I called you here?

Ruchi: I don’t know; I am wondering too..

Gurudev: I am going to give you a second chance; I want you to pay attention to the score.

“Now I am going, ‘Oh my God, what have I gotten myself into!’ Don’t forget I am in class 12. I am NOT at all interested in tennis.

“Now he is asking me about rules. So far I managed to pay attention and remember the scores, but now he comes up with rules. He asks me what is ‘footfault’.

“Footfault! I drop my jaw, “Swamiji, I do not know!”

“So he started explaining to me all the techniques he knew as during his early days he had played tennis too.

“In those three days I learnt technically what tennis is all about.

He was trying to teach me that whatever you are doing , you give your 100% without allowing your mind to wander. That is what I learnt in those 3 days I was

with him. So after the initial day of feeling miserably cold, those 3 days were bliss.”

“When I look back I am so happy that I spent 3 full days with him, watching the game, learning some very sharp qualities of life: whether I am vacuuming or talking or polishing furniture, to give my 100%. He taught me that work does not have to be interesting but it can be done perfectly. You got to be a perfectionist.”

“I have learnt the game of tennis so well that even today when I watch tennis, the flashback that comes before my eyes is of how Swamiji explained tennis to me. Today my son is nine and a half, and he plays competitive tennis; I try to explain to him a lot that Gurudev explained to me...just the way Gurudev explained tennis to me! There is a sense of déjà vu.

“Gurudev explained the game to me and I am passing that same knowledge down to the next generation.”

67. The Girl Who Saw God

13-07-2015

Ruchi Vasa , nee Nanavaty, is the niece of Darshana and Gaurang Nanavaty of CM Houston. Her own mother runs a Balvihar in South Mumbai. This is the second and final part of her story.

Ruchi Nanavaty had stuck to Gurudev's counsel 'Don't leave Asha ...' and she continued to work very closely at Chinmaya Video Dham with her. In 1992 Ruchi who was in her first year of college, decided she wanted to attend the Sidhabari Vivekachudamani camp.

The Vivekachudamani was broken into many short camps and she chose the late Jan/early Feb portion as she had prelim exams coming up in March.



Ruchi with Gurudev.... seeing God

"I wanted to stay on," says Ruchi, "But Gurudev said 'No, you have to go back, you have to study. Chinmaya inner circle has to be well educated. I want you to go back and study for your finals. I am waiting to congratulate you on your distinction."

To continue, in her words, " I began pleading and whining...'these are not finals, these are just prelims, I can miss it, nobody gets hurt.'

"But he says 'No, go back. If you can get permission from your principal that you can miss the exam then you can come for the last camp.

“I was like ‘Oh my God! I have to go back convince my Principal and then come back?’ I got adamant. I decided to do all that.

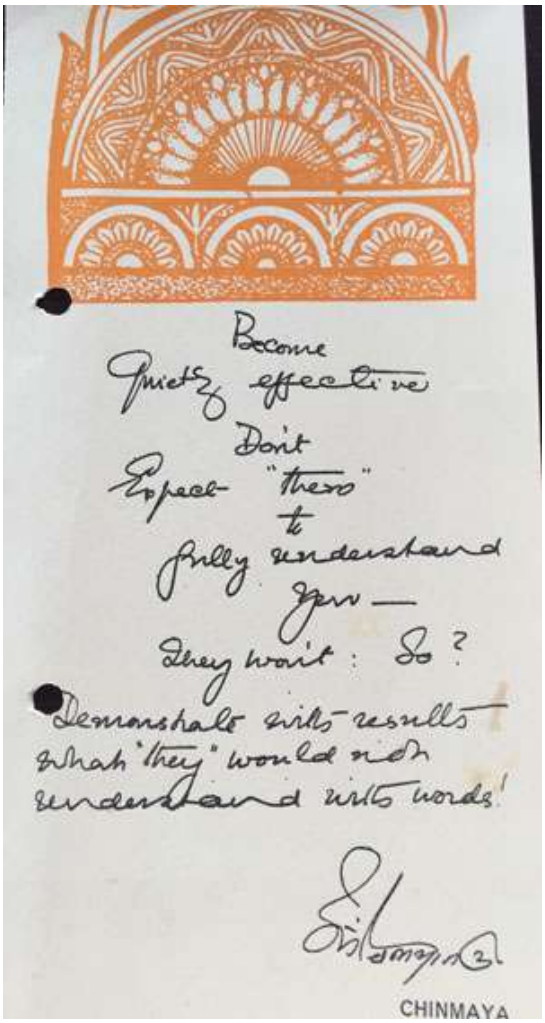
“I flew back to Bombay. My mother was slowly beginning to freak out, ‘Are you really going to say to your principal that you want to miss exams because you want to attend a vivekachudamani camp?’ She was incredulous. I said, the fact that he put the idea in my head, means he knows I will be able to do it. Why would he give me this idea? Mum agreed.

“The principal of HR College was Ms. Indu Sahani. She had been the Principal for a long time. I went to her office and said, ‘I am here to ask the most crazy thing, I don’t know what your reaction will be, but I am still going to ask,’ I said.

“She said go ahead, ask.

“I explain to her all this. I am associated with the Chinmaya Mission, I was in the Himalayas for 4 weeks, I want to attend this last session of my Guru, but I have had to give it up because of the unit exams. Is it possible that I don’t do the unit exams and I just do the final exams in May?

Principal: (pondering this for 5 minutes, then) You are 17, you have been in the Himalayas for 4 weeks, you are listening to the vivekachudamani and you want to go back, and you want to miss the unit exams?



Her favorite quote from Him

Ruchi: I just said all this to you, ma'am.... ,?

"And she looked at me, stared at me for 30 sec and said, permission granted.

"I shriek, " Really?"

Principal: In today's day and age I see very few teens interested in Indian culture and spirituality. If you are I am not stopping you; I am giving you the permission.

"I was so ecstatic. I wanted to call Gurudev, but I didn't. I took the next flight out 3 days later and went back.

"When I walked in he was sitting in the rose garden in satsang with devotees. I bowed to him, he looked at me, and said, "Oh my God, you are back again?"

"In my head I am saying, 'you knew all along I was coming back. You only wanted to see f I would go back and take permission, if I would really work hard at it. But

with your permission, I did get the permission!'

"That moment when he said Oh My God you are back? I felt the special feeling of being especially loved. I felt the love that a loved one feels in the glow of love. It felt like he was saying 'I missed you'. That was the feeling I got. I was goose bumps all over...even now I am feeling it as I recount it.

(Have I seen God? Yes, I have.)

I went home, studied and got that distinction he wanted. I wrote to him and told him and he wrote back, "I am really proud of you!"

" I read his letters to me again and again and again.... and each time they give me a different meaning.

"Sometime in June 93 he was leaving for the US. Two days before that, I was in the ashram. I was helping Ashaji pack his bag. He was sitting in the satsang room.When he came out, I was busy at some work. He looked at me and said, "Now it is very late and you should be going home, but I want you to come back tomorrow and when you do, bring mama, papa, brother and your grandma.

"I was wondering 'maybe he wants to see them because he is travelling.' So I tell my family to come.

"They all come at 6.30 in the evening and he was to leave the ashram at 9. I was occupied with Ashaji, but Gurudev met my parents in the satsang hall. He spoke to them all. At 9 when he was about to leave - he looks at my mom and said where is Ruchi?

"Mom said she is working maybe with Asha.

"He said, 'I think you should take her back home otherwise she is going to be wandering around this ashram and never want to go back home.' These were the last words he spoke about me. After this he never returned to India.

"Knowing he was unwell, I had stopped writing letters to him. The day he took Mahasamadhi, Aug 3 I was at Ashaji's place, answering the calls. That day I was really unemotional. I did not cry or smile.

"As it is I am not a very emotional person. Till the day his body was flown to Delhi, I did not speak about his mahasamadhi or cry. So many people around me were sobbing and talking about Him... but I was not.

"But the minute my eyes saw his embalmed body come out of a wooden crate, that moment an arrow pierced my heart. I sobbed like a little child. I could not believe that the person whose heart was working at 10%, who roared like a lion when he talked, who could laugh with a open heart, khulla dil ... that person was now boxed and contained in a crate. I had never seen him lifeless like this. No Vedanta could hold me back. I broke down.

“That day I felt like a big part of me just died right there. I was numb, I was so numb. I travelled from Delhi to Sidhabari by car and during the whole drive I was numb.

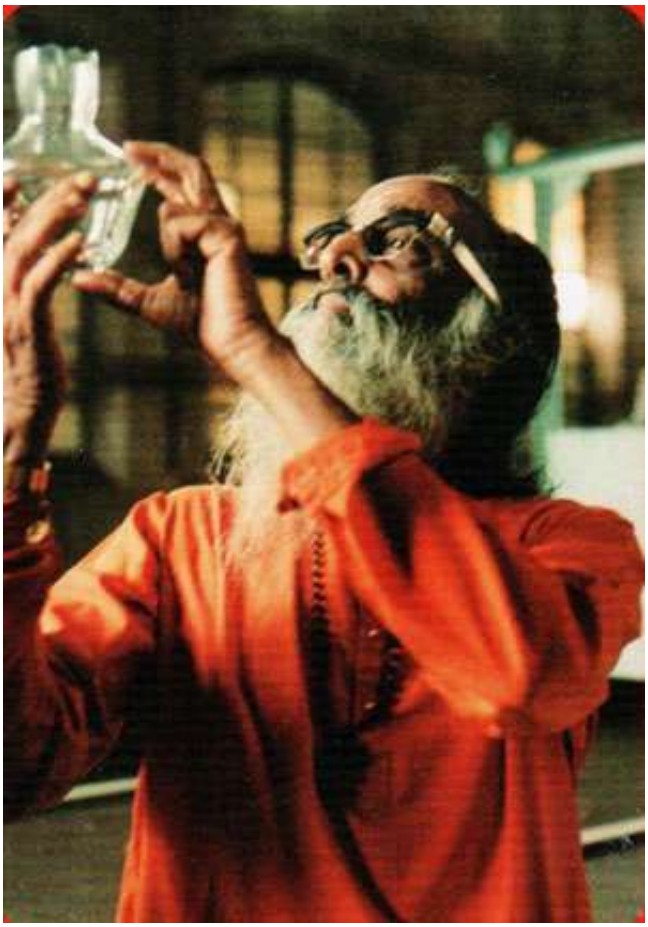
“I feel that this request to share my memories is a calling from him, a way to bring me back to the Mission.”

68. The Bottle in the Ganges

14-07-2015

This was the Vivekachudamani Camp in Sidhabari, 1991-92.

As always, there was a small group in satsang with Gurudev where devotees asked questions that plagued their minds and Gurudev would answer them.



One such occasion, a satsangi asked Gurudev: "Swamiji I cannot rid myself of my negative thoughts, my anxieties and worries even though I attend satsang regularly."

Gurudev looked at him then said, "There is a tightly corked bottle, nicely waxed all over. This bottle is thrown into the Ganges and left there for six months; even then the devil inside that bottle will never get purified.

“You have to make space for Him, if you want to invite Him!!"

From the collection and memories of Prarthna Saran

69. ' …… and we will go to the cinema together…!’

15-07-2015

G Krishnamurthy is a grand old man of 85 but his memory is so sharp you could slice bread. And when he talks about Gurudev he is announcing it, declaring it, he is so passionate as he recalls Gurudev. He wishes he didn't have to stop talking...

It was December 1953. It was around the time that Pandit Nehru was appointing Shri Rajagopalachari as the Chief Minister of Madras (now Chennai). Elsewhere, a famous flautist, Shri T.R. Mahalingam was performing at the Krishna Gana Sabha.

Attending this performance, among many others thronging that hall, was a young man from Thanjavur, named G Krishnamurthy. Towards the end of that same performance, in walked a young swami in dhoti and no angavastram – a rebel indeed. He sat for a little while and then he left.

When Krishnamurthy came out of the hall after the performance, he was handed a pamphlet about the Swami (whose photo was on the pamphlet) starting a series of talks in TheagarayaNagar (T.Nagar for short) Madras. At the Accountant General's office where he worked, somebody called Pattabhiraman had already told Krishnamurthy about a young swami who was going to speak in English. But Krishnamurthy had hastily pooh-poohed the idea and said there were enough godmen doing the rounds: " I am not interested."



Shri Krishnamurthy ji's most prized possession... adorning his living room and heart.

But Pattabhiraman told him weightier words, 'No less than a federal court judge Sir S. Varadachari is going to inaugurate the talks. And when such a traditional orthodox brahmin and a judge on top of that, is going to inaugurate, there must be something about this young Swami!'

The next day Swami Chinmayananda began his yagna at T.Nagar in Chennai. Sir Varadachari said in his inaugural speech words to this effect - 'there is a lot in our scriptures ... you must listen to the scriptures for your self-realisation. All of you are lucky to listen'… and so on.

When all the inaugural acts were done, Swami Chinmayananda had to say a few words too. This is what he said, "Friends! Whatever the esteemed judge spoke, keep that aside, and for the next 41 days listen to what I say. Have full freedom to doubt it, question it and enquire deeply.

And if you find the scriptures give you nothing then we will together throw it in the dustbin and I will join you and we will go to the cinema together."

Krishnamurthy who was then all of 23, heard the swami say, "Logically, the Upanishad is a Science of Total Living....!" He recalled the pamphlet he had seen the previous day and couldn't help admiring this daring young Swami who was now also saying, "Religion! Is it elixir or poison? Hope or dope? Boon or bane? "

Krishnamurthy ji recalls, "I was fascinated. What is this? He is talking as if without respect!" He was not sure at all whether he should keep attending the next 40 days, but he returned everyday. On another day Gurudev spoke about the multiple-layered personality of man. Says Krishnamurthy ji, "He was talking about man's personality as being not a single layer or entity. 'We have to integrate it. Integration of the mind is important. But you have to apply the contents of the Upanishads for that....' It was very impressive. What is more, every word he spoke was irreplacable."

Krishnamurthy ji already had enough to be worry about. He had had a difficult childhood, very troubled by the lack of encouragement for education, especially what he craved to study. His father was a man of good means but Krishnamurthy ji had to go seek the benevolence of his older uncle (father's oldest brother). But the uncle told him 'You don't need to study...' dismissing him summarily, whereas, Krishnamurthy was aching to join St. Joseph's College for his graduate studies.



Shri. G. Krishnamurthy ji, in continuous celebration of the Swami to whom he owes his spiritual birth

And not just all this; Krishnamurthy was troubled by the orthodoxy of his environment. He had some very deep rooted conflicts with his foundation which had led to fear -- a fear which then became the base for his beliefs, tainting his religion. In his words, "My goodluck ... I was not a believer.Out of fear I used to pray."

'Goodluck' it was because, as the days of the yagna passed he grew to accept and

trust this swami. As he says, "My spiritual birth happened with Gurudev. He told me Religion is the Science of Integrated Living."

Gurudev boosted his confidence further by making him secretary of CM Madras. "I was very worried if I could ever undertake such a responsibility, but Natarajan told me 'whatever Swamiji says, take it up.'

The two of them would even go some nights on cycle rickshaws to paste Gurudev's posters all over the city. Some nights, Gurudev would even pedal with them all round the city to paste yagna posters! At the end of every week of the Yagna, Gurudev would make small booklets called Yagna Prasad containing the gist of the talks of that week, which were neatly printed.

Meanwhile Krishnamurthy ji's mother was growing increasingly anxious. He was saying 'No' to marriage and now he was also keeping company of a young sanyasi, and not even a 'Brahmin sanyasi' at that! Says Krishnamurthy ji, "I said nothing doing!! He is more than a brahimin sanyasi."

On the other side, Gurudev added responsibilities to Krishnamurthy's portfolio as Mission secretary. He said you will organisethe All India Study Group Sevaks Conference.

Over 300 -500 people attended this conference. "Swamiji was building my self-confidence," says Krishnamurthy ji, which had been depleted by the fears left by orthodoxy.

Once in Kutty Krishna Menon's house when Swamiji asked, 'How do you control the mind?' Krishnamurthy ji had replied, 'Only from the higher you can control the lower.' Says Krishnamurthy ji, "Swamiji was very impressed with that answer."

In 1966, Krishnamurthy ji's Mylapore house, where he lives today was fully ready and Gurudev even came for a bhiksha. His son Vivek who lives there now, was 2 years old. "And Swamiji blessed him," says Krishnamurthy ji. "He also lay down here on a sofa and rested here. Swamiji's pada puja was done in that room...I owe whatever I am to Gurudev....."

His mind jumps back and forth. He goes back to his first T.Nagar yagna again and says, "For 10 days I used to go, and he never used the word God. He talked about man's personality layers, spiritual personality and intellectual personality. The last 3 days, there was: one hour lecture, 30 minutes meditation, and pin drop silence! He told me 'You can write to me, I will send replies.' And sure enough, 3rd day I would get reply."

Krishnamurthy ji as if mulls over his good fortune and snippets of his memories surface. He says, " In 1957 somebody asked me to attend Jiddu Krishnamurti's talk (Krishnamurthy ji refers to him as 'JK' after this). I was confused whether to go. Swamiji said go, listen to everybody, you will learn from everybody." He listened to JK and found that JK and Gurudev were pointing to the same things in essence. "I found that he is speaking from a great height; but like all true mahatmas, Gurudev was coming down to the level of common ordinary man like me and taking them by

the hand to the heights! JK and Ramana Maharshi speak from lofty heights and say come, come, come up, you can reach us. They encourage you and say you can reach. Whereas Swamiji came down to the level of the people and took them by the hand as far as they could go...

"We are not born like Ramana Maharishi or JK. We are born with problems and only people like Swamiji come and lift us up. That is why he called it a science. If you take it as a scripture it will be narrow, limiting. But if you take it as a science you can question it and challenge it and then experience it and make it your own. This is really experience of total living.

"I revived my life because of Swamiji. In my young days I was not able to bear that anxiety, that suffering. After I met Swamiji too I had to struggle, but in and through it I was calm. Swamiji would say 'Be like a rock in the ocean. Plan out your work and then work out your plan. ' He would also say 'play the game well, to win or lose, but always smile.'

“Now I am fairly free from all mental tremors. Swamiji truly rehabilitated my inner personality."

Some observations from Krishnamurthy ji:

Scriptures like pole-vault: the greatest message he has got from Gurudev is that the scriptures are like a pole vault. In his words, "You will have to leave what you have learnt as well. Till you have the confidence, it is 'look before you leap'; but once you find the confidence, it becomes leap before you look (ie, leap without looking, because you must trust your knowledge; you don't have to think, because what you need is with you.)

"Clarity is already available. Now confusion has also ended... at that point you should leap before you look. Once clear, just move."

Orthodoxy: The concept of dwija --- see how the orthodox people have spoilt the whole meaning by thinking that sacred thread is the second birth. But fact is the first birth is the biological birth, and the 2nd is the breaking of the mind-shell, which happened for me through Swamiji.

Failures etc are not the end of living but a part of living! That is why the adage 'Failure is a stepping stone to success'. That is why in Meditation there is no failure.

Lakshman Rekha: All sense pleasures must have boundaries -- Gurudev taught us how to draw that line and yet enjoy the world, otherwise it is a suffering. Once you understand this concept life is so different!

In conclusion, Krishnamurthy ji talks about Gurudev's greatness in his characteristic style and says, “He is a great boon to society. That you will realise only as time goes. Even now you will not realise how great the man was.

"Those days we talked only about Ramayana or Mahabharata. But today even young people are talking with ease about Mandukya! How? He has opened the flood gates

for people to think of the Upanishads as a science and all these youngsters look at life as if it is a lab - look at all these acharya,s young and excited to play with the scriptures ... he gave them that freedom."

70. The Kumkum Pot

16-07-2015

GURUDEV had been the Chief Guest at the Annual National Convention of Viswa Hindu Parishad at Dharmasthala near Mangalore. Before addressing the conference, Gurudev had darsan at the Dharamasthala Devasthana where he offered worship.This is a famous Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, but managed by a Jain family, the Heggades, whereas the poojas are performed by hindus from the Madhava order.

Overwhelmed by Gurudev's presence the temple performed a special Pooja and at the end of it, as per the custom, Shri Virendra Heggade, Head of the Jain Family offered kumkum prasad in a little golden pot (katori)



From there, Gurudev then left for Bangalore where he was to grace the dance performance of a young lady, the daughter of TVS Rajan of TVS Industries. This was a promise Gurudev had made to her sometime earlier and Gurudev was fulfilling that promise.

After the dance performance, Gurudev met the young girl backstage and gifted her the kumkum pot received from the Shree Dharmasthala Temple, blessed her and then left to catch the flight to Cochin as he had to be in CIF for a Trustees meeting.

All was well but the next day, the girl called CIF and requested to speak to Swamiji. The moment Gurudev took the call, she said excitedly, "Swamiji, this pot is gold!" Clearly she was stunned by the gift Gurudev had given her.

Gurudev calmly replied , "That is why I gave it to you!"

Then some small pleasantries after, Gurudev hung up the call and saw the men

around the conference table all looking at him. In his characteristic jocular manner, Gurudev chuckled and slapped his forehead, saying, " I never thought it was gold!"

The men in the room smiled. How many times this situation had come to pass and how many times he had found a new script to pretend he did not know…Of course Gurudev knew it was gold, says Shri K.K. Rajan, but Gurudev never kept valuable presents. It may be gold ring or coin, but that will be handed over to the deserving lucky one next to him.

"In giving,Gurudev was very very generous," says Rajan ji. "Gurudev never wanted to keep anything for himself and Gurudev never did too…"

From the Collection and memories of Shri K.K. Rajan

71. The Undersized Shoe

17-07-2015

At the 1992 Vivekchudamani Camp in Sidhabari, a satsang with Gurudev was in progress and Gurudev was talking about the amount of sorrow in the world.

Gurudev is known for his penchant for catching on the right mood, the right situation, the right example and then using just that to explain a huge point in Vedanta. How many devotees have said just this!

At this camp, Gurudev latched on to the most Indian of situations where at a satsang or at a temple, people leave their shoes – as is customary -- at the door before entering, and someone else might wear your footwear and leave – by design or accident – regardless. And this does happen that some pairs of footwear look the same and one can accidentally wear another's pair and come back the next day hoping to find one's own pair.

So here they were all listening to Gurudev explain why there was so much sorrow in the world, Gurudev said, "Your own thoughts are your own disaster. You spin your own likes and dislikes and then identify with them, then the sorrows of the world of matter, become your sorrows!"

Then slapping his thigh, he smiled a wide smile and using the footwear idiom, he said in slow measured tones, "You are wearing a shoe that is one size smaller which you collected during satsang. You are trying your best to squeeze your foot into it. It is sure to hurt till you get blisters.

"You are trying to squeeze that Consciousness into a shoulder to shoulder space!

"The body is NOT YOU!"

* * *

Squeezing the Consciousness into a limited body … Naturally it will pinch, it will hurt, it will cause sorrow because of our identification with the limited, small body, that this body is Me!

'But the body is NOT YOU!' – he had hammered that home!

The devotees were dumbstruck. The example he had chosen had once again hit home straight … like a bullet! Yes, they could see now why there was so much sorrow in the world!

From the diary notes and memory of Smt. Prarthna Saran

72. '…… make it your career…'

18-07-2015

ManjuWarrier had won the most prestigious award – the KalaTilakam – at the Kerala State Youth Festival conducted by the Kerala Government, the biggest cultural festival of Asia for school students with nearly seven lakh participants. A class seven student of Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Kannur, naturally her winning was communicated to Pujya Gurudev.

Gurudev had just finished the yagna at Port Blair and was resting at ChandrashekaraVarrier's place in Coimbatore. The year was 1992

SugeethaRajan, Principal, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Kannur wanted to take the winner student to meet Gurudev and she communicated this to him.

Gurudev told Sugeetha to bring Manju to Coimbatore for a performance before him. Gurudev was a great patron of the arts and has been known to encourage musicians, singers and dancers always.

ManjuWarrier arrived at Coimbatore and performed exclusively for Gurudev.

Highly pleased with her art, Gurudev wanted to gift her something nice, significant. He called Anjali Singh, who was present at the yagna, and asked her what was available to gift her? Then as if thinking, he said, 'Bring something valuable from my room.'

Those days Gurudev occasionally used snuff which he carried in an elegant little box. And Anjali Singh found was this beautiful new golden snuff box in his room. She brought it to Gurudev and Gurudev gave it to ManjuWarrier.

To Manju he said "Continue dancing and make it your career."

After the performance Gurudev called the great dancer Dr.PadmaSubramaniam and said, "Padma, I am going to give a young competitor to you!" Such was his joy and assessment of the child's talent.

Manju was conferred Kala Tilakam in Kerala Youth Festival for 2 years, stunning the dance aficionados with her style and elegance.

Manju received covetable offers from the Malayalam filmdom and went on to make a name for herself there as well as in the world of cultural dance. She acted in around 20 Malayalam movies over a span of three years from1995, winning numerous awards, including the National Film Award, several Filmfare Awards for Best Actress, and the Kerala State Film Award for Best Actress for one of her films.

After her marriage to Actor Dileep, she retired from the film industry.

On October 24, 2012, she performed a Kuchipudi recital in GuruvayurSree Krishna Temple. Later in July 2013, she acted in a commercial with Amitabh Bachchan and in 2014 made her much awaited return to cinema with RosshanAndrrews's How Old Are You.

From the personal diaries and collection of Shri K.K. Rajan

73. The Leaking Tap at BITS

19-07-2015

One day Shri K.K. Rajan received a letter from Gurudev, a non-business letter, yet business-like and exactly as only Gurudev could have written.

Rajanji was the Secretary of the Chinmaya Educational Institutions in Kannur and the construction and care of the colleges were the responsibility of the Managing Committee but Gurudev kept an eye.

Gurudev was writing from Pilani where he was addressing the students at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS).



“I saw a leaking tap, here at BITS” he wrote. “The tap was making a lot of noise! I noticed the same at your college,” he wrote referring to Chinmaya College, Kannur

As it happened, four months before this letter, Gurudev had visited the Chinmaya College and as he always did, he took a walk around the campus to check on the property that was partly under construction while another part had been commissioned and classes were on full swing. That was when among other things, he had noticed the hissing leaking tap, right outside the classroom wing.

And now he observed, ‘Probably you had kept it for the use of the construction work. If the construction is over now, please remove that tap as it may disturb the students!’

For that day, as he talked to the BITS students he distinctly heard a hissing sound outside the hall, a distinct hiss and drip sound of trickling water; one can easily imagine that Gurudev would have tracked its source and established that itwas a

leaking tap.

That had reminded him of the tap in Kannur College which was also leaking and it got him thinking. Then he had been only walking past it. If he as a speaker was being disturbed while talking, how much more students should be disturbed!

His instant response was to write to Rajanji to have the Kannur tap fixed.

But how does he notice the inane and better still, store such detail in his mind?

But then that is what made Gurudev the finest manager; he cared as much for the detail as he did for the big picture and as much for the students.

From the collection and memory of Shri. K.K. Rajan

74. When Gurudev Fasted …

20-07-2015

It was 1984-85. Parvathy Raman (Tapovan Prasad) was staying staying at Sidhabari with her family. Her two sons Hari – who was 9 years old then, and Bhaskar who was 2 years old, as a rule sat at the table with Gurudev at dinner. Gurudev would feed Bhaskarfrom his plate so that he practically ate only from his hands.

Eventually, the ladies serving food to Gurudev began to feel that he was not eating enough, as he give almost all his food to the children. So, without informing Gurudev, they decided to ban children from dining with Gurudev.

Bhaskar and Hari were perfectly happy to eat with the rest of the ashram at the dining hall, rather than in Gurudev'skutiya. However, a few days later, the two were called back in to eat dinner with Gurudev. They were only too happy to return.

Behind this sudden u-turn was a very strange occurance. Gurudev had stopped eating dinner, without giving any reason or showing any annoyance. He simply skipped the meal, and continued being his jolly larger-than-life self. The devotees serving him had no idea why.

The devotees huddled together, racking their brains to figure out why he had stopped eating. Someone wisely decided to go over all the factors that had changed since his last dinner. They realised that the only thing that had changed was the kids had been kept away. But could that really be the reason?

Still, no other possible reason presented itself, so they had called Hari and Bhaskar back. That night his two little ones waited at the table, and the devotees waited anxiously to see what would happen.

Sure enough, Gurudev ate. Heartily.

* * *

Bhaskar reflects on this and says, generally it is we who have to do the tapas, the sadhana to attain Him. But here he was doing tapas to bring us to him. It also captures his life's work – he broke the old tradition of the guru waiting in the Himalayas for seekers to climb their way up to him, and himself came down to where the students were.

From the collection and memory of Bhaskar Raman

75. Right Word, Right Thought

21-07-2015

It was at the residence of Mr. A. Balakrishnan in Kuwait. The year 1986, June. Gurudev had come to Kuwait after four years. The last Yagna was in June 1982. The Indian community in Kuwait had grown so used to Gurudev and the Mission that they waited for his every letter and visit. Naturally the first sight comments on looks and health followed ...

After Gurudev was received beautifully by the devotees with Poorna Kumbham, an eager devotee, overjoyed to have Gurudev back in Kuwait, said, "Gurudev, how are you? You look weak!"

Gurudev replied,"'I' am not weak, 'I' am strong.This body is growing old."

Many devotees do recall Gurudev's precision when it came to choice of words. And that precision was in fact scientific, Vedantic too.

That day in Kuwait it would seem the eagerness to meet Gurudev was heightened. But Gurudev's observation and choice of words never changed. Nor did his humour!

Lunch bhiksha that day was at the home of Som and Anuradha Oberoi. Gurudev went to wash his hands. As he came out of the washroom and passed by the room where food was arranged, he saw lot of food on the table and his words ... "So much food for one Swami, and all will eat." Hearing Gurudev, devotees around him had a good laugh.

Som ji would gradually begin to savor the Gurudev's precision in the use of language and more as a function of Vedantic thought. He recalls how on one occasion while driving Gurudev to their home for bhiksha, they noticed a dust storm gatheringin the sky. Unwittingly Som ji said, "Swamiji, it is very dirty and hot weather."

Immediately Gurudev corrected him and said, "It is not dirty, but dusty and hot." Adds Som ji, "Gurudev also told me,'Never complain or criticize; just define.' "

From the collection and memory of Som & Anuradha Oberoi

76. How Did He Know?

22-07-2015

Hemantini Bhatia had just moved to London. She had made address stickers of her London address which she affixed on all letters that she sent out.

Soon one day she wrote to Gurudev, and in her excitement she forgot to affix the address sticker. She realised this as soon as she had mailed the letter.

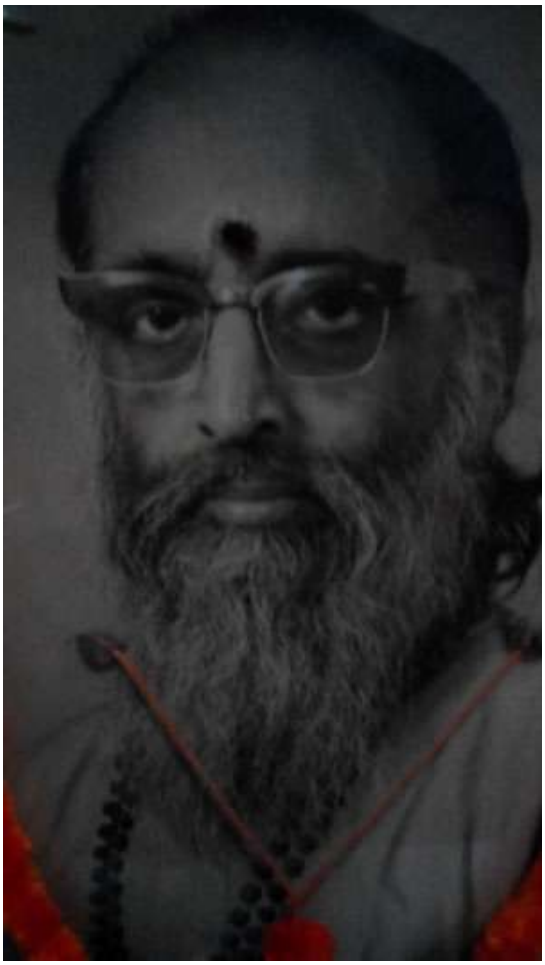
She had a shock of her life when Gurudev replied! How did he do that? How did he know my address? What was more, in his reply he wrote: Never write a letter without your address on it!

Hemantini ji was shaken and stunned. He knew her Mumbai address but there was no way he could have known her London address." I was very scared of him so never asked him," she says. But in all these years and till date she has no idea how he knew. I would like to know how, she mutters.

Back in India, Hemantini ji moved back into her Matunga home where she had lots of coconut trees. One day her husband Narottam ji said there were far too many coconuts and wondered what they should do with so many. "Let us take them all to the ashram," she said referring to Sandeepany in Powai.

So she and Narottam ji decided they would do just that. There were close to a 100 coconuts. The Bhatias put them all in the boot of their car and drove to the Powai ashram.

Gurudev was at the ashram and Hemanthini ji felt a certain joy just knowing that.



The photograph that Gurudev sent to Hemantini ji.... worshipped to this day!

The only soul she knew at Sandeepany Powai was Jairam ji. As she walked up to Jairam ji to tell him that she had brought coconuts for the ashram, her encounter was interrupted by someone who was calling out urgently to Jairam ji and running towards them. Stopping there, he said, “Swamiji wants coconut water... jaldi jaldi(soon, soon)! And Jairam ji was beginning to mutter there were no tender coconuts but right there before him was a boot full of tender coconuts staring at him.

The coconuts went straight to Gurudev!

Hemantini ji’s jaw dropped as her eyes filled with tears. “Where did we get the buddhi to take the coconuts to the ashram, she asks. Narottam ji only laughed, yes he was surprised too, but Hemanthiniji’s wonder was of a different quality!

* * *

On a later occasion the Bhatias were travelling to London on a vacation. Hemantini ji was most keen to go visit Gurudev when she learnt he was there too. Taking her grandkids and son she went to meet Gurudev. She was well armed with a camera

and all that, but the joy of seeing Gurudev was too overpowering so that she clean forgot to take a picture of him.

On her return to India, she wrote to Gurudev how much she enjoyed meeting him in London. And then she added, 'I don't have your photo, and I forgot to take your picture although I had carried a camera! Now I have only a picture of yours that I have cut out from Chinmaya Sandesh.' (That used to be in her prayer altar.)

Within days she received a letter from Gurudev with a photograph for her!

" And that is the one I have in my altar to this day!" she says pleased as punch.

From the collection and memories of Smt. Hemantini Bhatia

77. The School Toilet

23-07-2015

1987-88. Every year Gurudev came to Chennai and one item on his Chennai agenda was the executive committee meeting where Gurudev would talk about expectations and his vision forward.

The secretary in turn would present the performance report, new members would be introduced and anything new would be shared with the committee. Gurudakshina collections would be placed on a tray with fruit and offered to Gurudev. He would bless the offerings and distribute the fruit.

That day in 1987-88, the executive committee meeting was likewise held as in every year in the Arts & Crafts room of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya at 17, Harrington Road. All else happened as it did in every year and Gurudev also distributed the fruit.

After the meeting, Gurudev wished to use the restroom.

The devotees felt Mrs LeelaNambiar's home, where Gurudev was staying, was nearby, let us take him there. A lot of hush-hush suggesting and planning happened and someone ran out to get the car which he reversed quickly onto the school porch for Gurudev to get in.

But committee members milled around Gurudev and engaged him for longer. Gurudev for his part was really patient and gave them all the time they wanted. Then he turned to be taken to the restroom when someone said, 'Swamiji, Leela-amma's home is just here, round the corner, isn't that better for you?'

Gurudev: No. I will use the school restroom. (Then laughing his humorous laughter…) Why, doesn't the school have a toilet?

Of course, said the devotees equally amused, laughing at Gurudev's humour, and one of them urgently pushed open the door to the office of the Principal that was right across the Art & Crafts room and led him to the private washroom that was attached to the principal's office.

Later when Gurudev came out he saw Keshav ji there – who had led him to the Principal's office – and said, 'Why isn't the flush working well enough? The pressure of water from the flush tank is not very good.'

Keshav: (doing his best to give a plausible answer) Being a Sunday the motor may not have been switched on for as long as it is done on weekdays, so likely the tanks are not full enough.

Well tried, but Gurudev shot back even before he had ended his sentence, "Then

why is there a bucket of water there with a mug? Maybe the flush does not work?

Keshav was foxed. He was not prepared for this, and said, “ No Swamiji, I think they must be keeping that for an emergency. For occasions such as these ...”

All this was happening as they were walking back to the car on the porch.

Gurudev: Are you sure all the toilets are working?

Keshav (smiling, unsure but he replied) Yes Swamiji.

Gurudev: Every Chinmaya Vidyalaya must have running water in every toilet. No child of mine should ever go home and say that the toilet in our Chinmaya Vidyalaya is stinking.

In that short walk from the Principal’s room to the car, Gurudev had shared one more dimension of his vision for Chinmaya Vidyalaya as a school with a difference.

From the Collection and Memory of Shri M. Keshav, Chennai

78. A Birth Most Fortunate

24-07-2015

James Hausman helped to establish CHYK Bay Area with his friends. He continues to attend Vedanta camps and to study shruti. His late mother Veronica Hausman was a great devotee of Gurudev.



James Hausman, his mother Veronica Hausman with Pujya Guruji

From my earliest memories, I knew Swami Chinmayananda. I first met him when I was a toddler. As I grew up in family camps, he would allow my sister and I to attend his evening lectures on the Bhagavad Gita, even when the rest of the children had to stay outside the lecture hall. I remember how his voice would boom if someone dared to walk in late. He really was a disciplinarian. Sitting through those lectures which I was too young to understand, I would promptly fall sound asleep, lulled, as it were, by the soothing quality of his speaking voice. However, at key points in the lectures, I would wake up, roused mysteriously to hear what I might intellectually grasp.

“The world is in you, you are not in it.”

“It is the gold in the ornament, the clay in the pot, the water in the ocean.”

Due to His grace, I carried these wise words of Vedanta with me from elementary school onward. At camp, I remember telling my mother and Swamini Radhikananda (then Brahmacharini Arpitaji) that I looked forward to the day when all of this knowledge would click and I would finally get it, like a tough math problem. So, even at that young age, I had some concept of self-realization.

Pujya Gurudev was also fun. Many people forget how he used to throw fruit as prasaad across a room. This kept his devotees very alert in satsang, preparing themselves to catch. It was a radical way to accept blessings, when you consider the etiquette with which one typically receives prasaad.

I have several memories of Pujya Gurudev, but now I would like to share one in specific.

At Krishnalaya, and this would have been in 1992 or thereabouts, he instructed me to go for a swim in the Eel River. For those who do not know, the Eel River flows under a bridge and along a pebbled shoal near the ashram. Gurudev once blessed the current with Ganges water, dubbing it “Eel Ganga”. The chill water certainly has a holiness about it, surrounded by lush mountain trees. Well, as instructed, I swam up and down those river waters, thinking all the while that, when I returned to Gurudev, I would somehow be rewarded, or recognized for my efforts. After the swim, as I basked in his majestic presence and sat at his feet, it was as if he knew precisely what foolishness was on my mind. I remember him looking at me sternly, giving correction.

I was a chubby boy. Maybe he only meant that I should get more exercise!

There was another occasion in Sandeepany San Jose when, walking across the spiritual and cultural center he had founded, Gurudev leaned onto my shoulder as a substitute for his cane. Even now, the memory warms my heart. I know that so many people shared moments such as these with our beloved Gurudev. It really is remarkable how a realized saint can inspire the masses. And among saints, Swami Chinmayananda was a dynamo.

79. GURUDEV ON RAMAYAN

25-07-2015

Gurudev has made references to the Ramayan in many of his talks, some so poignant that it causes one to gasp.

Devotees had been making notes of every word he spoke, that was his greatness and their blessing. Today from their diaries they pull out for us anecdotes that bring a serenity and silence to the agitated heart. Few such extracts are here from the memory of BV Prafulla -- which can help in day to day living .

She notes, he once said, why do you live with this notion that 'This' or 'That' will give you happiness? Look at Ravana; He had everything except that Mrs Rama and was he happy? Was he satisfied?!! And you think one more house, one more car, one more woman will give you joy?!

* * *

On another occasion Gurudev was narrating an anecdote. A devotee said to him, 'Swamiji, I would be like Sita if my husband was like Rama!'

Gurudev instantly said to her, 'Alright, can you be like Mandodari? I am sure your husband cannot be worse than Ravana'!'The devotees present there had a hearty laugh, but the message Gurudev was sending out was loud and clear to all.... we can be virtuous in any environment ....

* * *

Gurudev once said, 'The Lord is being very kind to us; Sita was always God centred. Her focus was always Sri Ramachandraji; and just once she was distracted by the deer and see how much agony she had to suffer! And we are always distracted by the world and only now and then we turn towards God. Yet we don't have to face an ounce of the tragic situations that Sita encountered!' How true! And that too in the life of an uttamapurusha and uttama stree!

* * *

The Ramayan has always adorned many a talk, lecture, satsang, and thought. Once, in Sidhabari Guruji was giving a talk on the Ramayan in Hindi. Gurudev was at Sidhabari at the same time, recovering after an illness.

A few devotees were not attending the class and Gurudev asked them why. They told him that they did not know Hindi. Gurudev said, "Now and then in the talk he will keep saying 'Ram Ram...' .... that is enough....you go and listen to that...!"

From the memory of B.V. Prafulla

80. “THIS TIME I WANT TO COME TO GOA …”

26-07-2015

Damodar N Naik is the Founder President of Goa Chinmaya Mission. He joined the Mission in 1985 and has since then been an ardent sevak of Gurudev.

In 1985, one Mr. S.D. Kanago, an officer in Zuari Agro Chemicals, proposed a Geeta Jnana Yagna by Swami Purushottamananda at Vasco da Gama, a city in Goa, named after the Portuguese explorer.

Shri Damodar Naik had seen many sadhus and sants come up and he wished to be sure. “So I made enquiries from my friends in Mumbai and they vouched for the Chinmaya Mission,” he says.

Continues Naik ji, “ I then called a meeting of some local people to get their opinions. The general consensus was that for our people Geeta is something that is studied in the old age and after retirement. This was clearly because of our total ignorance of what the Geeta is. In spite of this my inner voice told me that it would be something good and we lose nothing by hosting one Yagna.”

In the nth hour, the local person at Vasco who had offered his support and sponsorship for the yagna, backed out. Mr. Kanago who was taken aback by this turn of events, was rescued in time when he was led to Shri Damodar Naik.

And Naik? He was delighted. He readily agreed to hold the yagna. In hindsight, he is even grateful that things came to this pass!

In the city of Margao in 1985 nobody knew exactly what the Bhagwad Geeta was. Each one had his own idea so that there were many notions and interpretations of what the Geeta was. For the most part, people tended to discard it as a dead issue.



D N Naik

Naik had a clear view of what the Geeta was and its role in the life of man. He went ahead with Swami Purushottamananda’s Yagna.

Damodar ji spoke to many people, urging them to come and listen to Swamiji. But they were skeptical, a skepticism born of ignorance. But funnily, they asked him who or what kind of people would come for the Pravachan. [Either they thought nobody would come or they wished to know if anybody would come for the pravachan.]

The yagna began and the doubting members came and sat half heartedly at first; soon their doubts were proved wrong after hearing Swami Purushottamananda and the way he expounded on the Geeta.

For many of them it was also their first view of the workings of the Chinmaya Mission. And now hearing the Geeta presented by Swamiji, they were absolutely amazed and became permanent followers of the Mission.

For a first, the yagna which was in Marathi, attracted 60 people for the morning session and 80 in the evening. For Vasco that was big. And the attendance remained steady and unchanged for the nine days.

The yagna was held at Shree Damodar Saal, which is a part of the Naik house in Margao, dedicated to the local deity, (graam dev), Shree Damodar, and which is a principle place of worship for the people of Mathagram (today, Madgaon). This is

also the home where Swami Vivekananda stayed in 1892 as guest of Naiks’ ancestor. The evening lecture was held by the side of his house which is an open plot belonging to Daivdnya Brahman Samaj.

After the first Yagna there was no looking back. At the first Yagna itself it was unanimously decided that Geeta Gnana Yagna be held every year in January/February at Margao. A committee was formed at the instance of Swami Purushottamananda.

Damodar Naik was very happy that the Geeta had finally reached Mathagram. Encouraged, he decided to hold a yagna every year. After a year he decided to invite Swami Tejomayananda. This 1987 yagna was attended by 100 people.

“When I went to Powai to ascertain a Swami for our 1989 Yagna,” says Damodar ji, “Swami Chinmayanandaji – Gurudev, sent for me.”

At first, like everyone else, Damodar ji may have been inhibited or anxious about being in the presence of such a great soul. But he says, “The first thing that struck me is that you do not have to be afraid of Gurudev. He is full of jokes and makes you laugh.” Damodar ji had already met him briefly once before in 1986 at the Goa airport when Gurudev had made a short stopover.

Damodar ji went to him gingerly, not sure what he was going to ask. To his utter surprise, Gurudev looked at him and said, “This time I want to come to Margao!”

Chinmaya Mission in Goa has gone from strength to strength. In subsequent years he has not been able to contain the yagna attendance. So he shifted the Yagna to Seva Samiti’s Narcinva Damodar Naik Hall.

In the years to come Goa went on to build its own Mission Ashram . The Margao Centre has been instrumental in encouraging similar centers in other places in Goa like: Ponda, Panjim, Mapusa, Sanvordem and all of them are doing well and have their own premises.

During the two yagnas he conducted, Gurudev stayed with the Naiks. But the people of Goa were thronging to see him. Bhiksha as a result was held at breakfast, lunch and dinner, as there was a continuous flow of devotees who came to see Gurudev.

Seeing the ease with which he looked after so many visitiors, Gurudev asked Damodar ji Naik, “How do you manage to entertain so many people?!”

As a result, Naik ji spent close to 11-12 hours a day with Gurudev. In the process he got to see a side of Gurudev that is unique. In his words, “Gurudev was first and foremost a patriot and then alone a Saint. I remember very well: Those were times when our people derided our Government and our institutions. Gurudev would react to such insinuations and say that we are indeed a true democracy and whatever Government and institutions we have are our own reflection.”

The facilities at Seva Samiti were always available for the use of the Mission activities, but Naik ji felt that ‘for the institution to go on its own it is essential to

be independent rather than dependant on another institution. “Consequently, we launched construction of our Ashram,” he says.

“The design was prepared and was approved by Pujya Guruji. There is only one thing that I miss and that is… until the Ashram was built, all the Swamis and Brahmacharis would stay in our house, which indeed was a great blessing and matter of great satisfaction.

“When Guruji came for the first time after construction of Ashram, he opined that unless Swamis stayed in the Ashram, it will not attain the stature that it requires, which indeed is a fact, but we as a family were deprived of a continuous Satsang for eight to ten days with different Swamis and Brahmacharis.”

With the coming of Gurudev to Goa, the Geeta too was deeply established and that flag has since been carried by Pujya Guruji ….

81. Communing with Nature

27-07-2015

Rudite Emir met Gurudev in 1966 and for many years thereafter worked in various capacities to support his efforts, including leading Study Groups, editing his books, being the founding editor of Mananam, and serving as a member of the Chinmaya Mission West Board of Directors. She is the author of At Every Breath, A Teaching and Undoing, as well as of several books on Vedanta in the Latvian language, published in her native country, Latvia, where she taught Vedanta.



Gurudev in the Redwoods, near Krishnalaya, California

As Gurudev was walking through the Redwood Forest (known as home to the tallest trees on earth) near Krishnalaya in California, taking in the majesty of the giant trees, I was walking behind him. “A giant walking among giants!”– I said to myself. As always, he was walking ramrod straight, much like the trees encircling him. He stopped in front of one of the trees and carefully read the placards placed in front of the giants, which described their size and explained the reasons for their longevity. Then Gurudev looked up in awe at the trees reaching countless meters in the sky.After some long, silent minutes, someone brought a chair for him, and we sat down on the ground around him, in quiet communion with him – and with the majesty of nature all around us.

Gurudev's communion with nature was an inspiration for us all: it was as though he understood the language of the trees in the forest, the flowers in the field, and the birds in the sky. He understood their needs as well as their boundaries. It was Spring 1992, when, during a camp at Krishnalaya, Gurudev asked that several evergreen trees in front of his residence be trimmed back. "The trees look undisciplined," he said. At the ashram, he explained, even the trees need to be disciplined. Members of the Krishnalaya staff began to call various tree-pruning establishments in the area, and with each phone call received the same answer: "Pruning in May? That's the wrong time of the year for pruning! If you prune the trees now, they will not survive!"

The staff members at Krishnalaya were in a quandary, not knowing if they should proceed and risk hurting the trees or follow Gurudev's directive without question. They kept delaying the pruning, but Gurudev persisted. Finally, it was decided that two feet would be trimmed from the branches of each tree, and so it was done. After the pruning, Gurudev inspected the trees and assured us that the trees would be all right, that we just needed to give them a little extra water for a few days.



Satsang in the Redwoods: - Gurudev, Rashmi Singh, Rudite Emir (Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda in the background)

That afternoon, an unseasonal rain fell to bless the freshly trimmed trees.Once again Gurudev had proved to us that he was firmly in tune with nature.

Even the birds wanted to commune with him. One time as Gurudev was leaving the residence of a devotee in California where he had stayed for several days, a swarm of birds set up a massive chatter, as though to say, "We loved having you near us. Don't go away! Don't go way!"

Such stories abound, some highly dramatic – as the account about his taming of the wild winds on the hilltop that became the site for the Sidhbari ashram – and others simple, but still powerful. We watched how, especially during the later years when his body was becoming frail, he would get out of the car and lean on his cane, with

limbs obviously hurting and body weary, as he prepared to enter the lecture hall. Then he would stand up straight, look up at the trees lining the path before him, as though breathing in their vigor, and move on toward the yajnasala, fully energized.

To this day, remembering those moments, I often gaze up at a tree to replenish my energy and secure my footing in the present. Gurudev's teaching never stops.

82. Four Generations and Gurudev

28-07-2015

Surekha Raghavendran's family starting from her grandmother, her mother, her sister and now her sister's daughter --- are all ardent devotees of Gurudev, associated with him since childhood. She is currently trustee treasurer of Madras Chinmaya Sewa Trust.

Surekha met Gurudev in the 60s, as a child. Nothing unusual there, or extraordinary, for like others have said before, her world contained Gurudev and he was a part of all that happened in their lives.

Surekha's mother Ushabai, who was a famed devotee of Gurudev has a story that is told about how she met Gurudev. As Surekha puts it, "My mother met Gurudev accidentally…"



Surekha Raghavendran

That 'accidental' meeting is rather interesting. It seems one day Ushabai was walking in Malleswaram, a suburb of Bangalore City when she noticed huge pandals and a yagna going on inside. Ushabai had been out running errands and had accomplished whatever it was that she was outside the house for but did not want to

go home yet. The reason was really silly, says Surekha ji, so silly that no one remembers why the good lady did not want to go home early. Seeing the pandal and the yagna, she decided to go in and doing so, she sat there.

“That’s it!” says Surekha summarily. There was thereafter, no turning back.

Surekha’s grandmother (Ushabai’s mother) was also an ardent devotee; more on that soon. It is most heartwarming.

Back to Ushabai, thereafter Ushabai became the first balasevika – teacher of balavihars. So sincere was she with her teaching that she never once cancelled a class. That is actually saying a lot. She went on to train more and more sevikas who went on to teach more and more little children.

What was more, neither did her 70 children cut class. They were present all the time. Ushabai would train them for Gita Chanting Competitions but there was a different loving touch to her teaching: she taught them in their time, their convenience, never hers. Gurudev was her mentor, so what she did or how she conducted herself was what she got from him, says Surekha.

Surekha has a sister, Chandrika. Both girls were brought up under Gurudev’s gaze and also under Ushabai’s gaze, so that both the girls also evolved with such values – ‘Mission first, everything else later.’

Gurudev held BalaMahahostavs (children’s festival), where all Karnataka balavihars participated. Sometimes even neighbouring areas participated. They had competitions, satsang with Gurudev where he would tell them stories, talk to them, or there would be cultural events and Gurudev would sit with them and enjoy the shows, cheering with them.

Says Surekha, “On day 3 when we had to go home, we would all feel bad.” Naturally.

There is something to be said for families that made the Mission their lode star. Like Surekha Raghavendran’s. Earlier Vijayalakshmi had said this too, where they went from school straight for a yagna, did their homework in the car.... .

Surekha says, “We would make new friends at all these balmahotsavs. And the prizes which we won were preserved by amma. And I still possess them! During the holidays the balavihar sevikas took us to places where any Gurudev yagna was going on. We would all be hosted by a variety of Mission members and we thus ended up making new friends!” This was the tapestry of their life, a life they loved very much.

“Even today if any Mission activity is not there, we feel our routine is incomplete,” she adds.

Now Surekha’smaternal grandmother, also a great devotee, was an orthodox lady. She never ate food that was not made at home. In short she never ate outside her home, so that when she wanted to attend Gurudev’s yagna, she would take a cook along. And attend many of them she did. She would also stay with a Mission

member or a relative or friend, her cook in tow. She had been like that all her life, says Surekha and Gurudev realised that. Not once did he make a comment on that.

So grandmother went to Kumbakonam, Salem, Madurai, Trichy for his yagnas. And what she would do was invite Gurudev for bhiksha at these places she visited. Now that was grand, and Gurudev always accepted her invitations and had bhiksha from her.

About herself, Surekha ji says how she chanted for many of Gurudev's yagnas. "Once in between a yagna in 1970, I got married. I was chanting for the yagna, but I missed only the day of my wedding for I came back the day after and resumed the chanting."

This is what the Chinmaya Mission meant to many many devotees – the nucleus of their lives.

And now a look at what her mother, Ushabai did. At the same time as Surekhaji's wedding, a CHYK camp was going on as well as Gurudev's Yagna in Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore. Says Surekha ji, "Those 3 days of my wedding, mother said to the camp organisers, "When a wedding is going on in my house you don't have to worry about food for the yuvaks. I will send it."

Surekha's sister Chandrika a professor of Botany, accompanied Gurudev whenever she got time between semesters, when she played his secretary and also chanted for the yagna. Says Surekha, "She has travelled to many places with Gurudev and she was with him in Manila when he got a heart attack and she attended to him."

Surekha remembers with great mirth a funny incident. Here, in her words, "We are all silly foolish people with whom he had to put up! There is an area called Vishveshwarapuram, where mainly the trading community live. This was in the 60s or 70s.

"One day a talk by Gurudev was arranged for only those ladies as they were members of Devi group.

"One of the ladies from the group approached Gurudev and asked, 'What is the topic you will be talking on, Swamiji? We don't have a topic.'

"Gurudev said, 'So what? If we don't have a topic, we don't have a topic!"

The lady went back and declared that Gurudev is talking on the topic 'So What'. They then went ahead and printed that on their invitation flyers.

"Gurudev came to know about this only when he reached the venue," continues Surekha ji. "He saw the flyer and then turned to the podium and started: 'You may slip many times, so what?'"

And adding several similar 'So What?' rhetoric to this, he went on and on speaking on a topic he had not intended! "All this, only to validate that statement his devotees had committed to!" says Surekha ji.

On a different note, she continues narrating another incident, “Gurudev insisted that we should not shirk or reject any new responsibility just because we don’t have prior experience.”

It so happened that once, it was time to reconstitute the committee of Bangalore Mission. Many people were present and out of this list various office bearers had to be nominated. Gurudev called out to one gentleman and said, ‘ You be the secretary.’

The gentleman was startled. Lost for precise words, he said many things, “I can’t do it, I have so many responsibilities at home and at work. And on top of all that, I have no experience as secretary in the Mission!”

Gurudev said, “Did you get married because of your previous experience?”

Ends Surekha ji mirthfully, “That man did not have anything to say! He quietly accepted the secretary-ship!"

83. A Dream and a Promise

29-07-2015

From Unusual to Unique

Father Massimo de Orlando is a priest ordained in the Roman Catholic Order in Italy. He is the disciple of the late Fr. Bhikshu Anthony Elenjimittam, his revered teacher, who too was an ordained Roman Catholic priest. [Said as L -N-G- mittam]



The amazing Fr. Elenjimittam

Fr. Massimo arrived at CIF one day, with his students from Italy and Switzerland, for a spiritual camp on Vivekachoodamani!

But before that, who is Fr. Elenjimittam? He is a priest who runs the Sachhidananda Mission of Assissi in Italy, and has a story preceding him.

One historical, blessed day in 1991 or thereabout, Fr. Elenjimittam boarded a flight from Mumbai for Rome. When all passengers had boarded and taken their seats, the last passenger was led in, Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Gurudev usually made a request to be allowed to board last.

As the imposing figure of Gurudev came into vision, many eyes looked up at the orange robes and the leonine gait; one pair of eyes that espied this arresting figure was Fr. Elenjimittam . As Gurudev walked to his seat, the good Father waited for him to settle down and be comfortable. He now sensed an urgency to stop by later and ask after this man who was clad in orange garments. It was an international flight, a long flight,... there was all the time he needed.



Shishya and Guru - Fr.Massimo with his teacher Fr. Elenjimittam

Now, Fr. Elenjimittam is of Indian origins even if he has been living in Italy over 40 years. Therefore the orange garments were not a surprise or a wonder.

A little later, Father Elenjimittam walked gently to where Gurudev sat and stopped as he turned toward Gurudev's seat. A spectacular moment was taking place....

"Are you Swami Chinmayananda?" he asked with the gentleness of a man of God. Gurudev affirmed that and they greeted each other with the cordiality and respect that people of such elevated spiritual commitments do. And they both -- not needing any introduction or formal handshake -- were sharing their life roles, Gurudev seated, the good Father standing.

Presently the gentleman sitting next to Gurudev, stood up and offered his seat to Fr. Elenjimittam, himself offering to occupy the latter's seat.



Fr. Massimo at CIF with his team from Italy, with Swami Advayananda

Taking the offered seat graciously, Father told Gurudev that he was from Cochin region and appropriately broke into Malayalam. "Aaah", said Gurudev, "Then you are

my neighbour!" And Gurudev talked about CIF and his dream to set up a Sanskrit research foundation in Veliyanad, Kerala. (Adi Sankara Nilyam had just been bought by CIF)

At this point Fr. Elenjimittam froze. "Where, did you say?"

"Veliyanad, a small hamlet in Kerala," explained Gurudev, knowing that nobody would have even heard of the place. But not Fr. Elenjimittam; "Veliyanad!" he repeated slowly, relishing the name, and said, "But Swamiji! That is right next to where I was born!" Kundanoor[1] where Fr. Antony was born, is in Tripunithra, in the neighbourhood of Veliyanad.

The heavens must have smiled deeply that morning as two great men, converged after seeming years of separation. Like two roads that had parted to accomplish separate tasks and met again with greater purpose, so did Gurudev and Fr. Elenjimittam.

A significant meeting had been accomplished by Time.

Unusual settings and unusual meetings unfold unusual occurrences. So it was that Gurudev invited Fr. Elenjimittam to visit Veliyanad, "You must visit us!" he urged and the good Father accepted graciously, adding that he would like to do something for the Chinmaya International Foundation.

Two roads met that day and then diverged... as both went their ways. Some years after that meeting, Fr. Elenjimittam was watching the news on TV one morning in 1993 and heard that India's revered teacher Swami Chinmayananda has attained Mahasamadhi.



Fr. Elenjimittam on his 96th birthday with Fr. Massimo- 2011

Fr. Elenjimittam now decided to find CIF. Gurudev had told him CIF was located at the birthplace of Sri Adi Sankara. So, on his next visit to India, the Father landed at Kalady. As these things usually go, he was led from one to another to our chief

sevak Shri. A. Balakrishnan. Recounting his meeting with Gurudev, Father said, "I want to do something for CIF, as I promised Swamiji..."

The residential block where the Acharyas of CIF live today – called the Scholars Block—was sponsored by Fr. Elenjimittam. (see footnote) He kept his word... but more was to come.

In September 2008, his disciple, the revered Fr. Massimo de Orlando arrived at CIF and threw everyone off their feet as he wanted a Vivekachoodamani camp for his team. He himself gave talks on Vivekachoodamani in Italian. Next, Swami Advayananda and Swamini Niranjananda addressed them in English, and Father Massimo translated it into Italian for the participants.

Fr. Massimo sang many bhajans, chanted Sanskrit verses from Vivekachoodamani – all with the clarity, precision and diction rare even among born Indians. Then Swami Niranjananada held a QA session, where she would talk in English and Fr. Massimo would translate it into Italian for his students and take back their queries translated back to Swamini.



One session was on Advaita Vedanta by Swami Advayananda. The visiting seekers were so happy that at the end of the session, they offered to sponsor the entire Easy Sanskrit online course; that is how CIF was able to deliver this course so effectively. The entire cost of building the website, converting the Easy Sanskrit kit into an online course format and making it fully functional, was an offering of love from Fr. Massimo's team and the Sachhidananda Centre of Assisi. In fact it is this course that IGNOU has taken over as its certificate course.

The great Fr. Elenjimittam departed this world on 10th October 2011. The departure of the good Father in Turin, Italy, refreshes old memories. He was 96. Uncannily, he was the same age as Gurudev whose centenary year is being celebrated in 2015!

Close to two decades ago, two great men met without a plan, on an international flight leaving Mumbai. One was headed for the holy city of Rome, the other to the

Queen's city, London. In the backdrop of the celestial stars and clouds, that holy day, as the plane ferried the two saints, the heavens scripted the future in a most spectacular way.

One mentioned his dream; the other kept his promise.

* * *

foot note 1: Stories like this overwhelm the mind and at times a strand of the story could get confused, as it happened in this case. In 2009 when this story was first reported by CIF the meeting of Gurudev with Fr. Elenjimittam was reported as having taken place on a bridge in Rome. The meeting with Fr. Elenjimittam by a senior trustee of CIF corrected that for us.

We in turn have presented the story here after making that correction.

footnote 2: Kalady versus Veliyanad

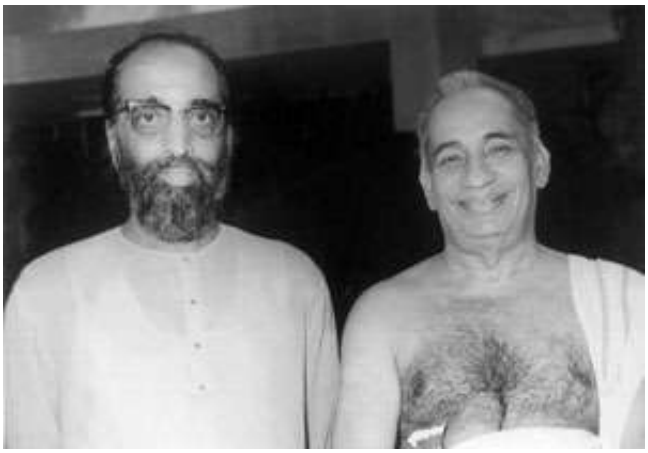
In a bid to revive his old promise Fr. Elenjimittam tried to recall their conversation some years ago and recalled Gurudev saying that CIF was housed in the place where Sri Adi Sankara was born. Confused connections in his mind led to the father sending a letter of commitment to the Ramakrishna Mission in Kalady. But since he had marked it to the Chinmaya International Foundation, the Ramakrishna Mission tracked down Atma Chaitanyaji who was regional head of CM Kerala region, who took the letter to Pujya Guruji when he was conducting a yagna in Trivandrum.Grace came again in the form of Fr. Ellenjimittam. In a meeting with Pujya Guruji in Trivandrum he said, "I have some FDs which will be maturing shortly, around Rs 17 lacs, I wish to give this for the building project." And that money was used for Eswar Kripa Phase II.

This story from CIF appears in the Mananam Publication UNTO RESEARCH, published in 2013 as part of the centenary celebrations.

84. “Moley! How will you have a daughter?!”

30-07-2015

Sangitha Varier is the daughter of Late Thangam Varier and Late Chandrashekhara Varier, Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, Coimbatore, Founder Trustee, CIRS , Chinmaya Garden Trust and Chairman, Chinmaya Vidyalayas, Cbe . Gurudev stayed with the Variers every year for a period ranging 9 – 40 days for 40 years .



Dr. P.V. Rama Varier with Gurudev

It was 1989. Gurudev was in Coimbatore for a few days, staying at the home of Thangam and Chandrashekhara Varier.

The daily routine was, Thangam amma and her daughter Sangitha would both wake up before the crack of dawn, bathe, dress in traditional Kerala Mundu – Veshti, which Gurudev was very happy about, and carrying a cup of steaming hot coffee to Gurudev’s study, they would wait there at 3.30 am. Invariably, repeat, invariably, he would open his door at the dot of 3.30 am. “That time, you will see his table lamp on, and Gurudev would be glowing in a vibrantly charged divine atmosphere, already in letter-writing mode,” says Sangitha for whom Gurudev was a given in her life when she was born. “Like children say, ‘mother-father’, I would say, ‘Gurudev, mother-father ...!’

On such a similar day, Sangitha arrived with her mother Thangam amma – as she was known to one and all – with the piping hot coffee.

A short break here to give a background. Sangitha’s firstborn Arjun, was a bit over 2 years of age. It had been her experience that when she was pregnant, she simply began with morning sickness – vomiting. She never had to go see a doctor. So that day too she had woken up with morning sickness.

So when Gurudev opened his door, Sangitha entered, placed the steaming cup on his desk and said, “Swamiji, please bless me with a baby girl this time.” Sangitha was intensely longing for a girl child.

Gurudev told her, ‘Go bring some ghee (clarified butter) from the kitchen.’



With my Mom, Dad and grandmother and my aunts & cousins

When she brought some for him in a katori (steel cup), he took that katori in his hands and covered it with both hands and prayed. Then placing his hand above Sangitha’s stomach, he said, “Moley (child), you will have an Arjun and a Krishna only.”

Sangitha already had Arjun – who too Gurudev had named!

“I didn’t even test for pregnancy,” says Sangitha. “I just went straight to the labour room for the delivery in the 9th month!”

Sangitha ji delivered a baby boy and Gurudev said, “He will be called Pranav.”

Says Sangitha, “In Feb 1991, he came home for 10 days’ rest,. My son was born on Sep 19, 1990. When I placed my Pranav at HIS Feet for HIS blessings, Gurudev said, ‘Oh , now you have 2 boys? My boys! My boys! Who will you give to me?’

“I said both are yours, Swamiji!”

During the 9 months, Gurudev came to Coimbatore thrice. Says Sangitha ji, “Everytime he would walk past me, he would always bless me and my baby and say ‘Om Namo Narayanaya! Narayana Narayana....’

He has thus blessed both babies while in the womb, at least 70-80 times each in this manner!’ [For Gurudev was with the Variers when Sangitha was expecting Arjun, just as he was when she was expecting Pranav..]

And each time she and her mother, Thangam Varier would bathe in the wee hours

and wait for Gurudev, outside his door. He would then come out, and put a spoon of ghee in Sangitha’s mouth. “He would pray over the ghee and give it to me, everyday of his stay with us. I would then feed off this ghee throughout the 9 months!

“For both children,during the time they were in my womb, he said, ‘Read Krishnavataram from Bhagavatham every day morning. ’

Blessed are we to hear all this!

85. Led to the Guru

31-07-2015

Isabel Taylor has been very involved with CORD Sidhabari since its inception, and has helped as much as possible all these years, 'with immense respect and admiration for Dr Kshama Metre and all the wonderful people helped by CORD Sidhabari," she adds. "A dream of Gurudev's beautifully realized."



1992 - With Urmila, one of the very best workers for CORD SIDHABARI.

Isabel was married to David K Taylor for 54 years -- an American Swamiji really loved by Gurudev and who loved Him too, for 54 years. In a touching homage to him she writes, " He died at home in my arms, the day after our 54th wedding anniversary. He died as he has lived: at peace, surrounded by beautiful music, candles, loving people and many photos of our Gurudev. He died with a magnificent smile, obviously already in another dimension. He lived and died with Grace and Dignity.

On January 30, 1990 I was in India, and at the Delhi airport, on the way to Bangalore, when a lovely Indian lady kindly conversed with me. She told me she was on her way to see Sai Baba in Bangalore, and in three days she would be going to see her Guru: Swami Chinmayananda, and she proceeded to draw the BMI chart on my boarding pass!

The lady was the wonderful Anjali Singh, the angel sent by the Lord to bring me to my Guru!

Thank you, Anjali!

So this lady asked me if this BMI chart made sense to me. I was astonished! I replied: It not only makes sense, it is what I teach, I didn't know it had a name!



1992 With Kshama Metre, Akhilam and Margaret Leuwerink - and Gurudev

And before leaving the airport in Bangalore I bought my ticket to go with Anjali to Coimbatore.

On February 2, 1990 we took that flight and arrived in the house of ThangamAmma, where Gurudev was staying: WOW!!!

My heart started beating so fast and so hard that I could barely move away to sit and observe.

I had seen Him in three dreams, and my beating heart showed me this was REAL!!!

I was on my way to Auroville to do Past Life Regression with the 50 scientists who live there to study how we change at a cellular level when we have a change of consciousness. This was of great interest to me, and yet after spending three days with Swami Chinmayanandaji, at his invitation, I changed my plans, and hired a taxi to follow Him instead. Traveling with Him for another 5 weeks.

Sent a telegram to my husband David who was in the United States of America, just saying there was a slight change of plans and itinerary, that all was well.

During those 5 weeks there were many times when profound experiences were Vedanta in action. I will try to describe some of them:

One day we were in Lucknow, I think, when Swamiji received a visitor, a foreign Professor of Philosophy. I had been massaging His legs, and found myself listening to the conversation.



Isabel with Gurudev, Manjeri, Kerala

After maybe ten minutes, Swamiji shook his leg, and looked at me, reprovingly, and said: "You are listening to what we are saying! " To which I replied "True". And He said: "Then what is the point?" And withdrew his legs. For a moment I was perplexed. Then I understood: The point was the real communion with Him, so much more valuable than the intellectual exchange of ideas.

Many special moments.

Meanwhile my husband was waiting for me and when I joined him in Paris, he asked me about my trip and I explained the changes, and how amazing Swamiji was. David said he would suspend his judgement until a year had passed.

Later Swamiji and David became great friends, and He came to stay in our house in Washington DC.

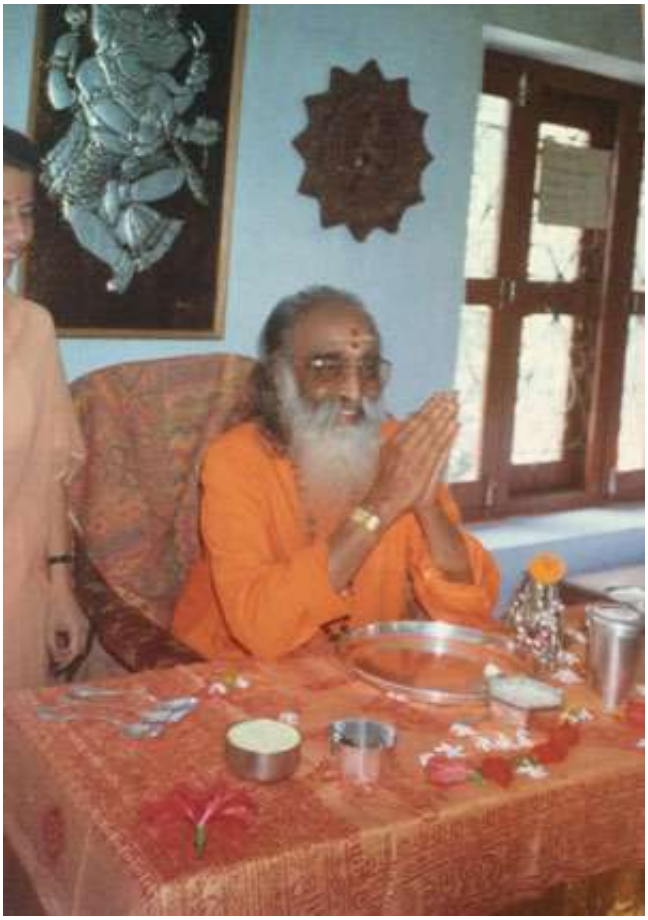
After meeting Swami Chinmayananda, I spent six to nine months a year with Him, traveling and serving Him. We traveled through India and abroad, and oh so many Blessings!

One day there were many devotees gathered, and one young couple came with their baby son, and gave him to Gurudev to bless. Gurudev took the baby, tuned in and smiled so joyfully.

He gave the baby back to the parents saying: "This one is mine! The mother isn't sure she likes the idea, though!"

I wonder if that young man has discovered his vocation?!

* * *



Led to the Guru

“Good night, Happy Guru Purnima!” So ended Ms. Taylor’s email who had been delayed sending her story as she had her three young nieces staying with her. In the spirit of Guru Purnima, it is fitting to take a peek into her postscript, for what she says there is also a Guru prasaadam for all of us:

“My day was wonderful with the phone call from Swami Tejomayananda, and these beautiful little girls, my great great nieces! We meditated together, we told some stories of Swamiji, and now I am going to sleep in the light of the magnificent very full moon, showering us with Blessings!

Happy Guru Purnima! May we abide in Him. “

Note: The BMI chart is a flowchart created by Gurudev to explain the fundamental structure of man. Here he shows man as fundamentally composed of the body, the mind and the intellect which respectively give rise to the Perceiver (via the B body's sense organs), the Feeler (via the M mind) and the Thinker (via the I Intellect) that graze in their respective fields – Objects (and relationships), Emotions and Thoughts. The driver of this entanglement is the Vasanas of each human – tendencies. When we overcome our Vasanas we realize our true and essential nature – the Self.

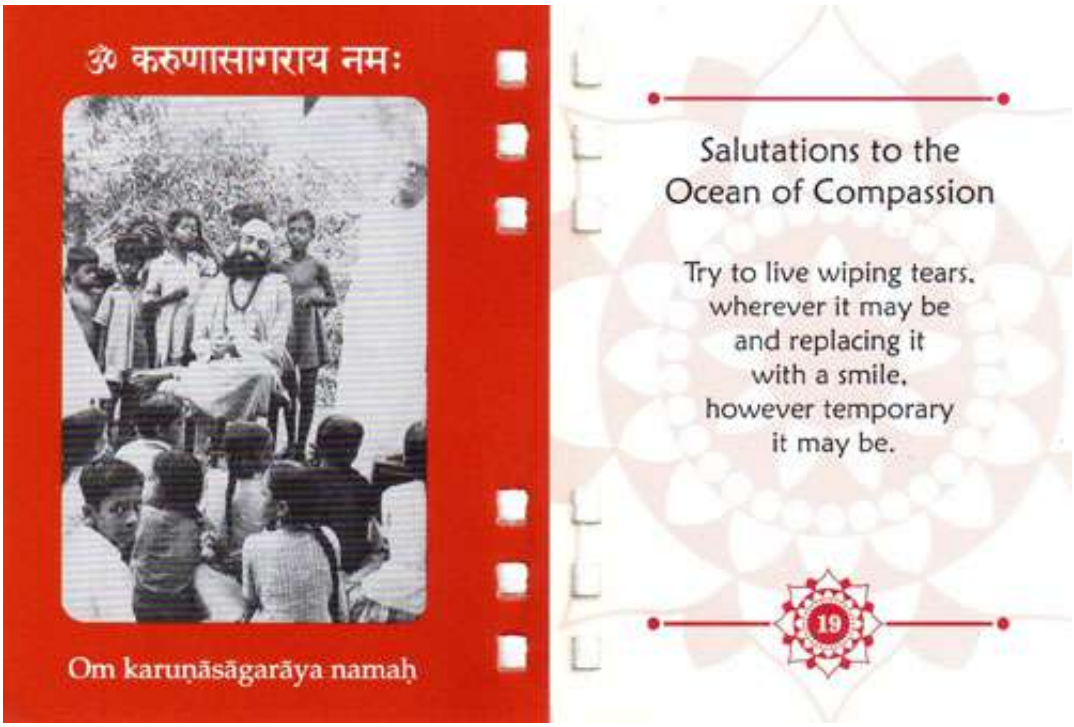
86. On the Path, via Alfred Hitchcock

01-08-2015

Hemu ji's father was a road contractor. A deeply religious man, he was the sole breadwinner of his family of seven children, the oldest of whom was Hemu ji.

When Hemu ji was 17 years of age, the good father departed this world much to the shock of his wife and children. Hemu ji who was in the midst of his studies had to discontinue as he had to take over the road contracting business and support the family.

1962 February. Chennai. Hemu ji was 21. One day with some of his cousins and some engineers from his firm, he decided to go watch Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho' at the Minerva.



Om Karunasaagaraaya Namah

As luck went that day, no tickets were available. One among them suggested why not go and hear this unusual English speaking Swami who was giving talks on Geeta.

Strangely, nobody thought it was a bad idea, in fact, all were inclined to go and

hear him speak.

The talks were being held at Khivraj Mansions, Annasalai where the British Council stands today. Gurudev was teaching Chapters 8 and 9 of the Geeta.

Hemu ji recalls some unusual facts. Chief among them is the fact that it was also the era when Gurudev had said 'I am going to change my gears now.' Hemu ji explains that Gurudev had decided to increase the speed of his working. That yagna was the 100th yagna and it was conducted by the women of the Mission. Chap 8 and 9.

Says Hemu ji, "We went, he conquered. Love at first sight. It may not make logical sense, but that is exactly how it was!" he says happily.

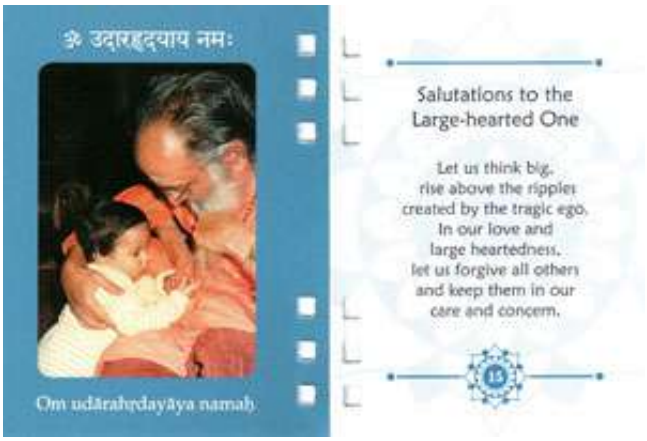
"The love I have for Him today was there at right at the first sight I had of Him. Those days I did not know Sanskrit, but uncannily, I understood kavim puranam anusasitaram, anor aniyamsam anusmared yah andananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate -- as I understand them today. That day without any Sanskrit background I had understood it as if I had always known that!"

Thanks to that missed movie, Hemu ji found Gurudev. "Hence for me He is Cinemayananda!" he says gleefully. Lest someone take offence, he clarifies that Gurudev himself had remarked jocularly once in his lecture that those who find it difficult to pronounce His name, 'pronounce my name as Cinemayananda.'

When he thinks back, Hemu ji sees some connections – divine designs! "A few years before this 100th yagna, a friend of my father approached him for sand that was needed for a yagna. That was in 1956-57. Those days the yagnas were held in open air and the land had to be made even and smooth.My father had then supplied a few lorry loads of sand for Swamiji's yagnas.

(Hence sand would be spread on the uneven grounds to render them comfortable for sitting. What detail Gurudev went to!)

"And Gurudev took care of our entire family though my father died young and had never met Gurudev!



Om Udhaarahridayaay Namah

“In gratitude the Mission sent subscriptions for Usha and Tyagi magazines published by the Mission, to my father. After father passed away they asked me if I wished to continue the subscription. I said, ‘No.’ The magazines were coming to us because of my father’s contribution. Besides, that time I was not so seriously involved in spirituality because I was only 17 although I had a strong religious and cultural background thanks to my parents.

“After attending the 1962 yagna, for 52 days I was in a different plane of consciousness. After that Chinmaya Mission became my obsession.”

Having lost his father at the age of 17, and with six brothers and sisters to support, Hemuji who managed his father’s contracting business, was having to borrow heavily to sustain business and family. “I was all the time working ways and means to clear debts. Where ever there was any paper -- even a newspaper -- I would be toting numbers, working out some accounts, calculating ways and means to find the security for our family and the business.

“Gurudev could never have known this, but it seems He did!,” says Hemu ji.



Hemu ji (in white dhoti and kurta) next to Swami Mitrananda

One day at Nambiar amma’s home in Chennai,Gurudev was sitting in the drawing room. Hemu ji was standing outside the room where he could not be seen, and he believes Gurudev could not see him either. He says, “Gurudev looked at the roof and said to no one in particular, ‘God and security do not go together.’

“The meaning of this that I took away was: I should depend on Him for my security and not my continuous preoccupation with numbers, thinking numbers will do their dance and bring security to my family.

“I was always financially strained. I had borrowed so much. I was always calculating how to earn more, how to repay, how to keep the family sustained. All the number crunching I did on backs of papers and envelopes were my way of continually checking if we were safe, secure ….So Gurudev was saying if you depend on God wholly why do you need the numbers to give you security? That was the message I took away!

“This is essence of Gita’s - Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja – isn’t it?” he says reflecting.

“This is Gurudev who remembered my father’s gesture and looked after his family in every possible way including giving me direction, finding me and bringing me for the yagna so that I may find Him … including giving me the means for my anger transcendence. I had a serious anger problem and He took care of that!”

In conclusion Hemu ji says, Gurudev does not forget anyone who does anything for Him. Throughout his life, his struggles and trials never became ‘suffering’ because He stood by the family silently.

Om Karunasaagaraaya Namah! Om Udaarahridayaay Namah!

From the memory of Shri Hemachandrudu, Chennai

87. “When the student is ready, the teacher appears”

02-08-2015

From Canada to Sidhabari, with Gurudev lighting the Path

David Brown only had a burning quest, but not the direction. A shuddha sankalpa to know the meaning of life, spiralled into solutions one by one, reaching him to the doorstep of Gurudev, in most spectacular manner. Retired, David at 76 today, lives in Sebastian, Florida with his dear wife Lynn who edits his work and other writings. They attend the Camps with Pujya Guruji every year at Krishnalaya, Piercy, California. Read his story here....

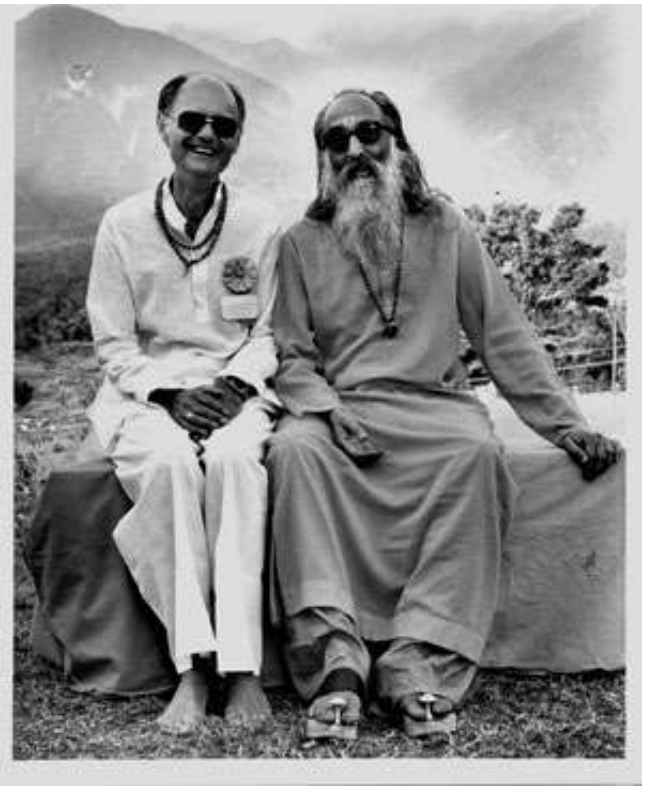


A Leadership unparalleled

I first met Gurudev in 1980 at a Camp in Olivet, Michigan—an event which profoundly changed my life in an instant. This story started some three years earlier in Toronto, Canada, when a tragedy came into my life and caused me to radically review all that was important to me and to deeply desire to know the meaning of life as I experienced it. My introspective searching took me through conventional Christianity and then a mystical meditation group that turned out to have cultish qualities. None of these experiences were in any way satisfying to me, and in a rather sanguine frame of mind, I took up yoga as a means for quieting and settling myself.

Here Grace stepped into my life, as my yoga teacher was Margaret Leuverink (the

editor of Mananam and now married to David Dukes). Margaret turned out to be a devotee of Gurudev. She kindly loaned me some books on Vedanta and then invited me to accompany a small group that was attending the Swami Chinmayananda’s Gita Camp at Olivet in Michigan. I remember sitting in my seat looking at the empty stage, which was adorned by a strange looking chart with the BMI symbols on it. I had no idea where this was going to lead! When Swami Chinmayananda strode onto the stage and took his seat, I was immediately struck by his confident and kindly bearing. But when he began the discourse with an introduction of Vedanta, I knew that I had finally come ‘home’ to where I needed to be. His words of truth and love filled my heart and mind to over-flowing. In the afternoons, thanks to Margaret’s guidance and tenacity, we attended satsangs and basked in the blessed flow of grace that descended upon us.



David with Gurudev, Sidhabari 1980

Now begins the absolutely magical and completely unforeseen part of my new journey into Life! Gurudev told us about an upcoming two month camp in the foothills of a new ashram. This was of course Sidhbari. He would teach the entire text of Vivekachudamani and also there would be the inauguration (Abishekum)of the Hanuman Murthi, which would bring great blessings and be a symbol of peace to the region surrounding Sidhbari.

Here was I, with the responsibilities of my job in Canada as a data processing manager but no emotional ties to anyone, praying for some guidance in and for my life, now suddenly in the presence of a master teacher who was offering the one great opportunity that unwittingly I had asked for. “When the student is ready the teacher appears” was so true in my case that it seemed unbelievable. I asked Swamiji if I could go to Sidhbari, almost afraid of the answer which he unequivocally gave—“Of course!” Graciously, he gave explicit instructions with names for contacts in Delhi, who would help with the transition by train and bus to reach the ashram.

Unbeknown to me at the time, this set the scene for which I gradually became aware (over the next magical three months of my first trip to India to be with Swami Chinmayananda) that HE KNEW ME! His grace flowed constantly toward and into the devotee, filling us with courage we did not know we had and a desire to sit at his feet in a state of surrender that we had never before experienced. He watched over us with attention, kindness and love, ensuring that no harm came our way; and despite our ignorance and lack of experience in what we were about to attempt, no harm ever did.



Installing Hanuman ji for us, in Sidhabari

The ‘us’ in this part of the story is a group of about six Torontonians who joined up as a group to attend the two-monthVivekachudamani Campto be held within a few months. I obtained a leave of absence from my job, booked my flight to India and soon was on my way for a grand adventure that I knew not where it would lead, excepting only that my love and trust for Gurudev had already reached a point in which there was no room for fear or anxiety. We landed in Delhi, and then with the help of kind devotees, booked passage on the train to Pathankot and then on by bus across the mountains to Sidhbari and the ashram.

In the interests of brevity, and with the desire to focus on the presence of Swamiji in this narrative, many interesting and anecdotal aspects of this story have to be omitted. Suffice it to say, that our first experience of the Sidhbari HIM ashram was awe-inspiring. Under a backdrop of the lovely Dhauladhar mountain range in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, the ashram was in the process of development. Swamiji's residence, the satsang hall, and some of the residence kutias were already built, with more coming. The towering murthi of Hanumanji, draped and hidden from sight, stood imposingly in the center of the grounds. At the inauguration Gurudev set out the programme of meditation, classes, and discussion groups, as well as the general timetable for the next two months. We were given scarves and a gown, embroidered with the image of ajyoti symbolizing the flame of knowledge, to enhance our awareness of the need to listen, contemplate, and meditate upon the sublime teachings of Gurudev and Adi Sankara Acharya.



Mahaveera Vikrama Bajarangi

Once we settled into the routine we thoroughly enjoyed Gurudev’s eloquent exposition of the sublime Vivekachudamani, and his powerful conducting of the early morning meditation. I thought that I was secure from Swamiji’s searching gaze until I smacked a mosquito during meditation;and Swamiji immediately pointed out that if we were conducting our meditation practice properly, we would not be distracted by a mere mosquito! Another example of Swamiji’s commanding awareness was when a devotee placed a rose upon his lectern as a symbol of devotion. Unfortunately, the rose was plucked from the rose garden in front of Swamiji’s kutia, and he mentioned casually that it would be much better if the poor rose had been allowed to stay in the rose garden and not become a mere adornment to a lectern.



Ramdhoota atulita baladhama - at the installation.

Every moment became a teaching, whether Gurudev was taking charge of the abisheka (inauguration) proceedings, reviewing the building and construction at the ashram, or conducting daily puja and arti. To live in his presence was totally immersive and instructive. Nothing seemed to be missed when Gurudev was present, and everyone was enlivened by the energy that he radiated. One not so pleasant occurrence, however, was when this devotee took a trip to the market at Dharamsala and was attracted by a nice display of strawberries on a fruit stall. So these were purchased and brought back to the ashram, given to the kitchen staff and asked if they could be offered to Gurudev. Only later did I learn that he suffered a nasty tummy upset because they were contaminated by flies in the market, and no amount of washing could remove all samples of bacteria. Of course, Gurudev continued in the teachings without a break, which was another example of his dedication and strength of purpose. It was another teaching, another example, and another lesson that continuous attention and awareness is necessary.

An aside to this story is that I was very happy to meet and make the acquaintance of our dearly beloved Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, whom I knew then as Br. Vivek Chaitanya. We made a VHS recording of an interview with Guruji, which I believe is still in existence in the archives somewhere in the Mission records.

The abisheka,or inauguration, of Hanumanjiwas exceptional in its complexity and grandeur. Anointed with milk, honey, Ganges water, and the prayers and Vedic chanting of the pundits, the majestic murthi of Sri Hanumanji was finally unveiled. A long ramp was built to the top of the murthi; and led by Gurudev, who held the sacred urn filled with milk and honey on his head, the long procession of swamis,

priests, pundits, brahmacharis, and devotees climbed the ramp and poured the oblation upon Hanumanji’s crown.



sahasraaksha sahasrapaat

At long last,the wonderful experience of theVivekachudamani Camp came to an end. I was so filled with the teaching and the presence of Gurudev that I could not bear to return immediately to Canada, so I wrote to my employer to ask for an extension of my leave of absence and offered my resignation if the extension was not possible. Then I asked Gurudev if I could go to Uttarkashi to stay for a few weeks by the Ganges and re-read the Vivekachudamani text before rejoining him for a few more weeks of immersion in the Truth.Swamiji unhesitatingly gave permission for this novice from Canada who a few short months before had not even heard of Vedanta! He gave me detailed instructions on how to travel, make connections, and whom to contact upon reaching Uttarkashi.

The Camp came to an end, and many fond goodbyes were said, as new friends went their separate ways. I took the bus and then the train to Rishikesh and finally to Uttarkashi. I had no idea really of where I was geographically in these days before Google Maps and the Internet but relied completely upon Gurudev’s guidance and blessings and the assistance of kindly devotees who offered their advice as well.

The last part of my story, which I suppose could go on for much longer, was that on arrival at the ashram in Uttarkashi, the brahmachari in residence was expecting me, having already received a handwritten note from Gurudev telling him of my arrival. Another note from Gurudev was waiting for me. The note advised me to meet him in a few weeks at a specific place and had train information, which I have now

forgotten. When I finally took the next steps of returning to Gurudev, I was a day later than he had planned because I was asked by a devotee to visit his home in Delhi. Anyway, I arrived at the designated station at 2:00a.m. in the early hours of the morning, in a town somewhere in the center of India, and was met by a man who took me to the home where Gurudev was staying.

The next morning Gurudev asked me where I had been and why I was a day late. I explained, and he understood immediately. He then pointed out that his host had personally gotten up inthe night when I was supposed to arrive to meet me when I got off the train. The previousnight it had been the senior servant of the house who had gone to meet me.

The point is that at no time did Gurudev forget about each one of his devotees or cease his constantvigilance regardless of his busy schedule. This is but one ofthe many examples that I could have given of Swami Chinmayananda’s loving kindness to and protective care of us all. He wasa perfect demonstration of Truth and Love in Action.

With Prem & OM

88. “Amma, I was waiting …!”

03-08-2015

Indore, 1989.

On one of the days, after the yagna Pujya Gurudev proceeded to the house of a devotee for bhiksha.

A devotee couple Mr.& Mrs. Iyer with their 2 little sons were also present. Overwhelmed by the way Gurudev connected and interacted with the devotees around, Mrs. Iyer came up to me, as I was assisting Gurudev with His office work, and asked me if they could offer something to Gurudev ... ‘at least a cup of coffee’.

I told Mrs. Iyer to submit her request to Gurudev.



Gurudev with Padmashree RG

Gurudev immediately obliged her and said "Tomorrow morning 5.30am".

Mr. and Mrs. Iyer's joy knew no bounds which was evident on their faces.

Next day morning as usual Gurudev opened the door at 4am. The hostess came in with a cup of tea, placed it on Gurudev's table, offered pranam and left.

I observed that Gurudev was busy with His correspondence and that He had not had His morning tea which was getting cold. I wanted to gently remind Him but I did not dare to interrupt him. In a few minutes, the hostess came and told me that somebody had come to see Gurudev.

It was Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, who had arrived with coffee decoction, milk and sugar!

That morning's tea/coffee was the privilege of the Iyer's.

I immediately told Mrs. Iyer that Gurudev had been waiting for them and He had not had His morning tea.

Mrs. Iyer went to the kitchen, prepared the coffee and offered it to Gurudev.

Gurudev immediately exclaimed, "I was waiting for this cup of coffee!"

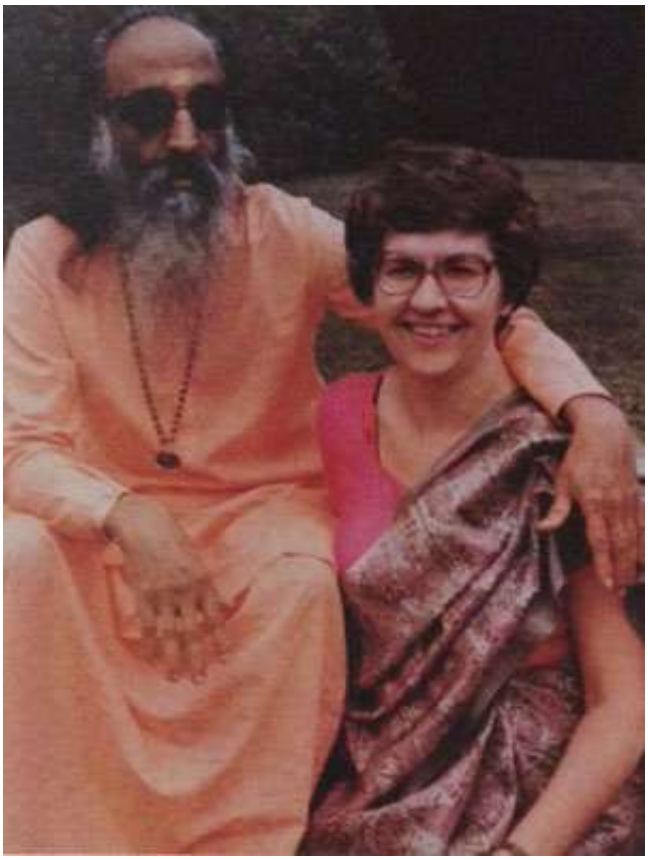
After this incident whenever Mrs. Iyer had the opportunity to go and attend Gurudev's camps especially Sidhabari, Gurudev would ask her to make coffee for Him!

She was thereafter fondly addressed by all as "Coffee Amma"!!

Sent by Padmashree RG, Bengaluru

89. Sealed With A Ring

04-08-2015



Rose Ann Blau, 83, has known Gurudev since a very very long time. Today she is highly respected at the CM-Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA and sends us another anecdote. Coming as it did on Mahasamadhi day, this is one more prasaada.

Once before the last talk at a camp, several of us went into Gurudev's room, where we had satsang. At the end, I gave my ring to Gurudev and asked if he could wear it and he approved.

Subsequently there was one more lecture, after which, we ran to the dining roomand took our spot. Several of us wanted to sit at the table next to the head-of-the-table seat where Gurudev would sit.

When Gurudev arrived, he sat at our table, right across from me. He carried the ring with him and asked me for my hand as he wanted to put it on my finger. Thereafter he said, "From now on you are mine, is that OK with you?”

I was very happy and said, “yes, yes, yes.” And as I said consciously ‘yes’, I found that I had rededicated myself to the spiritual pursuit with greater resolve. I am grateful to my Guru.

As I ate my dinner, I kept quiet during the meal and mentally kept telling Gurudev that this was all very nice of him!

From the memories of Rose Ann Blau, Milwaukee

90. Fearless Thatha and the Grace of the Guru

05-08-2015

Ranganathan Krishnamoorthy known best as 'Thatha' or simply grandpa, today lives at Chinmaya Vibhooti, Kolwan, Maharashtra, doing the only thing he knows: serve the Mission. He is 86. He shares an anecdote here.



At the feet of Hanuman ji

1984. It was just before Operation Blue Star in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. (Operation Bluestar was a military operation ordered by the government to vacate the Golden Temple in Amritsar that had become the refuge of some militants.) Punjab was in flames and the Khalistan movement was very active.

I had gone to attend a camp of Pujya Gurudev at Sidhabari, with my wife and daughter. As always, I went by car from Delhi. On the last day of the camp, I had to leave before the concluding session just after lunch, so that I could be in Delhi by late night. I had to chair an important Board meeting with our foreign collaborator and that was scheduled, hence I had no choice.

Reluctantly we went to take leave of the Master soon after breakfast.

Gurudev said “Why Krishnamoorthy, why are you leaving today. Go tomorrow. You are going by road. Not a good idea.”

I tried to explain to him that it was not negotiable for me, there was a crucial meeting etc. Gurudev closed his eyes for a few moments, thenhe said, “Okay, go; but when you reach Delhi, call me, whatever the time.”

He gave us fruit prasad and to my wife, he pressed hard in her hands, a full coconut with a silent prayer and said, “Hmm…”

Usually we leave the coconuts in the kitchen but this time, my wife said, “I will take this with me.”

We left.



His Master's Voice....

By the time we were on the Chandigarh-Delhi bypass, it was close to 6 p.m and getting dark. However, Chandigarh was only half an hour away and we were not to go to Chandigarh, but go straight to Delhi.

As we drove along, we were stopped near a rail crossing. There were many vehicles in front of us and we were behind a bus. From the car we watched. Someone got into the bus and the bus decided to take a 'U' turn. We could hear that the gate will not be opened for quite some time because of some accident and that hence the bus driver was taking a different route to avoid the crossing.

My driver said that we too should follow the bus and right before us a couple of other vehicles also started taking a U-turn and getting into the dirt track road along the railway track. We also then took the u-turn and fell in line with the other vehicles, onto the dirt track.

A few minutes later, the bus stopped near a clearing on the road. Some persons got down from the bus and I was sitting in front next to the driver, I could see a

bearded man asking the passengers to get down and walk ahead of the bus, whose head lights were on.

Within seconds, more bearded men appeared with guns in their hands. My car was also standing behind the bus. My driver said, “Sir, these are terrorists. I am frightened. I can’t drive.” He was a strong man of good build from that part of India known for its brawn and bravery. But the man was shaking with fright.

I told him, “Move over, I will drive.”

He scurried out of the driver’s seat and came to my side of the car while I slid into the driver’s seat. Don’t ask me how it happened. I have absolutely no idea. I put off the head lamps of my car, backed a short distance and took a full 180 degree turn. I tell you again, how I managed to do this on a village road, I really don’t know.

I must have driven about 50 meters when I heard – what sounded like sharp gun shots. I decided to take the mud track through the villages with just the moon as my guiding star.

Meanwhile my wife and daughter took off their jewelry and started chanting Lord Rama’s name. They wrapped up the ornaments in a handkerchief and gave it to me to be handed over to anyone who stopped us. And they hid behind the front seats!

It is a vivid recollection now. I came to a village and with the head lights on I could see that we are at a crossing. I didn’t know whether to take left or right.



Sharing the Vision - A young Tatha with Gurudev

At that moment, a Sikh gent with a long white beard, appeared and I stopped the car and asked him the way to Chandigarh. He asked us to take the left road but not without also asking me, “Why are you coming this way – you should have taken the highway!”

I mumbled that there was a traffic jam on the highway and then revved up and as

fast as I could and drove on and on -twisting, turning and bumpy.

Eventually at about 11.00 p.m we reached Chandirgarh. Since I was a frequent business visitor, I checked into the only leading hotelthose days.

The next morning, when I read the papers, the news flash caught my attention. “Fifteen Hindus shot dead near the railway crossing on the bypass road.” That could have been nineteen!

I somehow got through to Sidhabari and left a message with Paiji that we have reached Chandigarh safely and to convey that information to Pujya Gurudev.



Thatha in 2012, the tradition continues

About half hour later I got a call from Gurudev – “If only you had listened to me. Anyway, forget it – get on with your job.”

I could only mumble, but Lalita my wife pulled the phone from me and said to Gurudev, “I held on to the coconut you gave me Swamiji!”

I could hear his roaring laughterpour out of the phone!

I believe that it is Pujya Gurudev who saved us. He must have got some indication before we left that these devotees are going to face some problem and must have said a silent prayer.

Our entire family owe to Pujya Gurudev what we are today and the only way to even partly repay HIM is to serve his mission during our life time.

Om Sri Chinmaya Sat Gurave Namah.

From the memory of
Krishnamoorthythatha – Vibhooti

91. HOW I AM BRAHMAN

06-08-2015

Chapter 13 of the Bhagvad Gita falls in the Third part of the triad Tat Tvam Asi – Asi.

The essence of the Vedas are the Mahavakyas. In them the most often used is Tat Twam Asi which says That which you are seeking – that state of deathlessness, sorrow-lessness, ignorance-lessness, Eternal Blissful Conscious Existence - That is You.



The question rises for many students: how can I the limited, ignorant, miserable, bound, be That Infinite enlightened blissful Lord.

To explain this the scriptures use bhaga tyaga lakshana - which means renounce all that which is changing in you, which is subject to change in you -- the body mind and intellect. Similarly, renounce all your concepts of God, of the Absolute. What remains is Pure Consciousness in 'That' and in 'Thou'.

So, what happens is, you have to leave a portion of yourself – the BMI and all matter; and you have to give up a portion of God as well – all the names and forms; and you retain only the remainder. Therefore it is called bhaga, which means portion.

Tyaaga means renunciation. Lakshana is a methodology of indication, pointing to.

To add to this already difficult concept we are made to understand jahal lakshana

and ajahal lakshana – more complicated terminologies and names.

Now how does Gurudev explain it? He makes it so simple in the introduction to Chapter 13 -- which includes all the technicalities as well, but yet so easy!

In one shot, Gurudev says, "'THAT' dressed up in matter, is the vainful THOU. Therefore man undressed of matter is the Eternal and Infinite Spirit."

To explain: Wave is a part of the Ocean. Remove the name and forms -- 'wave' and 'ocean' -- what remains is the One Water!

That is how suddenly you understand that 'That' is 'Thou'; Thou is That! Jai Gurudev!

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu,
Chennai

92. The Pledge: Vedanta in a capsule

07-08-2015

Sri Sidhu is a graduate brahmachari of the 15th Batch Vedanta Course. He looks after the CIF centerat Kottayam, Kerala.

I learnt the Pledge way back when I was in lower kindergarten at Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Allapuzha. Within a year I had also been enrolled into Balvihar, where too the Pledge was taught to me. This time in Malayalam.

In both places, the Pledge was ‘chanted’ at the end of the day, at the end of class. We wouldstand together and belt out the Pledge, full throated, and the moment the end words - OM TAT SAT - were yelled out, we would all run out, homeward, screamingin chorus.



Hence the Pledge to my 5 year old mind (then) stood for ‘freedom’.

Today, 25 years later, it still stands for Freedom, but a freedom that one has evolved into after being taught how to live the Pledge.

At 5 or 6, the Pledge was a capsule we swallowed and chanted. No meanings were

taught. This is in keeping with Indian oral tradition too. The first time I learnt its meaning was in my chyk classes at age15. We had group discussions on the Pledge. It was a subject by itself.

I began to think of the Pledge as a promise to myself.

We were told a story of how Gurudev had composed it. Gurudev was the spine of my living as he was there on the altar at home, on the walls at school, at Balvihar. So I did not have to ask who is he. He was. All stories came out of him.

Like the one about the Pledge. It seems one day during some camp preparation, some members went to Gurudev and said “Swamiji we don’t have a Pledge!” Gurudev said, “Do you have a pen and paper?” Followed by, “Now take down…”

When I learnt that Gurudev composed this fabulous promise in 30 minutes, it was a wonder for me. Gurudev’s Pledge has enveloped everyone. Importantly the Pledge was an extempore delivery and it has remained without need for even a grammatical revision all these years.

Because it was born of shuddha sankalpa.

We were also told that the Pledge is the guidance Gurudev gave to CM members and sevaks. Why? Because he is very keen that we who have come together under him should be bound together in this manner. Bound, as in unified.



The Pledge has come to be a sadhana for me. From a school student where I began with the 'Courageous and disciplined' part of the Pledge, I found the Pledge stay with me like a check list ensuring I was practising them all.

Every line in the Pledge is a strong spiritual message and sadhana from Gurudev. That is why after the yuva veer course, Sw. Mitrananda ji taught The Pledge and later at Sandeepany too, as recent as the 15th batch Vedanta Course, we studied The Pledge for 6-7 days under Swamiji again. Of course at this stage, the Pledge meant higher things for us brahmacharis.

Gurudev put into the Pledge what he did all his life, what he practised, what was his everyday religion and through it he has given us an instruction manual, as it were, for attaining Perfection. The Pledge binds us all together while also binding us with the love of a Father, in a commitment.

At one level it is a simple statement that says we should be like a family, have love for each other and work together. But when we start working we find it is difficult to feel that love, despite the fact that we are all trying to work for the same Mission of Gurudev.

That is why Gurudev wanted that we practise the first line: We stand as a Family. As for being bound together in love and respect-- in a family of blood relations that love and respect seems to be there superficially. The love we feel for our children, siblings may be possessive love, or assumed love born of duty; but that kind of love is without respect for the child as an individual.

The same goes for respect which manifests in organisations. Gurudev says 'bound together with love and respect' – it is love AND respect; specifically because he wanted that we show this love and respect. If love is not there in respect, then that respect is just fear. Gurudev's Pledge seeks from us love that respects and respect that loves.

So what is the quality of love and respect I have seen? I have grown from kindergarten to running a center – all on the lap of the Mission. Be it at Vidyalaya or the Balvihar or at CHYK or at Yuvaveer camps or at Sandeepany or the various projects that Mission Centers have involved me in, I have experienced this: You are an individual and you are free. That I belong to this family and therefore I will be looked after for my development. I don't even have to wonder about it. It is there.

Pujya Guruji says 'It is not according to your ability. It is your availability.' This I have actually seen play out in the Mission. The many acharyas Gurudev has raised, the Pledge is clearly seen to unfold.



I grew up in a small town where Malayalam was the language in which we not just spoke but also thought. When I started working at the Mission, I could not even put a sentence together. The acharya under whom I was working, I was happy being his fetch and carry boy, so grateful to be serving him. He? His love was the kind that respected and empowered. He straightaway gave me editing work! I was stunned but there were many under him who held my hand and showed me the way.

Love and respect.

Bound together.

You ask anyone who is working fulltime in the Mission: they have got this respect from the senior people in the Mission. Even in families today it is not happening. But the Chinmaya Family was created by Gurudev and the love and respect flows from him.

See any of the mentors. They have done this for their wards. They learn it from Gurudev that is why they are able to give us that! Guruji would say the same thing. 'I knew nothing, but by being with Gurudev I improved.' Love combined with respect.

I have seen that ability is not the benchmark at Gurudev's Mission, but being available to the mentor, to allow him to shape you, mould you,correct you. That is where your own love and respect (at an individual level) comes in.

The mentor, how does he become such a great mentor? That is also looked after by the Pledge. It seems that Gurudev's intention was once we adopt the Pledge, the Pledge will adopt us. We are one family, everyone is working for the same family (same vision). There may be difference in opinions, how we accommodate differences in the same family is through understanding that we belong to the same father and by buying into his vision.

That is what I found to be 'respect'. The mentor in turn, makes you another worthy

mentor!

Gurudev said in the Pledge, “May Thy grace and blessings flow through us to the world around us.” But this is what he did! He allowed the grace to flow out to everyone! We as recipients of his Grace, sometimes we may be guilty of not letting it flow out…

That is where the other line in the Pledge comes to remind us,

“We live honestly
The noble life of sacrifice and service;

Producing more than what we consume

And giving more than what we take”.

That is how He lived and showed us. He produced more, far farfar more. And gave and gave and gave. He wanted us to be like him, so what he has put down in the Pledge is just an instruction manual for us to become like him. If you remove ‘We’ and replace with ‘I’, we will see Gurudev.

Pujya Guruji made 7 chantings compulsory for Mission people. They were called ‘Go to Basics’. We are supposed to memorise and know them well. One of them is The Pledge (the others being Gurustotram, Tapovanshatkam, Gita DhyanaSlokas, Gurupadukastotram and Kritajnata). But what it really means is we have to live like this. It is a commitment, a promise to ourselves. This shows the visionary in Gurudev; what he wanted us to do, he put it in it!

Right at the start he put there: WE STAND AS ONE FAMILY, BOUND TO EACHOTHER WITH LOVE AND RESPECT.

This is the starting point; the primary building block of a good organisation. Gurudev knew how the human mind works and He knew that this was invariably the stumbling block.

We stand as a family means we should stand as a family.

Bound with love and respect means don’t confuse that love for possessiveness and respect for fear. Love is that which accompanies respect, giving room and acceptance for diversity and difference.

For every kind of human there is place in CM. You join Chinmaya Mission to belong. That’s it!

Gurudev wanted us to evolve from a ‘Group’ to ‘Family’ . A group is just a collection of people. Better than group is a TEAM, which is a ‘group’ with a common goal. And to achieve that goal, there may be instructions and specific guidelines. But a ‘FAMILY’ is a group/team joined with a special factor called love. Gurudev wanted us

to be not just a group, but a FAMILY. Kutumbam (Family) is one way we can say: KoodumbolImbamUllathu – where Koodumbol is coming together; Imbam is pleasing; ullathu - that which is. Hence: Family is that which is pleasing.

As the famous quote goes: “Coming together is beginning, staying together is Progress and working together is success!!”

Hari Om

93. Contemplating Vichara

08-08-2015

Br. Kutastha Chaitanya studied at the Sandeepany Vidya Mandir, Chinmaya Gardens, 2000-2002 batch. He is serving at Chinmaya International Foundation.

The word "Vichara" is commonly used and very important in Vedanta. We are often told to conduct an inquiry into a thought.

In the following verse of Bhagavan Adi Sankara's "Vivekachoodamani",Vichara gets addressed right at the start in verse 45 (it is a 580 verse text):

वेदान्ताँर्थवचिारेणाजायतेज्ञ्ानमुत्तमम्॥

तेनात्यन्तकिसंसारदुःखनाशोभवत्यनु॥४५॥

vedāntārthavicāreṇa jāyate jñānamuttamam |

tenātyantikasaṁsāraduḥkhanāśo bhavatyanu || 45||

The highest knowledge arises from the sincere contemplation upon the meaning of the Upanishad mantras. By this knowledge, immediately a total annihilation of all sorrows born of the "perception of change" takes place.

Sri Sankara says, the highest knowledge arises from inquiry, that by the vichara of the meaning of Vedanta (vedantarthavicarena) one gets that highest knowledge and the sorrows of samsara is destroyed with its roots.

First I had a trouble with the word "vichara" - how does it give the supreme knowledge. Cannot really comprehend the deep sense of the simple looking word "vichara" in this verse. Which means that to get to the Truth one must know the art of vicara. And this is the one thing that was not apparent. How does one do inquiry?

Here comes the importance of a great master, a teacher - who is Srotriya and Brahma-nishta. A mother softens the food nicely with her hands (or a masher, in modern times) to feed the child so that the child can easily eat and also digest it without any difficulty.

That same love of a mother we see in our Pujya Gurudev who softened the word "vichara" – developed its intention and meaning and directly fed into our intellect an easily but perfectly assimilable form, so that that word is digested and absorbed within us to nourish our Sadhana.

So in the first step Gurudev describes the process of vicara. Before we think it is ordinary thinking about something again and again, or contemplating or analysing or

questioning, Gurudev tells us there is no English equivalent. This puts a brake on the mind from moving in the wrong direction of understanding vicara in English. But Gurudev also says it comprises all these word meanings too. Then he adds an important aspect which may never be apparent if we follow the English word meanings. Gurudev says, '..

along with certain essential mental and intellectual discipline. .... ' and to approach the inquiry with a mind and intellect trained and made steady,'

But often this definition is not enough, he must have known students to hesitate at the level of definition. So then in the second step Gurudev enhances on the first step by bringing to us a metaphoric understanding by using the example of bee and flower and honey. This is something we all would have experienced sometime. We would have seen bee sitting on a flower trying to get the honey. So Gurudev explains that the bee scents the honey, approaches the flower and probes the flower deep for the nectar lies deep in the innermost chambers of the flower.

Two points that stand out in Gurudev's explanation: a) the honey-bee, which courts it with ardour and adoration – meaning to say that ardour and adoration are primary qualities that ensure success in the search for the nectar. A disinterested bee is not going to work hard at the 'dusty exteriors' that cover the path to the nectar!

b) the nectar is in the innermost chamber

So these are Gurudev's words, "The nectar in a flower is always secreted in its innermost chambers. Its enchanted lover, the honey-bee, which courts it with ardour and adoration, alone can scent the nectar and groping through its dusty exterior reach the honey treasured in the blossom."

Having said that, Gurudev goes on to shows us how Vedanta is precisely structured like that: that to extract the essence, the nectar of the mahavakyas, the Upanishadic truths, the seeker should not look for it in the words that describe it ("The sweetness of each is secreted not in its outer words, fascinating though they be,") but deeper, deeper, deeper...

It was here that it became clear to me that the Truth would not stand there with a label, but would have to be mined. And if the bee has a probe, the jiva's probe is a sharpened mind and intellect.

Now that he has made this stage known to me using the analogy of a bee, my understanding of the process of vicara has reached a better position.

This is when he adds an important point: that the head and heart have to be in sync. The head with its intellectual debates; the heart with its emotion and sympathy. Gurudev does not say remove the heart, think with the head. He suggests their combined role. Therefore he says - The process by which the acutely intellectual and the divinely sympathetic head and heart of a seeker come to live in their subjective experience – hence the seeker has to tackle both.

Even at this stage Gurudev does not stop - till he takes us to the core and immerses

us in that knowledge. So that we do not get frustrated with the meditative moments where we grapple with the mantras' meanings, Gurudev says, when we strive hard here, we are actually in the realms of vicara.

So now we know that we have got our process right.

Here also Gurudev gives an example: using the waking and dream state experiences that we have, he says how on waking up we are rid of the sorrows caused by our dream identification, in the same way, the rise of pure Knowledge in us, puts an end to all ignorance so that we come to abide in Knowledge alone...!

Now when we read verse 45 the word vicara does not put us off. Sri Sankara is guiding us to the Truth. Gurudev's presence shows us how to walk....

94. My Teacher! My Education!

09-08-2015

Br. Sundar Chaitanya studied under Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda. He is a graduate of the 13th batch (2005-2007) of the Sandeepany Vedanta Course and currently serving at CIF.

2001, is the 1st year of the 3rd millennium and the 1st year of the 21st century. My journey into higher education began.

As a Junior Research Fellow at the Department of Microbiology, University of Delhi.

About Geobacillus thermoleovorans NP33,an extremophile and an invisible fellow to our naked eye.

Deep inquiry and research began into what is the anatomy and physiology of this bacteria. Many days and months passed. So at one level was this group of thermophilic bacteria, and serious lives were being spent studying its genesis. At another, there were around me fellow researchers of diverse cultures.

Suddenly I started introspecting about myself! What is my nature, my capacity, my potential? Who am I? Naan Yaar? The famous query of Bhagavān Ramaṇa Maharṣiwhich I've heard during the many visits to Tiruvannamalai.

That unanswered mystery of my college days, now led me to Chinmaya Centre for World Understanding, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. Here began my ultimate education in 2003. The overview of Upaniṣads with Swami Brahmananda at New Delhi and Bhagavad Gītā with Swami Tejomayananda at Siddhabari. Those two great disciples of Pūjya Gurudev led me to Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai.



Receiving books from Pujya Guruji

I completed the Vedānta course under Swami Tejomayananda in September 2007. And my ultimate education continues... while facilitating the activities of Chinmaya Mission... a mission established by a saint for those who seek...

Who is my ultimate teacher? How I gained my ultimate education? Pūjya Gurudev himself explains in the commentary of the 1st verse of Kenopaniṣad.

“To a Vedāntin, the real Guru is the pure intellect within. The purified, deeply aspiring mind is the disciple. This is represented for us in the unforgettable scene in our Bhagavad Gītā, where between the two opposing forces, in a chariot, the Absolute Teacher is preaching the Gītā to the Eternal Disciple, Arjuna. When a pure mind gets aghast at the negativities arrayed against the comparatively smaller forces of positives, in sheer despair it surrenders itself completely to the pure intellect, the Lord Kṛṣṇa within. All such living Arjuna-s can even today hear the entire divine song in the inner Kurukṣetra of their own bosom. Only we must make an earnest attempt and in faith wait for the critical hour when our minds glide into the voiceless state of true Vairāgya – the true Arjuna Sthiti:

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍhacetāḥ,

yacchreyaḥ syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanme śiṣyaste'haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam.

(Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, 2.7)

Thus, the most important thing is our own self-effort. In sincere Sādhanā, purify the equipment and the Guru necessary for our next stage of growth shall reach us. This is the Eternal Law. Hour by hour, the world about us is so ordered as to give us the necessary doses of experiences. What is necessary for the next stage of growth is always provided by the all-witnessing and the All-merciful Lord.

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa never went out seeking a Guru; so too are all the masters of our own times. Śrī Totāpuri Maharāj had to reach Dakṣiṇeśvara of his own accord to instruct the Mother’s perfect son in the higher realms of meditation. Each one of you is equally sacred and precious to the Lord. When one comes to deserve a Master, He shall reach him to guide, to help, and to enlighten.

Stick to Sādhanā. Be Good. Be kind. Be sincere. Purify the motives. Build life upon the enduring values of Love and Mercy, Charity and Purity. Through constant remembrance of the Lord rise in spiritualism. Guru-s shall, from time to time, reach such a determined, sincere seeker.”

These are the words of Gurudev that showed me the way...

Om Śrī Cinmaya Sadgurave Namaḥ!

95. The Extrovert Consciousness

10-08-2015

The Complex version: Consciousness focussed out through the senses identifies with names and forms and their qualities (gunas) and becomes the mind.

This mind thereafter with a name and a form assumes individuality like the wave that is essentially the ocean, more precisely water. As an individual when this mind sees the formidable world of names and forms, it feels insecure and develops agitations that cover our Real Nature, so that we experience imaginary birth and death, in just the same way that the wave sees itself to be different from ocean.

This is the delusion that 'I am an individual.' Consequently I experience birth death etc.

The Gurudev Simplification: This Sri Gurudev puts in his inimitable style in chapter 2 Stanza 11

"Grief and dejection are the price that delusion demands from its victim, mohatsokaha."

In another place Gurudev puts it as, 'Grief is the language of delusion. Solution to wake up to our Real Nature.'

Gurudev says in the same chapter 29, "Man awakened to the Self glory is God.

God forgetful of His own glory is the deluded man."

Sri Sad GuraveNamah

Sent by
Shri. L. Hemachandrudu

96. The Mask of Samsara

11-08-2015

At a place in Andhra Pradesh, Pujya Gurudev was holding a satsang. Several simple people from the villages had come and were seated on the fringe of the audience in the room. Those close to Swamiji were asking questions, involved in serious good discussion.

Suddenly, from one corner came the laughter of a child.

Then, a terrible sound of a child's cry issued forth. After a few seconds, the same wonderful laughter came up again. This went on for some time, the alternating laughter with that terrible crying. Gradually, people began looking around for the source of the disturbance and there it was in the corner of the room...

There, in the corner, sat a village woman with a small child in front of her. To amuse her restless child, she let her hair fall all over her face, completely covering it. Then, she began shaking her head, her wild hair dancing with no face showing, and the frightened child roared out in tears. The mother threw back her hair, and with sweet cooing sounds, revealed her face to the child, who, so happy now on recognizing its mother and being free from the fright of the hair, screamed out in joyous laughter. Again and again the mother played, tossing her hair in front, her face vanishing behind its mass, the child crying and howling.There were those devotees who were ready to send the disturbers out, but Swamiji prevented saying, “No, that woman has almost become my Guru.”

As Swamiji went on telling the story to us, he became the mother, her hair, and her play. He sometimes used his cloth to hide himself from view, heartily reveling in the disheveling of his hair and person. “So,” Swamiji continued, “the Lord lets His hair fall over His face and we are frightened, crying out like that child at His samsara. Actually, the darker the mother's hair, the more beautiful it is, but the darker the samsara, the louder we scream, because we are still little children and do not recognize that the hair is also mother, not only her face. As soon as we realize the same Consciousness is her hair, we are free. No more do we get frightened at samsara. And like the child, we even give the hair a good pull, showing that we have no fear whatever, saying, 'Oh, ho, ho, I know you, that's your hair.'”

Hiding himself again with his saffron cloth, Swamiji stressed, “Temporarily we identify with the mask and not with what is behind the mask. The mask can only be seen by the BMI in you. Once you recognize what is behind, you have no more doubts. That's why the Man-of-Realisation who knows the 'hair' as Brahman gives a loud roar of laughter.” The expression on his face was declaring, “Don't look here for Swamiji; he is gone... Only see this mask of the hair and know this, too, is Swamiji; this mask of samsara is Brahman.”

from the article 'Leaves from the Past - A pen picture from Tapovan Prasad, April 1966', reproduced in Tapovan Prasad in its April 2012 issue.

Sent by Arunachalam Gopalakrishnan, for CM Puducherry

97. THE HEAD BOY FINDS REAL FREEDOM

12-08-2015

My early memories of Gurudev's talks are from Pune, when he would come each year to conduct the GeetaGyan Yagna in New English School, Tilak Road.

It was in the sixties that he was taking discourses on the 2nd Chapter of Bhagvad Gita.

I was a teenager dealing with all the usual temptations of that age- temptations of the body and mind.

Some of these would prevent from giving of my best in my studies and in my role as "Head Boy" of the school. The desire to "have fun" would cause me to do things which we knew were not "right".



Anil Sachdev Today

It was at that time that I heard Gurudev speak on the "Yoga of Knowledge".Towards the end of his talks, he was explaining to us the significance of stanzas 62 and 63.

Stanza 62: When a man thinks of objects, "attachments" for them rises; from attachment desire is born; from desire arises "anger"

Stanza 63: "From anger comes 'delusion': from delusion 'loss of memory'; from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination he

'perishes'.

He explained to us in his own inimitable and humorous way, how the chant of "I want, I want, I want...."in pursuing sensory pleasures takes us away from our goals and values.

In his inimitable creative way, he explained to us how the "lower mind" gets carried away by its love for sense objects and stimuli and how the "higher mind" gets over powered.

To explain the way the "higher mind" should manage the "lower mind", he advised us that we should draw inspiration from the way a loving older brother deals with a truant younger brother: ' Be kind, loving and patient and try to reason by asking the right questions'.

He said to us, "The quality of your thoughts" defines who you are. If you allow your mind to run amuck and not follow the ideals that you cherish, for momentary pleasure, you will "fall in your own eyes".

He said to us,"Those who cannot control their senses are in prison."

Then came his much quoted saying, "Not doing what you feel like doing is real freedom".

These talks had a profound impact on my world view and the way I led my life. They helped me to improve the focus of my mind so that whatever I did was with deep concentration and full attention. As a result, I excelled at my studies and even managed to win prizes in badminton and theatre!

Looking back, I feel blessed to have received His guidance and teachings at a crucial stage in my life. All the good that has happened to me and through me is the result of this guidance.

Prem and Om!

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, longstanding devotee and CEO, SCHOOL OF INSPIRED LEADERSHIP (SOIL)

98. Putting the Vasanas to Use

13-08-2015

One of the texts that Gurudev took during the Olivet Camp in Michigan in 1979 was the Narada Bhakti Sutra.

One of the verses talks about the six “families” of negative thoughts and suggests that even these can be turned subjectively upon ourselves, or upon others, or upon Him. The manner in which Gurudev analyses and presents comes through so beautifully here:

When these impulses are turned upon others, they become negative energies and the forces of dissipation. However, when they are turned towards the Lord or upon ourselves, they can become creative, help us exhaust the vasanas (causing them), and become an integrative force of our personality.

For example:

- When Lust is turned towards Him, it becomes a Meera-like supreme devotion.

    * Anger too at the Lord can be a manifestation of extreme devotion.

- Jealousy about other seekers (who we think are progressing better than we are) while at first a negative energy, if turned inward can help us become more and more sincere in our effort and help channelize it in the right direction.

- Lobha (miserliness – in combination with and as a consequence of greed) can be used as greed for spiritual perfection and not compromising with our values, even an iota, just like a miser looking after his wealth.

- Madha (vanity) that I am a devotee of the Lord and a member of Chinmaya Mission, can be turned upon ourselvesso that we choose not to live with my baser instincts and animal values, this can lead us to become better sadhaks.

- Kama (gratification) when used in serving the Lord to the best we can and loving Him more than we love our family and spouse, can lead us to a state of supreme bliss.

Thus, the same negative tendencies, if practiced and applied upon ourselves instead of on others, they become aggressively positive.

Sent by Shri Apparao Mukkamala, M.D., and a long standing devotee of Gurudev's in the US

99. Govinda… Govinda… Govinda!

14-08-2015

Vyasa has brought out all possible psychological tricks which even our psychiatrist doesn't know in order to drag the mind from its wandering and persuade it to understand that there is a greater joy, a higher happiness in contemplating upon the Lord.



A sincere Guru or the teacher will give you what you need more than what you want. If you want money, he will say, “Go to Tirupati”.

You go four, five times and then you say,

“Swamiji, my business is not growing”

“Did you go to Tirupati?”

“Yes”

“How?”

“By car”

“Ha! That explains it. You must walk up”

You go up four or five times, panting. Your health improves. Still, the business is not

growing…

“Swamiji, I don't think…”

“Did you walk?”

“Yes, I do walk”

“While walking what were you doing?”

“I was breathing.”

“You must say Govinda, Govinda, Govinda, Govinda, at every step.”

Then what happens? Your faith increases, you repeat the Lord's name and you go there often. By that time, the business will improve, because a business cannot be down and out all the time. The business was down and out because you were not smart enough. By learning from your mistakes, you become smart. When your business becomes alright, your faith in Govinda increases. You attribute your success to Tirupati Venkatachalapati, and His grace, so you start going every month. On your birthday you go there, and while going there you chant “Govinda, Govinda, Govinda, Govinda”. Your general health improves, your faith increases, your business flourishes.

If the teacher had told you to increase your faith, then you would have asked, “How can I get faith?” It is not available in the local market like toothpaste. So he gives you a technique.

In this way, throughout the puranas you find hundreds and hundreds of little techniques which are fit for all of us at all levels. Puranas are great scientific textbooks and that is why our forefathers constantly studied them.

(Source : Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda’s introductory talk during Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda’s Bhagawatdiscourses at Birla Kreeda Kendra Hall, Chowpaty, Mumbai, from October 30 to November 6, 1992, published in Tapovan Prasad, June 2004 issue)

Sent by Chinmaya Mission, Puducherry, India

100. Head and Heart: Understanding Feeling

15-08-2015

Understanding feeling, feeling understanding, is contemplation, said Gurudev in a satsang once.

We will see how he has built an entire Vedanta lesson here, without using any of the heavy aphorisms and sutras from other texts.

We have heard gnanenaevakaivalyam (Only through Knowledge you can get Liberation – knowledge here being the knowledge that the formless Brahman alone exists, all else is maya.).
That same Sri Sankara says Moksha sadhanasamagryambhakthievagariyasi (Of all the means to Liberation, Bhakti is the highest.

NaradaBhakthi Sutra says sa(bhakthi)tu karma gnanopiadhikatara (That Bhakti is superior to karma and jnana).

Now these seem to be contradictory. Gurudev makes this easy for us to grasp, through the use of the means of contemplation (bhavana) or meditation in His commentary on stanza 254 of Vivekachudamani.

He says: Just as understanding (jnana) is the function of the intellect and feeling (bhakthi) is the function of the mind, contemplation (bhavana) is the function of the heart, since the heart is combination of mind and intellect.

Therefore contemplation is feeling what you have understood and understanding fully what you have felt!

This is further clarified by Gurudev in Stanza 266 –

“In the cave of the intellect is the "heart" and in the heart the Atman is apprehended. The idea of being in an atmosphere of love, when an individual starts thinking (contemplating) regularly, he will arrive at the experience of the Atman.” Hence Liberation.

This substantiates what Gurudev said elsewhere: Knowledge soaked in love is wisdom.

Another related thought that Gurudev leaves with us goes like this: The integration of the head (jnana) and the heart (bhakti) gives rise to a third faculty called intuition, which reveals the Self to us.

So now we go back to the opening sentence, above: Understanding feeling, feeling understanding, is contemplation. Now see how Gurudev brought the heart and head

to work together for that same Liberation!

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

111. Carrying the Lord on the Head – A story teller incomparable

26-08-2015

In his talk on Krishnavatar, (CCMT, 2011) Gurudev narrates for us how Vasudev was directed by Lord Krishna as a newborn, to do as He said and take Him across the Jamuna to the home of Yashoda and Nand.

Vasudev, says Gurudev, placed a dhoti inside a stray basket he found in the corner of the jail where he lived with his wife Devaki, and placed the baby inside it. Then carrying this basket on his head he stepped out into the darkness to go to the otherside of the turbulent river Jamuna.

Vasudev had no idea how he was to do any of this. But he had placed his faith in the Lord Vishnu who was directing him, step-by-step.

Here is where Gurudev is oh-so subtly toggling our inner software to redirect itself to the Divine method of living. This does not become clear until later. Gurudev says, Vasudev had no idea what he was to do. This compares to our condition almost always when faced with hardship and difficulty.

But it is usually when our hardship has peaked, that in a helpless surrender, we do as we are told and not as we 'think'. Here it means – doing as the scriptures request us to do. Prayer/ Worship/ adherance is the last (if ever) resort of the intellectually driven mind.

Vasudev was hopeless and helpless by the time his 8th child was born. He had seen seven of them done to death by the atrocious Kamsa. And the pattern had been the same each time. This 8th time, the Lord spoke to him, or… he invoked the Lord. This is a thought that comes to us. To be able to remember the Lord is itself half the battle won, one may say.

Even so, Vasudev is willing to do anything to save his child. So when his mind sought the Lord, the Lord spoke to him and Vasudev did as he was being directed, regardless of whether he knew how to do it. So placing the child in the basket and the basket atop his head, Vasudev walked out of the chained jail into a dark rainy night. 'What does a man in the jail know if it is sunny or rainy? Only when he reached the Jumuna banks he saw the river flooded.' Well observed by Gurudev! And the number of meanings this proffers, are charmingly many. Think of man in captivity of his mind and identifying with it then stepping out. Or… think of person living in comfort and then stepping out into a harsh world… both work.

But the father had had a vision of the Lord, says Gurudev and keeping that vision intact, he walked into the water. The icy cold Jamuna– metaphoric of the harsh coldness of life – only grew worse.

The river rose even higher. To his neck. But Vasudev did not withdraw. He had to quickly take the child across the angry river to safety and return to the jail. He would do as the Lord had told him, he was committed to that. Another little lesson here. Vasudev was likely to have been hopeless and even in doubt, but he ignored his doubt, for clearly, he had chosen to listen to the Lord.

Many are the people who tell a story. Many are the people who engage the mind with detail. When Gurudev tells a story, he verily rewrites your software with the compassion and commitment of a Vasudev-like father, determined to make you see the Truth.

The water at first was up to his lower lip, says Gurudev. And next step, the water was up to his upper lip. "Anyone of us (in his place) would have said, 'A-ha! This is irrational, don't be silly, let us go back!' says Gurudev correctly deigning the human mind. But not Vasudev. "Because Narayana has ordered him."

Do or die must have been his motto that day, and Vasudev took the next step as well – when the water level would reach his nose and suffocate him.

This is the faith and steadfastness of mind that Gurudev is gently urging for us to have.

'Narayana in the basket knew it... therefore He put His tiny foot outside the basket..."

When Gurudev says this, the mind instantly recalls

kararavindenapadaravindammukharavindeviniveshayantam |
vatasyapatrasyaputeshayanambalammukundammanasasmarami

I memorize the Lord in his infant form (Mukunda), who sleeps in a Banyan leaf. He is the one who puts his lotus like foot to His mouth, with the help of His hands.

Already the mind begins to swell with renewed joy and hope, for the Lord has acted.... One step by Vasudev and so many million steps by the Lord!

Now Jamuna dare not touch that Foot! It is a tiny baby, says Gurudev coming back to story teller mode and suggests, 'it is a tiny baby, it will get pneumonia!'

There are story tellers and storytellers and there is One Gurudev. His is an art that is a class apart for a seeker.

Now see how much he has reasoned it out for us, a detail we would all clearly and surely miss. Says Gurudev, when that tiny child drops its foot outside the basket, His toe will be at the height of Vasudev's nose. Not sure if even Vyasa pointed out this logic. But Gurudev knew he had an audience of logical, intellect driven, doubting seekers. So when the baby Krishna's foot dropped out of the basket, theJamuna which had risen to Vasudev's upper lip and just about to engulf his nose, receded. For to stay at that level would be to soon touch the baby-Lord. And that the Jamuna would not!

Unthreatened anymore, Vasudev carrying the Lord on his head, reached the other side of the Jamuna.

So where is his message? It is all over. All over. All over! If you are carrying the Lord on your head, all the time, nothing can touch your buddhi, your intellect, and cause you to take unwise steps. "The basket is your own cranium," says Gurudev. He urges us to carry the Lord in our head,our intellect.'When you are carrying Narayana and walking into the floods of life, no doubt you will get wet,(any fool will get wet, adds Gurudev challenging the cynic); The water will come to the lips.... You cross. Because your nose will not be affected."

Gurudev says in life every kind of problem will be there (and he lists out 10 kinds), '.... your near and dear ones may hate you, may die,'... "all these problems will be there because that is the nature of life, ... but if you are carrying Him on your head, and have perfect faith in Him, one thing is certain... you will not get drowned! Full stop."

112. Win the Mind- Win the World

27-08-2015

One of the most important lessons that I was fortunate to receive from our spiritual teacher, Swami Chinmayananda, was about dealing with the consequences of setbacks, failures and personal criticism.

Right from the time I was a teenager, I realized that I would get hurt by personal criticism for which I had no answers.

For example, some of my friends would make fun of a slight squint I had those days(which disappeared over time) and it used to hurt me a lot.

My entire family had members who were from the Armed Forces and some of them had great physical prowess and I could not even do a 'front roll'! This made me the butt of jokes! Somehow, I could not find the capacity of doing such physical tasks well and so felt miserable after being teased about this weakness!

Many years later, when I got married at a very young age(22 and half), I and my wife moved out of our joint family home and I had to deal with the emotional trauma of my parents and family members not being happy with my decision.

Even in the world of work, I was very sensitive about personal criticism about my intentions or values if it came from people I cared about.

I recall one incident at work that caused me a lot of grief.

At the company I had founded, we discovered that we had made serious mistakes in hiring some people. One of them whom I had known for many years and was a senior colleague, was found to engage in disruptive activities like dirty politicking and talking badly about me and others in external forums. We also discovered a serious fraud in which we found that the accountant whom we trusted the most, had been siphoning out lakhs of rupees!

We were providing services to the best companies on how to assess people and had made errors ourselves in assessing the people we were hiring!I was really feeling very hurt and sad at these developments! These emotions came in turns, troubled, receded and came back in a different form later.

When I reflect back at how I coped with the negative emotions of being disappointed, let down and hurt at different times in my life, I realize that a big factor that has helped me to deal with my low resilience has been the wisdom that l learned from Swami Chinmayananda!

After the fraud in our company and discovery of the politicking in our team, we

asked a number of people to leave.

The next day our current spiritual teacher Swami Tejomayananda, who took over the global role from our Master who had left this earthly plane in 1993, visited our offices. We shared the story of what had happened with him and he smiled and said: 'Just follow Gurudev and all will be fine'!

Situations such as these do not leave the mind in a hurry. They spin on their own axis and whip up a froth. But Swami Tejomayananda's timely message shifted the mind's drift. I began to ponder over Gurudev's teachings and I could hear him speak to me and the lessons from his explanation of Stanzas 5, 6 and 7of Chapter 6 of the Bhagwad Geeta came back to me with such precision as was needed for my situation:

Stanza 5 : uddharedatmanatmananam natmanamavasadayet

Atmaiva hyatmano bandhuratmaiva ripuratmanah

Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, and let him not lower himself; for, this Self alone is the friend of oneself, and this Self is the enemy of oneself.

Stanza 6: bandhuratmatmanastasya yenatmaivatmana jitah

Anatmanastu satrutve vartetatmaiva satruvat

The Self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self, but to the unconquered self, the Self stands in the position of an enemy like the (external) foe.

Stanza 7: jitatmanah prasantasya paramatma samahitah

Sitosnasukhadukhesu tatha manapamanayoh

The Supreme Self of him who is self-controlled and peaceful, is balanced in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, as also in honour and dishonour.

When these exhortations of the Gita were pitted against the despondent mind's restlessness,

I realized that I had to lead my own mind and bring back the positive emotions of my higher purpose and vision and consciously teach my mind to be happy by doing the positive actions of appreciating others, showing compassion and deriving joy in the quality of work that we were delivering! (atmaiva hyatmanao bandhuratmaiva)

Right through my younger days, having begun at His feet so early, Gurudev's messages to me had been as if prophetic - 'Do not take revenge upon yourself for the fault' of others; 'Build a foundation with the bricks that people throw at you' and 'Disappointment comes to those who keep an appointment with the future' ! These were the pearls that had helped me all along and all I needed to do was to meditate upon them yet again and invoke the Master's blessings!

Not only did we recover from the setback in our team, but my colleagues too felt empowered and energised by the attitude that we adopted and thanked me for taking the tough action. They felt that the team would function better!

I feel fortunate and blessed that not only did our Master teach, but those teachings also surfaced to the memory when I needed to use them!

Gurudev's teachings helped us to acquire perhaps the best leadership attribute- leading the mind- from disappointment to joy and real freedom!

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, a longstanding devotee of Gurudev

113. Nodding in Agreement, Hearing Nothing

28-08-2015

The art of fielding dussangaha

Narada Bhakti Sutra: Shlokas 42-43-44

One of the basic foundations bricks of a Vedantic way of living is the satsang, company of the good; but its flipside is even more important it would seem, for the Narada Bhakti Sutra cautions us and instructs the rejection of dussangaha. Shlokas 42-44 emphasise exactly this.

Dusangaha Sarvathaiva Tyajyah (43)

Kama krodha moha smriti bhramsha buddhi nasha sarvanasha karan tvat||44

At all times, places and under all conditions – reject evil. But in the everyday world of living, it is there constantly ... If we try to avoid company then we can be thoroughly isolated in this world.

How then is one to live, yet, let live? This has been the biggest challenge.We come across this exhortation to avoid evil, all the time. Yet we find ourselves in its presence. We are being cautioned more about the silent persuader, the psychological marauder – the impure mind. And impurities there are many... so what do we do?

In his lectures on the Narada Bhakti Sutra, Gurudev agrees that in the everyday world, this is not possible. Wherever you are you have dussangaha, he says. If all sanga is removed then you are sanga viheena, he says in jest, yet, hinting at the quality of purity that is near impossible to attain in this day and age.

” It is not that you reject everyone or evaluate everyone –“ and stick a label on them, “you are this or that,” says Gurudev.“You could become cynical. And thus lose all faith in mankind.”

But what Gurudev specifically points for us to know is, the need to be alert and aware of “the camaraderie, with the evil mind.” It is this that he refers to as ‘Dussangaha’. Such minds will be present in this world for the world is the place where they can spawn and grow, says Gurudev. Don’t try to run away from [evil minds], but don’t have mental involvement with the stupid ideas of the evil minds. This is key.

Knowing that we will willy nilly find ourselves in choiceless company, Gurudev urges

us to chant Narayana Narayana when the company is unavoidable. Don't get yourself involved he says again and again. Hearing their words is not a risk. But getting involved in it, discussing it, participating in it, is risky.

It then follows that, that is when dussangah assumes the quality of 'company', sanga. Until then it is not company. The quality of sangatvam happens when there is involvement, participation.

This skill to externally perform but internally remain grounded is valuable. Gurudev even suggests we appear politely participating, but within hold Narayana tight and chant His name.

So far, so good. Theory is always appealing to the intellect. But it is the mind that we work with on an everyday basis. The road to the intellect is accessed only through the mind's complicity. So how do we detach from avoidable company?

Gurudev tells us about a nugget from our own life! He describes how a little child comes back from school and prattles about inanities that occurred at school. These inanities assume different hues for different cultures. In India of the 60s and 70s, it used to be about birds and animals – very Pancatantra-like in content. So Gurudev says when this child talks in his excited manner about a crow that came and sat on the window and how his teacher shooed it away and how they all cheered for her and how powerful his teacher is..... 'do you try to focus on what the child is saying? Or do you merely nod in agreement, making small cooing sounds now and then to appear present? Or do you stress over " 'was that a crow or was it a dove? I should have taken notes...!' ?"

Nor are you to lose your patience and show off that you are 'an international political figure' with no time, says Gurudev and shoo the boy away (Gurudev loves to make these characters really larger than life!) In our context of dussangaha it would mean, an arrogance arising from a feeling of superiority over the chattering group in whose company we find ourself.

When our child prattles, just as we perform our duty to the child, lovingly, yet not get involved in the story of the crow, likewise we must handle the world we live in. People are all good, reminds Gurudev. It is the stuff they engage us with that can be toxic and Gurudev's most precise explanation of dussangaha is: Not keeping companionship with the vulgar. Hence we may say, people are not vulgar, their minds are.

He explains - "It is only when you keep companionship with that mind, that its vulgarities can defile the beauty and purity of your mind.... Creating in you those vasanas."

Gurudev says, "When you are thus in companionship with an evil mind and its thoughts, it is then that those vulgar thoughts and ideas react in you, and however great and noble you have been before, psychologically, step by step, you fall until your mind is a complete disaster."

That psychological ladder of fall is enumerated here:

Kama krodha moha smriti bhramsha buddhi naasha sarva naasha karanatvaat .... Dussangaha sarvathaiva tyajyaha...

Dussangaha must be given up, rejected, dropped at all times! And when it is unavoidable, remember how to forget the crow in the story!

114. Relationless Relationship

29-08-2015

All this world is pervaded by Me in My Unmanifest form (aspect); all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them. IX, 4

Swami Chinmayananda describes Chapter 9 as the postgraduate exercise in contemplation. Dualists think of the Supreme Lord as existing far away. Advaitins, however, contemplate on both the transcendent and immanent aspects of the Lord. That Truth at once remains unaffected by the happenings of the jagat, while also sustaining and pervading it with inherent glory.

The above verseof the Gita is one of many found in our shrutito indicatethis “relationless relationship”, as Shri Gurudev used to call it. To explainthe verse, he cites the well-known metaphor of the ocean and its waves.

Each wave rises, exists, and subsides in the ocean. During its lifetime, it clashes with other waves, gains eminence, and noisily, pridefully, announces its grandeur. This, as Gurudev describes it, is the autobiography of the wave. By the time the wave has finished its boasting, however, already it begins to glide down and crash. Then as before, it makes tremendous noise. So the ocean surface always roars.

But in its depths, the ocean dwells in silence. It has no personal desire to create waves. Their individual destinies of birth and death do not affect the ocean. If anything, the waves on the surface are the ocean’s laughter and playful jugglery. Only when pulled by the gravity of the moon and tossed by the winds do its waters surge forth and crest.

"Similarly, the Infinite Consciousness, disturbed by the storms of your desires, appears to be the pluralistic phenomenal world,” Gurudev explains.

Our world is loud with the vanity and cries of the individuals who populate it. Yet just as the oceanpermeates every wave, the Supreme Lord permeatesevery person of this world.“So your corporeal physical gross body itself is nothing but a grossification of that subtle Consciousness.”

This realization, when deep and abiding, frees one of all misery in this world of change. Thus, the Gita refers to it as the Royal Secret.

To contemplate steadily upon this Truth, one requires faith. As Gurudev explains, “Belief reinforced with understanding is called shraddha, faith."One must study the scriptures to gain a clear understanding of the goal and to turn the attention of the mind and intellect toward the immanent and transcendent Reality.

Then, whenever thoughts and experiences rise into your awareness, you remember

that they exist in you but that you do not dwell in them. Identifying in this manner with the Supreme, the seeker rises above all limitations.

For further study into this explanation, refer to disc 27 of Swami Chinmayananda'sGita talks, recorded in 1991.

115. A Confusion called Varna

30-08-2015

We live everyday in an environment that is torn between the meaning of varna, the interpretation of varna and the resultant social evil of this misinterpretation. Varna has been a very difficult word for every Indian, for he is often challenged with, 'How can your Krishna talk about caste and yet seek to be worshipped?'

This is when people fall over their faces trying to give an explanation that Krishna did not. And in doing so, they mix up 'Varna' the word used by Krishna and 'Caste', the word created by people who sought to govern, and suddenly Varna came to be explained away as 'caste' and all ills of the system is blamed upon Krishna.

So Brahmin became a caste, Kshatriya became a caste. And so on.

Wikipedia defines caste as: "Caste is a form of social stratification characterized by endogamy, non-commensality and hereditary occupations."

It then goes on to explain the situation in India as: "Historically, the caste system in India has consisted of thousands of endogamous groups called Jatis or Quoms and Biradaris (among Muslims). The Nepalese caste system resembles the Indian Jāti system with numerous Jāti divisions with the theoretical Varna system superimposed for a rough equivalence."

And without a warning, it brings in the word 'varna', thereby revealing the complete error in using Krishna's word. And over the years (hundreds), it has been very convenient to keep people in labelled boxes and stay with this error.

The most appropriate explanation comes from Gurudev. Gurudev says, 'Translations by our foreign rulers included confused interpretation and this is what came to become our texts.' Gurudev gives Sanskrit his best salute when he says, 'India forgot Sanskrit (also) and people learnt their scriptures in English translations.'

Clearly, this is the point where the baby was thrown out with the bath water. Out went Varna, in came Caste. Gurudev says, 'The English translations came from French; the French translated from German... and the missionary who did this translation (having learnt sanskrit), twisted the meanings of some words.

We didn't know this.

Krishna's original words in the context of Varna goes as follows: "I have created the whole of mankind in four distinct personality colours."

Personality Colours. Varna. The word varna comes several times in our culture to refer to color, complexion. But there followed errors in translation, and we have

chosen to use the misinterpretation. As Gurudev says, “It became caste, and from caste it became casteism and the whole community is being broken down in India.”

But what does Varna really mean? And only Gurudev, ONLY GURUDEV should be allowed to talk about this.

“Everyone is an expression of his vasanas, tendencies. These tendencies fall under 3 types: The noblest, the so-so and the basest; good, bad and indifferent.... The highest type of tendencies are called satvik, the other is called rajasik, and the basest is called tamasic.

Everyone has all three colors, he says. “These three are the fundamental ingredients of a personality. All 3 put together is human personality. Even the highest saint or sage also has rajas and tamas. The lowest and basest criminal also has sattvik tendencies. He loves his wife and children. .... There can be permutations and combinations of these colors: Supremely satvik, extremely satvik – saints sages masters; Rajasik – active and dynamic with sattva – the true leaders of mankind inspired by high ideals, sense of duty and yet he is not satisfied by mere study of scriptures and going away to the jungle. He feels he has a responsibility to see that everybody does keep law and order. Sense of justice. Kshatriyas.

“The traders and men of commerce are as dynamic as the politicians, says Gurudev. They will work 18 hours a day. But the difference is, they are functioning not for the high ideals of satva, but a dash of tamas.”

The last is Tamas, labour class. Gurudev says this segment has this quality of tamas, so that work has to be got out of them. If not watched they can shirk. Indolent, sleepy, dull – these describe their attitude.

This is chaaturvarnyam mayaa srstam – the four-fold classification of human personalities. Gurudev lays this open so wonderfully. Why did we skid and fall into caste, color, race and its ilk and blame Bhagawan’s varna system?

Gurudev says, the same color scheme can be observed in every part of the world, “Are there not brahmins in America [too],” he asks, making reference to ‘Boston Brahmins’!. And when he says, “There are brahmins in America, is it not?” it is the gentlest, most tender urging as if to lead us away from the misconception of varna – no matter how many many years later we hear this. Likewise he points out to passion for commerce in every part of the world, just as there are people with a fire in their belly for righteous dharma in every part of the world. Martin Luther was thus of Kshatriya varna. And these colors of personality are in every country, every nation.

“And how did you make the four types?” asks Gurudev, and he answers in Krishna’s declaration, “guna-karma-vibhaagasah” --- i.e. classifying people according to gunas and their karmas or actions.

And Gurudev says it clearly: it is not by birth that your personality is defined.It is by guna-karma: the quality of vasanas and gunas: satvik, rajasik or tamasik or in what combinations they are;” and karma, the quality of your actions as emanating out of

your tendencies.

What triggers the action, what is the intention behind the action, it is that which links straight to the inner vasanas. The intention. In Gurudev's words, " guna-karma-vibhagasah - at the basis of the tendencies (vasanas) and thoughts and ideals that you keep in your mind and the performance with which you are doing it, it is on the basis of these that the four types have been created."

Hence the vasanas (tendencies), the OET (Objects, emotions and thoughts) entertained, and the PFT behind the action – the essential Perceiver Feeler Thinker.

"I am the author of these," says the Lord and Gurudev explains that That same Lord as Om presides over the vasanas of one and all causing the four colors of personality. "I am the author in them all," declares Krishna.

What this means is that each one is the creator of his actions. A low scrap dealer rose to be the highest hotelier in India – by purushaartha. Businessmen have taken sannyas – through purushaartha. Brahmins have become traders – also purushaartha. The power agent is Narayana. The BMI – whatever be its composition (of gunas and vasanas), can plug into Narayana and behave like a saint or a sinner, says Gurudev. In one of his best analogies, he says, petrol does not want to go anywhere, it is you who want the petrol to help you go to your destination……. You may choose to go to a drug den or a satsang, the petrol takes you there; but the choice is made by, determined by, your mind.

Sannidhya maatre – by My mere presence, every type of vasana gets the ability to express itself through its BMI equipment.

Man may be prompted by his vasanas to do acts that are wrong but Gurudev says man also has the duty to come out of it. To revel in the past and think of oneself as sinner is illogical. That means a tamasic mind can evolve to the rajasik. No human is condemned to remain in a box.

Hence to ascribe people to a segment and condemn them to the definitions of that segment is also illogical. Man belongs to a segment if he fulfils the personality of that segment through his actions.

116. To Be A Leader

31-08-2015

Shri B.D. Garg is an old devotee of Gurudev and is currently Secretary, Chinmaya Mission, Chennai

Bangalore, 1990. I remember that was a talk in the morning for just 15-30 minutes, addressing a group of CEOS. I was one of them.

Gurudev began on a spectacular note when he said, Lord Krishna was leader to Arjuna (student) in the Bhagwad Gita. Lord Krishna inspired Arjuna, said Gurudev, adding, 'Leader is one who inspires others.'

Even a peon in your organization is a leader, said Gurudev, as the head of his family, leading his Home). If the peon says to his son do not smoke or drink and his sons know that their father does both, it will have no effect on his children.

I understood a serious message here: "Practice what you preach." If I wanted my family to do something, I had to be doing it myself.

Gurudev explained the meaning of leader – as being both the head of a family as well as head of business organization. His words affected me. As head of family, I was a leader too, but I used to bring home my tension and created commotion is my family life. I said to myself, drinking was not a solution to tension, worry and stresses of business.

That day I said to myself I will stop drinking alcohol. I was to realize that thiswas good in theory, but most tough to practice. Even so, Gurudev's words remained alive in my heart, never diminishing in intensity; because they were logically explained and convincingly expressed. It is His grace that that fire never quenched till date.

From the above talks of Gurudev, the following vision from the Bhagwad Geeta came home to me:

"The Bhagavad Gita (3.21) says:

यद्यदाचरतिश्रेष्ठस्ततत्तदेवेतरोजनः

सयत्प्रमाणङ्कुरुतेलोकस्तदनुवर्तते ||3.21||

Whatever a great man does, that other men also do (imitate); whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world (people) follows.

Later, Pujya Guruji would explain this verse in his words and give me a new dimension to ponder over. Guruji opened the word 'Great man/Person' and said,

“Every person is potentially a great person because whether he is the head of the family, a businessman, or a nation leader, he is a role model for someone. If the person who is in a position of influence has the vision of the oneness and works keeping the totality in mind, then there will be real success. His performance will be good, his success will be great, and it will extend/ go beyond, his field of work. There will be a total blossoming of his personality. When the whole nation is built up of such persons, then such a nation will flourish, and only then the world will change”.

Guruji brought in a new dimension for me when he brought in the concept of “Goal of life” and “Goal in life.” Gurudev had caused me to change my ways and adopt leadership dharma, butnow I understood that, of the four purushaarthas, (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha), the first three belong to the world (jagat) we live in, where Artha and Kama is guided by Dharma.

Having accomplished the goal in my life, I am now pursuing the Goal of life: Moksha.

Would not have been possible without Gurudev explaining what it means to be a leader.

117. Harih Om

01-09-2015

We have our trademark greeting by which our spiritual address is automatically known: Hari Om.

Is this a greeting only or is it also an invocation to the Lord?

Once (1975) at a private satsang, a devotee had asked Gurudev to expand on the mantra 'Hari Om'.

The explanation that Gurudev gave is verily a mahavakya, for it carries the blueprint for living. Gurudev said, "Om is the same as Hari. Hara is to loot; Hari is the looter; Hence Om is the looter, the state of awareness or consciousness when I reach which, all my experiences of the BMI / OET / PFT are removed. This can be done only when my vasanas are exhausted…"

This is so poignant. Every day we are harassed by the experiences of the body, if not, the mind, if not, challenges to our ideals and values and by the time the day ends we are dead beat.

Gurudev is now telling us that reach the awareness of Hari and allow Him to loot away these pointless experiences.

But reaching Hari is difficult (not impossible), because I have in-built deficiencies, disabilities, called vasanas. All it needs for us to do is, request the Lord to remove these vasana- roadblocks. Urge Him, Please come and loot away these vasanas that I am filled with, which cause me to be derailed all the time, even if my intellect knows to seek You, the mind skids on these vasanas and is ever falling…, ever further away from finding You!

So the remedy is to be rid of the vasanas. Gurudev used the word atonement (likely because he had an audience of Christian origins) whose close equivalent in the Indian system is prayaschitta. On pondering over this, some thoughts occurred. Atonement is at one level, making amends for wrong done; but at another level, it is (according to Christian Science) the experience of mankind's unity with God, whereby the attributes of God are exemplified in man. If we ponder, we will see that what separates man from divinity (if at all), is the presence of vasanas which are the 'sins' in the Indian system. The more we enjoy our vasanas, the more we stay vasana-led. Hence the more we stay in sin. So if drinking is a sin, then that is because one is yielding to the drinking vasana. Ditto for overeating, anger, gossiping….

Atonement is when we reconcile ourselves with God and to do that we need to remove the vasanas. (What separates us from divinity is our temptation and

succumbing to vasanas).

At-One-Ment (with God), says Gurudev – when I am awake to that plane of Consciousness, then all my sins are looted away. Gurudev says, just as the Waker is the looter of the dream and the dreamer's world. In the same way, Oh Lord I know that once I reach there, none of these will be significant. So please loot away my misapprehensions.

Gurudev shifts perspective and says, 'The post is the looter of the ghost'.

Once the post is apprehended, naturally the ghost ceases to be. Likewise, once the waking state is apprehended, the dream ceases to be. Once Divinity is apprehended, the experiences of the BMI cease, the experiencing ceases! Jivanmukta? As long as our BMI is alert (like a transistor to sound waves) to worldly experiences, it will experience. And as long as it experiences, it will remain in the realm of the world.

So it appears that we have 2 choices: reduce the worldly experiencing or increase the divinity apprehension. The latter is easier.

Gurudev says, 'the desert is the looter of the oasis, the mirage waters, which is a delusion. An error of vision. The oasis is a false perception, the reality is the desert.'

This is such a powerful means to understand our perception of the world. For, we in fact know the oasis to be an optical illusion and so we do know that an oasis is delusory.

"So Hari Om, 'Om' the state of consciousness I want to reach, and' I am striving to reach there, Oh Lord, you do a little help by plundering away all these vasanas from me,' explains Gurudev. 'If we only meditate or chant Om OmOm … chances are that we will get into our sleepy mood; the mind may become quiet but there will be no alertness or vigilance. Therefore Harih Om Harih Om Harih Om Harih Om … that Harih between the Om makes us alert and vigilant.'

And then with a slight casualness built into his voice, Gurudev tears up the question chit, and concludes on a lighter note, (which is in fact a very potent note), when he says, "… Hari Om actually is Hurry Home… return Home quickly from where you came…!"

118. Faith – An Essential in Management

02-09-2015

The world of business and commerce where we earn our bread (our artha) is often the source of a lot of learning and honing of our Vedanta.

After a very joyful innings in the Eicher Group, first in Human Resources and Operations and then as the Founder of Eicher Consultancy Services(1991 – 2001), I left this wonderful Institution to start a new journey as an entrepreneur.

The first Board Meeting of this new venture , was held on 8th of May, the birthday of Swami Chinmayananda, our spiritual teacher. We discussed our business model and passed our first board resolution that emphasized the following principle:

* 10% of our Gross profits each year would be given to Chinmaya Mission, the global NGO founded by our spiritual teacher. This would be used to serve the poorest of the poor and to spread the Master's message of spreading "Maximum Happiness to the Maximum People for the Maximum Time".

* Out of the remaining 90%, one third would be shared by all employees as their bonus, one third would be invested back in the growth of the Company and one third would be available to shareholders.

Thanks to the reputation of our work in Eicher and Eicher Consultancy Services, this new enterprise received "angel" funding from our clients who encouraged us to start this venture.

The new company got off to a great start.We were convinced that this was due to the blessings we received by starting the venture on the birthday of our spiritual Master. (No doubt, but things like this also cause us to develop a blind spot. If we truly trust the Master, we should go beyond obvious auspiciousness …)

However, we faced our first major setback in the third year of our operations. We had started working on a major consulting project worth 15 million rupees (a big amount for a start up like us) and two months into the project, the client called off the engagement! This business was critical to us and on its strength, we had gone on to hire several new consultants to augment our resources.

I was leaving for Sri Lanka to meet another client, when my colleagues broke this unexpected news to me. I closed my eyes and invoked the blessings of our spiritual teacher and then these words came from me "Do not worry! The Lord closes one door and will open another!!". I had no idea where this statement came from. My colleagues were taken aback as they had expected me to share their sadness and disappointment. Instead they saw me unperturbed.

The next day, after finishing the work with the Sri Lankan client, I decided to meet a devotee of Chinmaya Mission there. I had a very joyful meeting with him, sharing stories about our experiences with our teacher. As soon as I stepped out of his office, I got a call from an old friend. He said, the Chairman of John Keells, the largest group of Sri Lanka wanted to meet me to offer us a large project!!

When I asked where their office was, I was told it was within a few metres of where I was standing -the office of the Chinmaya Mission devotee!!

Within hours, we were on the way of winning a large Rs. 30 million contract- double the size of the project we had lost!

As I reflected about what had happened, I knew that it was the grace of the Guru and our faith in his teachings.

The world of business may seem to many, the wrong kind of place to invest with spiritual faith as many corporate managers are often embarrassed to admit to their faith or invoke it when in need. The reason for this, I cannot hazard. But my Master, Swami Chinmayananda, has taught me that all work is a yagna and if we have the right intentions and dedicate all that we do to the "higher purpose", have faith in the supreme power that guides us all as we act, yet do not have a sense of "doership", then we will be doing what is right, and doing it with gusto, reaping outcomes that are greatly beneficial for business and man. What is commonly called, 'blessing'.

The following stanzas of Chapter X of the Bhagwad Geeta, are what pervaded my understanding that day as I strived hard to stay in Faith. These are the potent verses that Gurudev has expounded on and which dwell in my heart:

Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate

Iti matva bhajante mam budha bhava-samanvitah (10:8)

I am the Source of All; from Me everything evolves; understanding thus, the "wise" endowed with "loving consciousness" worship Me.

mac-citta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam

kathayantas ca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca (10:9)

With their minds wholly resting in Me, with their senses absorbed in Me, enlightening one another, and ever speaking of Me, they are satisfied and delighted.

tesam satata-yuktanam bhajatam priti-purvakam

dadami buddhi-yogam tam yena mamupayanti te (10:10)

To the ever-steadfast, worshipping Me with love, I give the BUDDHI – YOGA, by which they come to Me.

Pujya Gurudev's commentary beautifully explains the power of the divine glories of the Lord. It is for us to remain anchored in them and trust that if our intention is pure, His glory is simultaneously invoked.

Our teacher always emphasized that there was the one cosmic Force that caused all results and encouraged us to work sincerely by dedicating selflessly all that we did with full faithin the Force.

I can recount many incidents in my life that have time and again reinforced this teaching. Infact many amazing opportunities that my colleagues and I have been given, have "appeared" as a result of testing this faith and may classify for some, as 'miracle'. The rational mind cannot grasp how they suddenly present themselves. The Spiritual mind knows that such are the glories of the Lord "His Vibhooties" (Sanskrit for 'glories').

We were fortunate to have received our Spiritual master's guidance that made us know and accept the glories of the Lord and accept all that came our way as His "offering" without our getting overtly excited or disappointed.

Over time we have realized that deep devotion and Faith is a powerful force that always works □ and'miracles' appear regularly as we celebrate His divine Presence!

From Shri Anil Sachdev, a longstanding devotee of Gurudev

119. Beautiful Field

03-09-2015

Animating My PRAKRITI, I, again and again send forth all this helpless multitude of beings, by the force of nature (PRAKRITI). IX, 4

Continuing his exposition of chapter 9 of the Bhagavad Gita, Swami Chinmayananda discussesthe Absolute Reality in relation to Prakriti. Prakriti explains how the universe appears out of the Eternal Substratum.

Prakriti, directly translated, means nature. According to Vedanta philosophy, it consists of the three gunas: sattva, rajas, and tamas. When those three gunas are in equilibrium, the universe does not express. However, when those three gunasget out of balance, the play of creation begins.

Swami Chinmayananda, in his lecture on this verse at Krishnalaya in 1991, does not go into such detail about Prakriti. Rather, he indicates the unmanifestPrakriti through his characteristic description of the vasanas.

Gurudev explains, “The Lord Narayana is one, but each one of us is behaving differently... according to the vasanas.” He always emphasized thatvasanas are unmanifest desires situated in the causal body. They cannot be perceived directly, however they can be inferred to exist whenever new desires manifest in the mind. Vasanas are seed-like because they exist underneath the surface, before a thought shoots up.

Gurudev compares the Absolute Reality to the earth in which the seeds of all our vasanas are planted. Each seed grows according to its nature. The mango seed must grow into a mango tree. The apple seed must grow into an apple tree. Similarly, some individuals have doctor vasanas, while still others have engineer vasanas. The earth, however, remains a non-doer, even while animating the growth of the seed. Similarly, Gurudev explains, the Absolute Reality animates our desires into this creation, which is none other than a “beautiful field for us to exhaust our own past.”

Swami Chinmayananda tirelessly repeated that vasanas perpetuate the experience of samsara. In order to realize the Absolute Reality in its true state, one must exhaust the desires, so that thought disturbances no longer arise in the mind. Rather than chasing after new experiences in the world outside, then, one settles into a state of sublime composure, meditating on existence-consciousness alone. The world answers some of our desires; others not. As Gurudev said on a separate occasion, during his 1992 talk Planet in Crisis at the United Nations:

“Friends, this mental renaissance must come. A greater awareness must come. We are being pushed towards the search for a higher state of consciousness. Just as when the fetus in the mother's womb is fully developed, does not every muscle in

that loving mother push the child out? The child also wants to come out. If he does not come, a c-section is performed. In the same way, does not Nature from all sides squeeze the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, whether you are a developed nation or an underdeveloping nation? A developed nation or a never developing nation, it does not matter. Is not everyone in the whole world being squeezed? Why? The pain and agony of a new birth. We have to move from materialistic prosperity and from running after objects into a better and larger awareness, a greater state of consciousness."

Gurudev assures us that if the individual changes, nature around that individualwill change by itself. We must change the quality and texture of our thoughts and actions. Then, we will find our way into more conducive environments in which to express thesattvic tendencies.

In his explanation of this Gita verse,Swami Chinmayanandaunderplays the role of prarabdha karma, or destiny, while extoling the virtue of purushartha, or self-effort. When we exert our energies positively through selfless service and other forms of yoga, we can vividly create a new future.

For further study into this explanation, refer to disc 27 of Swami Chinmayananda's Gita talks, recorded in 1991.

120. Attachment: A tragedy of the body

04-09-2015

Dehanyatvaan me janma jara-karsya –la ya dayah….

Since I am other than the body, the tragedies of the body are not mine

We have the biggest difficulty and that is not just the attachment we have for people and things, but worse, the inability, the near impossibility to detach from them. Add to this, inability/impossibility to detach from memories, from beliefs about people, from likes and dislikes.

To bring us to this point, Gurudev takes us step by step towards the realisation that a) I am not the body, mind or intellect b) what we think of as attachments are those experienced by the BMI.

In his atma bodha lectures, Gurudev defines an object in a reverse manner and says that whatever we are conscious of, is an object. Hence not only what we see. To be aware of one's thought, makes that thought an object. To be conscious of pain, makes pain the object. Hence if what we are aware of is an object, then the 'awarer' (a word that Gurudev uses often) is the subject.

And because they are objects, outside of Me, they are subject to change. So we now get that all that is perceived is changing, will change and will keep on changing. As Gurudev says, "I the subject (the Perceiver, the Consciousness, the Subject) am experiencING; everything is being experiencED by me."

The finesse lies in the fine tooth comb Gurudev uses to separate the warp and woof of this minutest concept – How do I separate myself from the things/beings/ideas I think I am attached to. (Of course he has already talked about how the mind identifies with its experiences and ascribes to itself the experience, taking ownership.)

So then having talked about the subject experiencing and what the subject experienced, Gurudev now separates these two as well and says: "The experiencER cannot be the experiencED!" and here he gasps in amazement for us, to drag the mind to this finest understanding. Once again he brings to play the triad which we hear so often in his lectures on meditation but never apply that same triad to the iPhone 6 before us! So Gurudev plays with us, with the triad of 'experiencer, the experienced and (the act of) experiencing' and separates each and shows how none of that is the individual, Me. And as simply, he says: the ExperiencER is the Mind-Intellect equipment. To gain this designation it must have a world of objects – ExperiencED, and thus happens their relationship called, ExperiencING.

Gurudev: "The experiencer cannot be the experienced! And the entire world of

experiences are perishable. They are bud-budavat ksaram (31)– perishable like bubbles. .... Since they are perishable, they are called unreal."

This is composed of the BMI, the various perceivers, thinkers and feelers, and their fields of experiences in the objects, emotions and thoughts. This world made up of the PFT who through his BMI revels in the Objects Emotions and Thoughts, finds that it is ever perishing. Hence is not permanent and hence illusory. Hence they are unreal, as against all that is Real. 737

Here Gurudev explains what Unreal means: (a) they belong to the world of Objects; (b) they are always changing; (c) they are conditioned by Time – hence these experiences cannot be held in place. Made permanent.

Therefore, Reality is something other than the BMI, PFT and OET, says Gurudev. So until this stage we have come to separate the changing from the unchanging. And come to experience aham brahmeti nirmalam.

And this Brahman is not other than me, or away from me - it IS me but me as subject without the basket of objects that I normally identify with: the BMI/PFT/OET.

All these are dry words. If we add the energy of Gurudev's voice and humour, this learning gains life and it enters the system! That is why sravanam is a completely different matter!

The point Gurudev hammers home is, that we are ever sticking to the Body as the Perceiver of Objects, the Mind as the Feeler of Emotions and the Intellect as the Thinker of thoughts. Whereas my real nature is Pure Consciousness.

I need to be attached to this Consciousness Me, the one that helps my equipment work. Instead I am attached to my equipment and the equipment persona (PFT).

It occurs to one, that this is why prayer, japa, worship chanting... is valuable. It cuts the grooves to create attachment for the Consciousness. And it is this Attachment that detaches us from the equipment based experiences and fields of experiences. As only Gurudev said: Attach, detach; Attach, detach..... this is it!

And so we come to attachments.

Only BMI can have attachments. Only the Body says 'My legs'; only Mind says, 'I feel'; only intellect says, 'I know'. And only the BMI enjoys, hurts, weeps, desires.

So now, the consequences of Aham Brahmasmi.

I the Brahman, in that state, I am first of all not the body. The body is an object. Just in case we are not clear, Gurudev says (this is the same as) when I am seeing a buffalo, I am not that buffalo! Likewise we 'have' a body. That body as an object, must be born, must grow, must die.

If we are conscious of a thing, then that is an object other than Me. The body is other than Me just as my car, even though I express as 'my car' is other than me.

“When my dog is vomiting will anybody say, ‘I am vomitting’?” Only Gurudev possessed the art of spiritual startling.

With metaphors like this Gurudev again and again shows us how we identify with our equipment and says, “Yes as a PFT you can get attached, but as Brahman, I cannot have attachment because I am other than the BMI and only the BMI can have attachment.”

The more we practise our sadhana, the more our attachment will be with Pure Consciousess.

Om Sree Chinmaya Sadgurave Namah.

121. Lessons from Vivekacudamani

05-09-2015

(Rudite Emir)

Vivekacudamani was among my favorites as I listened to Gurudev's discourses over the years. I heard him unfold the meaning ofSankara's great work in Napa, California,as well as at many other venues in the United States and in Sidhbari, India.

Gurudev himself was the living scripture as he revealed, in one action after another, the meaning of the four qualifications of a fit student of Vedanta, as expounded in Vivekacudamani Verses 17 through 27, Sankara's famoussadhanacatustaya:

Expounding on Verse 24 of Vivekacudamani, Gurudev discusses titiksa, forbearance. He says:

Titiksa is that faculty of the mind which it maintains when intellectually it is governed by a tempo and a conviction which is complete and self-ordained, divine and noble ... the mind smilingly faces all difficulties and obstacles. This capacity of the mind to accommodate cheerfully all its vicissitudes and patiently ignore any obstacles that might come its way is titiksa.

Gurudev had been revealing the subtle teachings of Vivekacudamani in Napa, California, when on the early morning of the next lecture we found that the lecture hall,in a local high school, turned out to be lockedon that early Saturday morning. The caretakers had not anticipated that we would be attending a lecture at 6 a.m. on a Saturday! When the locked door was discovered, Gurudev, without a moment's hesitation and with a smile on his face, walked to the edge of the curb at the side of the broad driveway, sat down on the cold cement, and motioned us to take seats on the ground in front of him. He then began to teach – and continued for the next one-and-a-half hours as the brisk morning slowly grew warmer.

What words could have convinced us more emphatically of the true meaning of titiksa, the ability to cheerfully withstand all vicissitudes on our path toward the Truth?

The other quality from Sankara's list of qualifications that has remained a potent reminder during all my years on the path is mumuksutva, "the impatient and burning desire to release oneself... from all bondages of egoism" (Verse 27). Gurudev says in his commentary on the verse:

This inner revolution cannot be accomplished as a half-hearted hobby, but it can only be the result of a lifelong dedication and a fulltime endeavor.

Whenever I feel my desire for liberation turning tepid, I remember this verse – and Gurudev's vivid illustrations of its meaning. Among the stories that he related is this: Imagine someone holding your head below water. Every cell in your body, every thought in your mind has only one urge: to be able to spring out of your water-prison and take one breath of life-giving air.

That overpowering desire to take the next breath of air in order to survive reveals the meaning of mumuksutva, he said. It swallows up all other desires. In Gurudev's case that burning desire for liberation had gone one step further: the ardent desire to impart the life-giving message of the Rishis to everyone who was willing to hear. Up to the very end of his life, despite severe health issues, he never spared himself as he imparted the Science of Life, Vedanta, to others. His desire to teach us was, indeed, ardent, overpowering, burning – without compare.

122. That X-factor

06-09-2015

In a talk once Gurudev was explaining the meaning of values, and to do that he used an example. He said, “A piece of iron on the roadside is useless. But heat it up and beat it up, and it becomes a knife of value. …… Your effort in it gives it value!”

That piece of iron by itself has no value, but when we put effort into it, then we get a useful, usable product.

So value is that, adding which something which was otherwise of no use, gains great efficiency.

Gurudev calls the human body, an amalgam of a variety of chemicals - calcium, carbon, phosphorus, water. By themselves they cannot function. They are just matter. Yet all of us are operating, experiencing, moving, communicating and leading a meaningful existence.

That means, to the basic matter, a value has been added to result in efficiency. “What makes a car move?” asks Gurudev. “The car is made of metal, rubber, iron, glass, leather. None have locomotion. Then what then makes a car move?”

And we understand that even if we assemble these material, the resultant construct cannot be used as a car, the way we know it.

This explanation of ‘value’ comes back to help understand ‘life’. In a Vivekachudamani talk, Gurudev explains ‘what is life’, what we now see as that value addition owing to which alone a body moves, works, thinks and so on. Gurudev says, “There must be in the car other than its parts which lends the car the ability to move, which releases its power, the fuel,” … and causes the car to be an aid in transportation.

The Light Bulb - In further trying to explain the essence called life in humans and animals, Gurudev uses the example of a light bulb and says, “The body of the bulb has no light; the cathode has no light, the filament has no light… yet the bulb burns, how?”

”There must be something other than the bulb that is functioning.”

With the bulb, in the bulb, through the bulb, without which the bulb is not a bulb, but a mere assemblage of material. Something is adding value to the glass, cathode, filament so that they come together as a whole to be useful as a light bulb. Without that ‘thing’, the rest are just a random collection of glass, cathode, filament … add that ‘something’ and we have a light bulb.

The BMI : Using this very analogy, Gurudev points us to examine the ability and sentiency in the human body. “… that in you because of which you are so efficient physically, beautiful emotionally, brilliant intellectually… there must be something in you that functions through the B the M and the I.

“That -- cannot be matter,” says Gurudev instantly, just as it is not the cathode in the bulb that causes it to emit light, “for matter is insentient, inert.”

We now begin to see what that value addition is.

Therefore that because of which we are physically efficient etc is owing to that which is other than matter, says Gurudev. This is really the answer, ‘that which is other than matter’. This thing, we call spirit, Lord, Consciousness, Reality, The Truth… Gurudev says call it whatever you want.

In his most eloquent precise style, he puts it thus: “There IS something, an X-factor which expresses through these inert equipment of life and makes it possible for us to experience the physical, psychological and the intellectual world.”

What is that something? Gurudev says call it life, “because when you are alive your BMI is functioning!”

When a person dies, the BMI ceases to function. “When that life is in you, there is the dynamic you,” he says reducing life and death to a sentence (pun not intended).

We are One: Now here comes a great equaliser. The same holds true for plants and animals too. When enlivened by Life, they grow, they photosynthesise, they swing from trees…. And the life that enables their otherwise inert bodies, is also that same LIFE. The life in me and you is the same life in the cactus and the rose bush and the Chihuahua and the earthworm. Life being the same, the variation in behaviours or actions is a function of the equipment. And that equipment is perishable.

When that Life leaves a plant or a human, a rich man or a poor, both are reduced to a heap of biodegradable matter. Yet humans differentiate and discriminate!

123. Being Ganesha

07-09-2015

Gurudev says that the entire Shastra or entire Ganehsa is nothing but the picture of the man of perfection.

This certainly is astounding at first, but Gurudev explains this in a graded manner, addressing all that about Ganesha that we single out as being unusual.

In fact Gurudev says that Ganesha (and all other idols for that matter) “are all beautiful mysticisms, symbolising the One same Reality that lies beyond the BMI.”

Now we watch the steady manner in which Gurudev works out the implications,

At the very beginning, Vinayaka is the son of Shiva and Shiva means auspiciousness. In the commentary to naam 27 and then again naam 600, Shivah, Gurudev explains the naam as: "the One who is eternally pure" or "the One who can never have any contamination of the imperfection of Rajas and Tamas". Sri AdiSankara adds, "the One who is not affected by three Guṇas of Prakṛti (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas)" or "the One who purifies everyone by the very utterance of His name."

Having explained the lineage, Gurudev addresses the one single aspect of Ganesha that we often struggle with: His elephant head. Talking about Ganesha’s elephant head, Gurudev says, “the elephant head is biologically the biggest head available.”

But we now examine th human head. Gurudev says, it is “ordered and regulated by our limited ego and vanity,” but when we begin to make inroads into scriptural understanding, the human head ‘is generally blasted, and you get a bigger head with a better discriminative power.’ Or, what we understand as better discriminative ability with the rise of scriptural sadhana in our life. That would mean, Lord Ganesha has the finest sense of discrimination consequent to His great understanding of the shastras and scriptures.

Lord Ganesha’s trunk, Gurudev says, “It can pluck a huge tree … and can also delicately take out a pin from the ground.” Since the trunk is a part of its head, we include the trunk’s capabilities in those of the head. Now Gurudev makes a stellar statement about discrimination and the intellect. He says, “ The student [at first] came with a little head; when the philosophy was given out, the head blasted, and in its place comes a huge intellect; […] and that intellect has got a discriminative power, which is not only useful in discriminating the various layers of matter in him subjectively, but also it can comprehend the weaknesses and illness that are ailing the world around.”

That is the expanse or might of that huge head, its capacity to comprehend gross worldly matter or a subtle idea of the Shastra – both are equally possible, with the

same intellect.

Then the tusks, one whole, one broken. Again this is mysticism symbolising the One Reality. And the human being needs symbolism to comprehend the nuances of the scriptures. A pair of tusks is dvandva. The single broken tusk implies dvadvateeta – dvandva, the pair, is not in him, because we see one tusk is broken. Hence He does not have the dvandva, He is dvandvateeta. So love-hate; joy-sorrow; likes-dislikes... Ganesha does not manifest these dualities. Says Gurudev, “He knows only love and love alone, he knows no hatred at all. There is no likes and dislikes for him. There is nothing for him to discriminate!

The message is for us to attain to the auspiciousness of Siva and like Ganesha, become the son of Shiva. To become the son of Shiva is to attain the highest accomplishment through sadhana, replace our human head with a head of discrimination, the elephantine head. Hence shed the dvandva, master viveka and vairagya, discrimination and renunciation.

Gurudev explains discrimination as not just ‘knowledge of discriminating right from wrong’ but adds the living of discrimination, “the courage and heroism to reject the wrong, and such a man, when he lives in the world, he alone knows how to enjoy the world. Insult you give, he enjoys; adoration you give, he enjoys. Why? Dvandvateeta he has become and therefore he is eternal bliss and enjoyment!”

124. WHY KRISHNA

08-09-2015

Often we hear spirited allegations that Krishna was unfair, He cheated the Kauravas, that He did many sly acts, that He was not exactly pure as driven snow, which we expect of a God.

Mostly we tend to expect God to be fair and just. And we have a definition carved in our mind of what is fairness and justice, so that it says, even if the opponent is corrupt, my means to defeat him has to be clean and above board. While the Lord as Rama nearly got 10 on 10, He lost points when He sent off His wife to the forest when a washerman griped.

Gurudev makes a strong point about the composition of an avatar and in a stray sentence he made, the role of the avatar comes through clearly.

The concept of avatar appears in the 3rd chapter of Kenopanishad and Gurudev points us to this than to the Gita to understand the meaning of this much misunderstood word. “In the heavens when the gods became arrogantly egoistic, and forgot the grace of the Supreme, in order to shock them and make them realise their mistake, the Lord took the adorable form of a yaksha and presented himself in the sky.”

It was this that shocked the gods and they came to humbly pray to Him.

Pointing to the arrogance of the gods, Gurudev (in his talk on Lord Krishna and His Avatar, Chinmaya Channel) says this is the greatest danger facing the spiritual seeker too and it was to destroy this arrogant ego that – “yada yada hi dharmasyaglani… when the world is not sufficiently organised for good people to grow, I shall come again and again.”

This is interesting. Not just the setting right of the wrong-doer but included in that is the restoration of the environment for the evolution of good people.

But to stay with the ‘vinaashaaya ca dushkritam’. So when the humans get arrogant, then the Lord assumes avatar and comes on earth. He does this to aid our evolution, says Gurudev, adding, “..and He will come in a form that we as humans will understand.” To drive this home he says, “Soon after the pralaya when only fish were inhabiting, then the Lord appeared as a fish – matsyaavatara.” And so on. In other talks Gurudev has also said that the form He takes will be commensurate with the task to be performed (in the process of dharmasthaapana). So we have seen that when the devas needed to churn the milky ocean, the Mount Mandara which was identified to be the churning stick, while sturdy, began to sink, so they needed a stronger base to hold up the mountain and the Lord then came as a turtle and carried the mountain on His back. Thus Kurma avatar.

Animal forms we are able to discount. But when the Lord appears as a human we audit His performance and demand ethical conduct!

Gurudev implies that as time progresses in every age, the avatar is commensurate with the times. And it is here that he slips in the sandhi of 'avatar' – "avatarita, falls from its all-pervading blissful beautiful nature to assume a finite form and to be the conveyor or guide to correct our mistakes."

It is clear now that the objective is to correct our mistakes, restore dharma. And in the process of 'avatarita', falling, everything is falling. If He can choose to take a finite form, then it stands to reason that He will also assume the imperfections of the finite form. [In the varaha avatar there is a story that is narrated (source unknown, heard in childhood) of how the Lord after saving the earth, came out and fell on a heap of dirt, exhausted. And Sage Narada saw Him thus and exclaimed, 'Oh Lord you were meant to only act as a boar, not behave like one!' Thus we see that with the form, He also assumed the qualities of the form.]

Gurudev talks about what leads to a fall in the ethical quotient in an era. During the Mahabharata time, the population had increased and when that happens, moral and ethical values deplete, he says. Because, with the fight for survival, competition increases. Man's approach becomes short term, he fights for the day, lives for the day; anxiety to survive results in ethics being compromised.

In such a time the matsya, kurmaavataras are inadequate, even not commensurate. Even Vaman will not work, says Gurudev.

The ability of a Bali Maharaj to put his head down and offer it to the Lord to place His foot (and claim the third pace of land) is not possible in today's times. (The matsyaKurma avatars were in Satya yuga. Vamavatar was in Treta when virtue had begun to decline so that one quarter was sin.)

So during the Mahabharata time which was at the far end of the Dwaparayuga (one half virtue, one half sin) the call was for skill to match the times. That would include cunning. The Pandavas had some respect for culture; Gurudev says they were only relatively good compared to the Kauravas who were materialistic, valueless.

"In such a situation the 2 values clash. In such a time a Buddha like love for peace will fail," says Gurudev. "At that time a diplomat, a mighty mysterious man of inner perfection and glory, has to come. ..... And the answer to that wretched age was Lord Krishna."

Point here us this: the avatara is designed to suit the times. Krishna was the answer to the Dwapara Yuga.

Now in Kali Yuga when virtue is just a quarter (and three quarters is sin), wonder what Gurudev would recommend in the avatar for us.

125. The Turning Point

09-09-2015

Sent by Somesh Bhargava

I was only eighteen and half when I joined the Chinmaya Mission in Hong Kong. At that time I had no clue who Swami Chinmayananda is or Sri AdiSankara.

Today they are such a core part of my living; then, I would not have imagined this would happen.

Learning started for me with Bhaja Govindam, a precious jewel of scripture from Sri AdiSankara.

In Gurudev's words this ancient book is also called "Mohmudgara" means the text that will destroy all delusion in a spiritual seeker. And exactly this is what happen to me. According to Gurudev,

the children of Great Rishis would chant this melodious Sloka from their early childhood and by the time they become aware of the philosophy of its words, they are already devoting their life to a more purposeful life of self-control and self-improvement.

Gurudev explained the concepts so clearly that the meanings were so compelling. Highlighting some key ones:

- The term Bhaja Govindam is repeated three times, the first - to seek God, the second time - love and remember the Lord and then finally -- 'come to identify yourself with the One Reality as yourself'. Also Sri Sankara with a loving condemnation says, 'Oh foolish mind do it forcefully if you have to.'

- When the appointed time of death comes, none of our secular knowledge or achievements will save us. We must prepare ourselves with the knowledge of the scriptures today, while we are able and alive, so that we can realize...

- Gurudev pointed out this whole universe is the One Being; respect it love it worship it. This changed my perception completely. I began to move away from the differences in humans such as: rich-poor; powerful- not powerful...old-young.

One world:- how simply the concept is made clear to us that this universe that seems to be limitless formation of objects and planets is actually an expression of the One Reality so it is all inter connected and is a single Being only! This concept

when visualized with full awareness brings a flood of love for the universe....

- Self shining in every one:-Therefore as Gurudev explained, my own self as “Sat-Cit-Anand" shines through the whole world of object emotions and thoughts. It began to be easy to be accepting of everything.

Theory of Karma: Gurudev explained most simply that reward and punishment arises out of our actions and not through any God randomly doling out punishment. That clarified, I began to see the whole universe as abiding under this divine law. Hence good actions, it became clear, benefitted the Whole.

BhajaGovindam has enlarged my vision of life. Until I heard the talks, I was only concerned about my goals in this life, but this poem beautifully explained the very "goal of life," the very purpose of human birth. There was a huge shift in my perception. .

The number of times I have heard the talks! For every stage of my life it reminded me what I needed to do and what I was likely to be doing! As youth,(I was just eighteen and a half when I heard the BhajaGovindam talks) we have only selfish desires for sense gratification; these will result in sorrow and pain only leaving a fatigue and exhausted sick body to become burden on society.

Gurudev opened my eyes at the right age (that I was impacted is itself grace). I changed the course of my inner ambitions, for I was shaken well for transformation within.

So far I was living an ordinary life of ignorance struggling to prove myself as a good human being. I thought if I am good to others and be reasonable in business and spare time for social cause is good enough for a healthy life. But Gurudev with his mystic talks blew my idea of ‘a healthy life’ and lovingly embraced me in his circle of compassion to visualize the purpose of human life and make sincere efforts to achieve it. And he also made me believe that it is achievable right here and now.

That the Mission was set up right next to where I lived, is only His Grace. If not I could have had difficulty reaching the center for the talks!

I came to see that ignorance about ourselves is the root cause of all suffering and insecurities in our life and the knowledge of "the Self" is a direct means to end all of it at once and forever. In order to end the play of maya we must train our mind in self control in order to achieve a peaceful atmosphere within, from where we shoot out from the clutches of Maya.

And the starting point for such transformation, Gurudev said, is to bring ourselves available to SATSANG as much as possible.
Only then we develop dispassion towards our desires. Desire for self- inquiry was planted in me so hard by the Mission that I become part of regular activity at the Mission Center. That ensured satsang...

The man of perfection, said Gurudev, is a "contented individual". He has no desires, his path is above good and bad, he is beyond selfish desires, he has melted into the one Reality and has the perfect sense of oneness with universe. He lives life with bare minimum and spreads happiness to whoever comes in contactwith him. I made this my goal.

I learnt from Gurudev that --

• All wealth, accomplishment, power are mere toys to be used sensibly on the path to Absolute Knowledge in this life. They are temporary and short term only. Enjoy them but don't be attached to them. By right teachings Life becomes a sport to enjoy the play regardless of winning or losing.

Swami Tejomayananda ji gave a beautiful example how we must treat wealth. He said, imagine we are attending a lecture.We are sitting on the lawns, waiting for the program to end and we start plucking some grass blades and collecting them just to pass the time.

When the talks end, and we are leaving that place, do we have any attachment for those blades of grass? We just leave it at once, without any thought as to who is going to own it now, should I transfer it in someone's name or should I donate it to some religious organization. In just the same way we should treat wealth.As long as we are alive, just to pass our time let us collect wealth without attachment; at the time of departure let us have same mindset that all these belongings have zero value to me
.

• Spiritual life is a fundamental solution to all our suffering; if adopted early in life with the right perspective, it can give us permanent healing from the bonds of ignorance.

• "Hasten slowly" was the slogan given to spiritual SADHANA □ the urgency to practice spiritualityis underscored, but practice it slowly, gently. Daily japa, reading scriptures, keeping company of the wise and learned, or reading/listening to their discourses and bhajans, giving to the needy and serving – all these purifies our mind. Should be performed for greater good not for selfish purpose. This will also purify our heart.

• One must find the shelter of a teacher and live under his guidance. This has been confirmed by many who began as students, became free of ignorance, and then became teachers to guide others. The assurance of scripture is that there is no room for doubt that if you practice all of this you will find God himself resting in your own heart.

To find a Guru and come under the shade of his teachings is in itself the highest blessing that will enable the vision that -- "Narayana alone is in the form of universe."

Hari Om!!

126. Best Leaders the Best Followers

10-09-2015

As I reflect about my life and ask questions such as:When was I and the teams I have worked with, at our joyful best?What happened then, who were involved, when did it happen, how was the best enabled and why did we achieve excellence?

When asked with the "ears of a child" and the genuine joy of discovery',these questions bring out the following instances (I have chosen a few out of many such moments which we have been blessed to experience):

-Being a part of perhaps the first HRD team of India in Tata Motors, then called Telco (Pune 1975-1978)

-The co-creation of the HR function and people focus at Eicher (1978-1982)

-The founding and the initial work of Eicher Consultancy Services (1991-1995)

-The birth of Grow Talent Company and its unique offerings (2001-2005)

The co-creation and impact of School of Inspired Leadership (2008 -2011).

On pondering over these five phases, I search for what was common.

At Telco Pune, we had a dream of building the finest auto plant of India that would create new standards of 'Excellence'.

At Eicher- the tractor & automanufacturer, we had the vision of creating an organisation that would uphold the highest standard of ethics and serve the community in ways that would make our world better.

In Eicher Consultancy Services,we were moved to serve the cause of “India's economic development without spiritual impoverishment".

In Grow Talent, we had the focus on "Enabling people and organisations to realise their full potential".

And in SOIL, we are inspired by our purpose of "building leaders with character,competence and enthusiasm".

In each of the cases, we were inspired by the ‘causes’ that brought out the best in each one of us.

This is because we bought the mission and attempted to become the best "followers"of our vision and values.In the process, leadership happened to us!

The attitude was born out of many years of being with Gurudev's teachings and allowing it to work its way through my system. Gurudev's teachings are not magic if they do not sink deep into one. Values, like any sapling, takes a lot to drop roots. In the meanwhile it will be lashed by the breeze and challenged.

This is what Pujya Gurudev always told us, "The world's best leaders are the best followers" and an "altar in life alters your life."He always told us that a vision must be so lofty that our entire life is dedicated to pursuing it. It should not beeasily achievable because life will lose meaning if we feel we had already completed our work! He told us, "Enjoy the journey ---the process of pursuing your ideals will draw the best out of you."

Gurudev explained to us that once we understood our true nature and realized that the divinity within each one of us was the same as the Universal Consciousness, we would be free from the limitations of equipment of the body, mind and intellect. The ego binds us to these three layers of our existence and produces fears and anxieties.(It is unusual how we all get from the same words, what we need for our stage of life!)

If we developed a vision that was free of ego centric desires and chose values that enabled us to serve and all our work was done with the spirit of making our world better, we would discover the path of true fulfilment and happiness.

This knowledge is the richest source of wisdom as it awakens us to the infinite potential within us and enables us to manifest/express that potential in our communities and work places.

When leaders follow this way, they create the multiplier effect and countless others (following them either directly as managers or indirectly as consumers, vendors, families of managers, competitors) begin to choose the same path of greater good.

'Looking back' happens when you have walked a long distance. And on looking back, I examine those five stellar phases that brought us the greatest joy, a joy that we do not wish to change in anyway. I search for the commonality in them and I see play out Gurudev's teachings – specifically, the following two shlokas of the Bhagwad Geeta as he explained them:

Yad yad acarati sresthas tat tad evetaro janah

Sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate (3:21)

Whichever and however a great personality conducts himself common men do also; whatever he accepts as authority that and that alone certainly all the world will follow.

Says Gurudev in his commentary, "TO GENERATE AN ALL-OUT ENTHUSIASM IN THE ART OF LIVING, WHICH EACH STUDENT HAS TO BRING ABOUT IN HIS OWN LIFE, THE ART OF SELF-PERFECTION IS PRAISED IN THE FOLLOWING":

Raja vidya raja guhyam pavitram idam uttamam

Pratyaksavagamam dharyam su-sukham kartum avyayam (9:2)

Royal Science, Royal Secret, the supreme purifier is this, realisable by direct intuitive knowledge, according to the DHARMA, very easy to perform, imperishable.

We were blessed to receive the teachings of the Geeta from a great master and realized saint and this enabled us to bring His wisdom in the different organizations in which we served.

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, a longstanding devotee of Gurudev

127. Tommy… Tommy… Who’s that?

11-09-2015

Somewhere in the middle of the last century, in North India, there was a very rich queen who poured all her love upon her pet dog. A great artist of the North was commissioned to paint her portrait. The painter carefully finished it as a masterpiece and on an appointed day the queen visited the painter's studio to have a look at the piece. The great artist was at the hour of his success. Everybody in the audience appreciated the work. The queen approached the canvas and gazing at the picture called out, “Tommy, Tommy, who is that?” to her pet dog. The dog gazed at the canvas.



The smell of the paint was not very attractive and therefore it walked away. The old queen was angry and immediately turned her face away and walked out of the studio-hall. Though the artist was broken, he had the mental courage to request her royal permission, to be allowed to bring the picture retouched, the following day to the palace. The following day, the painter took the canvas to the palace. The queen reached with her dog at her heels, and the moment the dog reached the canvas, it jumped forward and started licking the face of the picture. The queen was happy and the painter was rewarded amply.

After a couple of days, the Minister who was very curious wanted to know what was the charm that the artist did on the canvas to attract the dog with such a mad frenzy of devotion and evident love. The artist said, “Dogs can never understand art. Therefore, I smeared the face of the painted picture with a piece of fish”.

The Infinite Lord is too difficult to comprehend for our gross mind. The Infinite Itself out of compassion, takes on an enchanting form with enticing qualities. Thus, our mind gets absorbed in the Lord.

The great rishis of the past knew that the Formless Infinite is too difficult for an average mind to focus itself upon and, therefore, they gave a coating of sensuality around it so that the mind gets evidently attracted towards the Great Divine Principle. To recognize one's beloved Lord of the Heart in all names and forms of the world is the easiest method of making the mind fix all its attention upon the Truth. Let the mind wander during the meditation. Stop despairing. Where it wanders, there also recognize the Lord's manifestations.

***

(A famous story narrated by Swami Chinmayananda several times during his discourses)- Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry

128. Gurudev From Far Beyond

12-09-2015

Acharya Priya Arunachalam, from 15th batch Vedanta course, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai. Now at Chinmaya Sarveshvara ashram serving the rural communities at Thamaraipakkam, Chennai.

What is sarvAtmabhAva or universal oneness? How does it feel? This was difficult to even imagine for me and far beyond even an intellectual understanding or appreciation until I heard Gurudev's talk on Art of man-making as he explains Chapter 6 verses 29 – 32.

When one lifts oneself in meditation above the BMI equipment and realizes the Self in one is the Self in all, at once dawns the vision of one, single Self. When there is no mind there is no world, as in sleep. In Samadhi too, there is no mind and consequently no world but unlike sleep, here, there is an awareness of the one Self and the direct experience of infinite bliss as there is no other. Now, when the mind comes back to waking state from Samadhi, one views the world as an integral part of oneself and as nothing but one's own projection.

My toe, hair, finger, eye are all me and make one single being, Me. Pain to any one part is felt by me and joy to any one part gives me joy. 'I' ness is spread all over the body equally although the toe is not the finger which is not the eye or the tongue. Each part is different in shape, function and form yet there is a universal harmony throughout. When the teeth bite the tongue accidentally, the tongue does not command the master to render justice by breaking the teeth. When the finger pokes the eye by mistake, the eye forgives instantaneously and the finger again rushes to wipe the tears. But if it were the fingers of another person then of course there is immediate hatred, anger and revenge.

Similarly to a man of realization the entire universe is his extension. All are his own being, their joys and sorrows are his own. He recognizes the universe as his projection. Hence naturally he has highest compassion for others. This is the zenith of meditation, acme of evolution and such a man is a god man on earth.

Is there God, a creator for this world? If so where is He and what is He? These questions that remained hurled up in my bosom cleared all at once as I heard Gurudev explain in simple yet scientific manner the 3 laws of causation.

Law 1: There can be no effect without a cause.

Law 2: All effects are nothing but cause in different forms.

Law 3: If from the effect, cause is removed nothing remains.

For example, let us take the waves in water. There can be no waves without water. All waves are nothing but water in different forms. Hence water is one but waves are many. If from the wave, water is removed nothing remains.

Similarly, there can be no creation (world) without the creator (God). All creations are God in different forms. Finally, the world cannot exist without God. In fact, all the time cause alone remains. God alone is and He alone verily manifests as this multifaceted universe.

Who is Lord Ganesha? Why an elephant face?so was I confused. Luckily for me, who could explain the mysticism and the symbolism so well as Gurudev?

Ganesha's big head represents wisdom. His fan like ears mean that we should do a lot of shravanam followed by mananam as represented by His big head. His tiny, sharp eyes mean ekagrata, utter single pointed focus. Single tusk denotes that we must go beyond pairs of opposites. The long trunk with which the elephant can pick a single blade of grass or uproot a tree indicates a subtle discriminating intellect.

'Lucky are those who could do pAadasevA for Gurudev. Am so unlucky', thought I. Until Gurudev clarified, serving the lotus feet of Guru does not mean massaging His physical feet all the time. True 'pAdasevanam' is to follow the teachings of the Guru and walk His path, serve His mission and fulfill His vision.

129. Inspired Action

13-09-2015

Sri Gurudev says action is the signature of life.

Gurudev humorously says when there is no activity in you others around you will become active!

Equally therefore quality of our life depends upon the quality of our actions. And some of that quality also arises from our attitude to action.

We shall see a few tips from Gurudev.

First we shall see what happens when actions are performed with ego. Gurudev says, “When we analyse closely the stuff of which the ego is made, we can easily find that it is a bundle of MEMORIES OF THE PAST AND HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE. The dead moments that are no more, constitute the past. The future is unborn and does not yet belong to us. To live in the ego, therefore, is to live either in the burial grounds of dead moments, or in the womb of time where the unborn future now rests." 2- 48 BG (The Holy Gita, Commentary by Swami Chinmayananda, Nov. 2002 edition, pg 124)

The solution Gurudev gives in a pithy sentence in the commentary on the Isavasya Upanishad:

"Depersonalisation is secret of inspiration." And then soon he elaborates with: “The secret of all-enduring work lies in this depersonalisation of the worker from his work..... the scripture is advocating every man of energy and activity to work tirelessly in the world in a continuous and unbroken mood of inspiration.”

In another reference to inspired action, in Chapter 2 of the Gita this time, in verse 38, Gurudev says:

“It is very well-known that in all activities inspired work gathers to itself a texture of divine perfection which cannot be imitated or oft-repeated. [....] Thus Da Vinci could not repeat for a second time and copy on another piece of canvas the enigmatic smile of his Mona Lisa; [...] Beethoven could never again beat out of his faithful piano a second Moonlight Sonata; Lord Krishna himself, after the war, when requested by Arjuna to repeat the Geeta, admitted his inability to do so!!” [The Holy Geeta Commentary by Swami Chinmayananda, Nov. 2002 edition, pg 104]

Gurudev then goes on to add, “..... inspired living is the real godly destiny of man, when he lives in perfect unison with the Self within him.

“A balanced life --wherein we live as unaffected witness of even our own mind

intellect, is the realm of self–forgetfulness, where, instead of becoming inefficient, our profession gathers the scintillating glow of a new dawn....”

Another lovely hint Sri Gurudev gives is --‘Love visualised is action.’

Gurudev also said when one empties himself and becomes a flute in His hand there will emanate Divine, enchanting, irresistible, music.

Finally we get this: To be rid of the ego, of selfish action, to depersonalise action, submit oneself as His instrument, is to be a true flute in His hand, to thus create most divine music.

Sent by Shri Hemachandrudu (Hemu ji), Chennai

130. Genius is Made

14-09-2015

The same am I to all beings; to Me there is none hateful nor dear; but those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me and I am also in them. IX.29

Swami Chinmayananda explains that many seekers, having understood, hesitate to fully exert themselves along the spiritual path because “they have got an excuse, or a vague feeling, that even though you may practice spirituality, without His grace, how can I succeed?”Seekers such as these believe God to be partial,as if He blesses people unequally. The above verse answersthese doubts.

In his commentary on this verse, Gurudev explains: “If from God the world has come out, the world must be God himself in another form."The Lord is "in the heart of all, equally present." Inequalities observed between the lives of two people are not due to some biased distribution of blessings. Our individual setbacks/shortcomings and advantages are due to the texture and quality of our thoughts and karmas.

Those who cultivate pure love for the Lord, enjoy peace and bliss astheir very nature. Gurudev further explains: “By adjusting your mind and turning and disciplining it, you take out of yourself all the potentialities that are lying sleepy in you, because, after all, every one of us is that Divine.” Each one us, then, have unknown abilities lying dormant in us, waiting for us to discover them. The philosophy and techniques of the Bhagavad Gita, when practiced diligently, have the ability to completely rehabilitate a person’s perspective and inner repose. The promise of the text is to make a person as valiant as Arjuna was on the battlefield, perhaps even to experience the glory of Shri Krishna himself. “In short, genius is made in India. Genius is born in the Western world.”

For some, the spiritual path may be long, however, commenting on the subsequent shlokas,Gurudev assures us that once a person fully devotes himself to the Lord and the realization of this great Truth, that person should be considered as reformed and righteous. Hecompares this to the traveler who has already purchased a ticket and entered the plane. In a sense, that person is already at one with the destination. Why? Because the mind naturally flows toward that which it loves. Rather than requiring an effort to fix the mind on that object of love, it becomes an effort to pull the mind away!

A literal reading of the shloka under discussion seems to contradict an earlier shloka from this same chapter, in which Sri Krishna states: “All this world is pervaded by Me in My Unmanifested form (aspect); all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them.”[IX:4] However, Swami Chinmayananda resolves this contradiction by explaining that shloka 4 instructs spiritual aspirants who are identified with the lower fields of consciousness, whereas shloka 29 refers to the spiritual aspirant who

has awakened to the Highest State.

As Gurudev elucidates, put otherwise, in this shlokathe Lord seems to say: “The dreamer and the waker have become one.... At that time, that individuality who was till now seeking Me, he has merged into Me, and I and he have become one. He is in me, and I am in him. You cannot separate. It is a new dimension of Consciousness.”

For further study into this explanation, refer to disc 29 of Swami Chinmayananda’s Gita talks,

recorded in 1991.

131. Be like a round-bottomed doll

15-09-2015

A devotee had recently lost her husband. During satsang with Gurudev, she said, “What is the use, Swamiji? For so many years I have studied Vedanta at your feet, but at this time of personal loss, I find myself sad and depressed.”



Swamiji patted her gently and said, “You are not made of wood or stone. You have lost your life partner. It is natural for you to grieve.” Then a little firmly he said, “But don’t get drowned in your grief. Let your life come back to normal as soon as possible. Remember – jatasya hi dhruvomrtyuh. It is certain that what is born, must die. Don’t become an emotional burden for your family and friends. Be likethe round-bottomed doll – each time it is slapped this way and that, it rocks. But it doesn’t keel over. It finds its equilibrium soon enough. Then it becomes still. Learn the art of finding your equilibrium.”

***

Sent by Arun Gopalakrishnan, Chinmaya Mission Puducherry (old: Pondicherry)

132. Churning

16-09-2015

Sent by Rudite Emir

“Making the ego the ‘lower arani’ and OM the ‘upper arani’, by repeated churning through the practice of the Path of Knowledge, jnanaabhyasa, a wise man burns up all the cords of his bondage.” (Kaivalyopanisad 11)

Gurudev explained how during the Vedic yajna ritual, fire was invoked by rubbing together pieces of wood: A wooden rod is churned between two wooden blocks (the upper and lower arani), until the resulting friction creates a spark of fire. A piece of cotton placed next to it catches fire, and, properly tended, the small spark grows into the flames glowing in the kund, the yajna trough.



Producing agni (fire) for yajna by churning with arani at a Vedic Village in Kerala

Using this Kaivalyopanisad verse, Gurudev explained to us the workings of the mind as we step onto the spiritual path.

As inexperienced seekers, we may be under the illusion that as soon as we step onto the path toward the Truth, we will be bathed in love and light. This verse, and Gurudev’s explanation of it,tell a different story. As we progress on the spiritual path, we may experience moments of pristine clarity and unparalleled joy, but the churning between the lower and the Higher is bound to return. “The tendencies and impressions left behind by the marching thoughts and actions upon the fields of the intellect together constitute maya, or ignorance,” Gurudev explained. These tendencies will continue to emerge in the form or desires that want to be satisfied.

And when we begin to feel the vast gulf between where we are today and our ultimate Goal, we may despair. Our lower earthbound tendencies will continue to haunt us as we feel the painful churning between our material nature and the Divine. We may intellectually understand our true nature as being free of material bondage; however, as long as we still cling to aspects of that bondage, the churning will continue.

However, when the lower ego-bound self is connected to the “glowing nature of the Higher Self, through contemplation and steady meditation,” the seeker will, in time, lose identification with the layers of matter and find the essential Divinity within. Meditating on the infinite Brahman, symbolized by Pranava, Om, is “the method of lifting ourselves slowly from the egocentric misconceptions of our life into the true nature of the Reality,” said Gurudev.

133. So, You Made Them…

17-09-2015

Gurudev came out from his afternoon nap in the best of spirits, with a mischievous grin, watching me as I fussed over arranging the little pastries and stirring his tea.

“What’s this?” he asked as he peered interestedly at the snacks.

“Spinach triangles, Swamiji. It’s a Greek recipe,” I replied, heart in my mouth.

He ate one.

“Mmmhhh” he said. He ate another and another.

“Not bad! .. Delicious! You made these?” My heart was full.

“Yes Swamiji.”



He l o o k e d a t me intently,

“What’s in there?”

I thought he must have been concerned about eggs as he was a strict vegetarian. I answered confidently.

“Green pastry, Swamiji, ricotta cheese, spinach, and herbs.”

“So you made them?” he said.

By this time, I was getting a little disconcerted by his questioning.

“Yes Swamiji!”

“You made that pastry?”

“Oh no, Swamiji, I bought that readymade.”

“Hmm. You made that cheese?”

“No Swamiji, I bought the cheese.”

“The spinach?”

“I got it at the market, Swamiji.”

“So you made them?”

He looked at me with that penetrating, loving, teasing gaze, stripping away all the misconceptions of that enemy, the ego, that perpetually appropriates the mystery of creation for its own glory.

“They’re very good,” he said, with a twinkle.

***

(‘Reminiscences’ by Chris Grimmer published in Tapovan Prasad, May 2007)

Sent with love by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry

134. KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

18-09-2015

I am fortunate to have been able to listen to several of Swami Chinmayanandaji's talks including the ones he used to give for teenagers. During one such talk, he

narrated a small story to bring forth the subtle difference between 'Knowledge' and 'Wisdom'. It goes like this:

Once upon a time, there was a king. In his court, he had an astrologer. The astrologer was very knowledgeable and efficient and had been serving the king's father when the present king was a boy, and was able to foretell things that were going to happen, well in advance, so that the king could take appropriate steps to ward off the ill effects of such events. People in his kingdom were very happy.

The astrologer was growing old and he wanted to retire from work. When the astrologer conveyed his wish to the king, the king responded:

“I understand your condition, and would certainly like you to rest from the arduous work. But, please select another person who can hold your position. If he satisfies

you, he is sure to be good – though perhaps not as good as you have been.”



Announcements were made in the public places about the vacancy of the post of 'Astrologer' in the king's court. Three months, the astrologer tested and interviewed several people but he was not satisfied with anyone to be his successor. The astrologer was tired. He went to the king and remarked:

“Your Highness, if you don't mind, I wish to say something. I have a son, whom I have taught all that I know, and perhaps he could succeed me in this court.”

The king was quite open-minded. So he said, “Never mind, bring him over. Since he

is your son, I will test him. And if he passes, he can certainly be considered for the post."

The astrologer brought his son to the court after a week and presented him before the king. The king asked the boy, "So, you are the astrologer's son?" "Yes, your

Majesty," said the boy.

"Well," said the king, and casually put both his hands behind his back and addressed the boy, "Here is your test. Tell me what I have in my hand."

The boy set about making several calculations using his fingers and almanac and so forth for several minutes and, after about 20 minutes of intense calculations, said, "A grinding stone." The entire court was stunned for a few moments, unable to understand the answer, and then, along with the king, burst out roaring with laughter.

A few words of explanation would be appropriate at this point. In the olden days, before the advent of the electric mixer grinder, the grinding stone was used in households to grind wheat, grams, rice and lentils etc. It consisted of two flat circular stones – one placed over the other. The lower one had a central metal pivot and the upper one a hole through which the pivot would pass.

There would be plenty of space between the metal pivot and the side of the central hole on the top stone. In this, the item to be ground would be placed. Using the metal or wooden rod at the edge of the upper stone as a handle, the top stone would be rotated. Thus the grain would slowly go between the two stones and be ground, move towards the edge and fall out. More grain would be continuously put into the central hole till the entire grinding was done.

When the entire court laughed, the astrologer was embarrassed. The king silenced the court and then asked the boy, "Are you sure of your answer?"



The boy said, "Yes, Your Majesty." The king cast an enquiring look at the astrologer, with a frown on his forehead, but said nothing out of respect for him.

The astrologer explained: "Your Majesty, my son's calculations, I must admit, are

perfect to the fifth decimal place. The calculations point out two things. Firstly, that the object in your hand is made of stone and metal.

Secondly, that the value of the stone is many times more than that of the metal.

“If I had answered, I would have considered what, as a king, you are likely to have in your hand, and would have said 'a diamond ring'. The ring has a stone, that is diamond, and metal, that is gold, and the value of the stone (diamond) is many times more than that of the metal (gold).”

At this the entire court fell silent, and the king smiled appreciatively at the boy. He then turned to the astrologer and said, “I think you can appoint your son, since he has the necessary knowledge, but you will need to guide him for sometime till he gains the most needed wisdom.”

The astrologer and his son had the same knowledge. But the astrologer was wise. It was this wisdom that made him apply his knowledge suitably and come out with the most appropriate answer. And this wisdom comes through the application of the knowledge over the years, and is generally referred to as 'experience'.

***

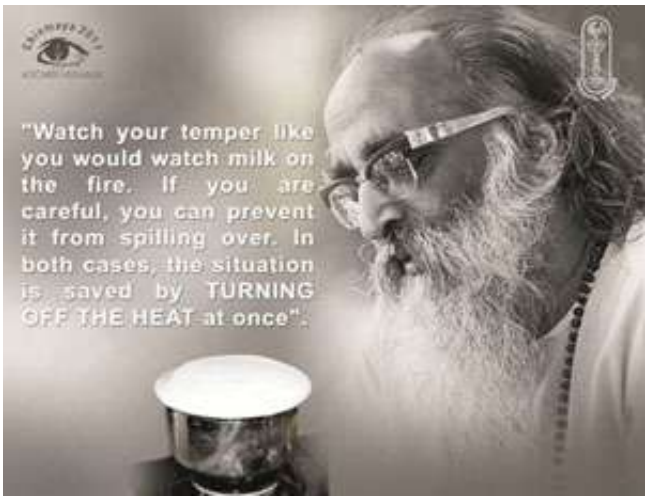
(Source: Tapovan Prasad Old issues)

Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry.

135. TURNING OFF

19-09-2015

In a little town Beawar in Rajasthan during December 1977, Pujya Gurudev was to discourse for 10 days on Bhagavad Gita Chapter III and BhajaGovindam. It was in a quiet moment after dinner Gurudev looked thoughtfully at the group sitting on the floor in his room and remarked:



“A good housewife cleans dirt the minute she sees it. A good sadhaka cleans the dirt of envy, greed and jealousy in the mind the minute he or she detects it. The housewife uses detergent and cleaning cloth. The sadhaka uses japa and namasmarana”.

An idea occurred to me – would Gurudev consider the topic Kitchen Vedanta over the next few days? He certainly seemed singularly inspired!

“Why not?” he responded with enthusiasm. “In fact, the kitchen and Vedanta are more closely related than you could imagine. Here is another one for you. Watch your temper like you would watch milk on the fire. If you are careful, you can prevent it from spilling over. In both cases, the situation is saved by turning off the heat at once.”

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry

136. I want your ‘Availability” and not just “Ability”

20-09-2015

Experiencing Gurudev in business and management

Business and Commerce may be mistakenly seen as standing for power, money and wealth. The notion of ‘giving up’ has been erroneously applied to an income bringing career. Artha is needed for dharma. Uniquely the work arena make for great karmabhoomis and kurukshetras if we can apply Gurudev’s teachings here with finesse. Hence, being ‘available’ to his teachings….Here Shri Anil Sachdev shares one more teaching that helped him.

Each one of us comes to this world in the human form for fulfilling a “purpose”. We have been given the requisite skills and gifts to work towards fulfilling this “calling”.

The meaning of “Education” is to “Know one self”. Irrespective of what we study, the knowledge that we acquire, the skills that we build and the values that we cherish, enable us to make the right choices. We are defined by the decisions that we make.

The most important decision that we make every day is “how” we intend to spend our time. It may be allocated on aspects that are “use less” or may be invested on activities that make a significant contribution in taking it closer to our own vision and purpose.

Swami Chinmayananda, one of the greatest Spiritual masters of the twentieth century, who we were blessed to learn from,always encouraged us to ask ourselves these important questions:

*Why am I here (as a human being in the planet) – My purpose?

*What are my natural strengths – Gifts?

*How do I leverage my positives to move towards my calling? – My mission

He would encourage each one of us by appreciating the positives in us. He would appreciate us each time that we did something to “take” responsibility” for making our world better.

The “Motto” of the Chinmaya Mission is to “Give the maximum happiness to the maximum people for the maximum time”.

He often said "I want your availability – not just your ability.” He said it is not just abilities that make a person great. It is his/her devotion and single minded focus that enables the person to achieve heights!

This learning derived from our Spiritual Teacher has played a major role in the way we looked at "talent" in our professional and personal lives. I was fortunate to hire many young people who were inspired by their own goodness and their capacity to create personal visions and missions that made them transcend their own limitations by being "fully available". We began to see how the will to evolve rises from the will to stretch one's potential, allow one's potential to be pulled and stretched, the will to be challenged, the will to be pushed to the edge and in and through all this, examine one's ability to remain value-led. The work place has been a great testing ground for Vedanta in living.

Three of my personal assistants went on to become VP's and heads of HR and functions such as Corporate Communications of well-known companies because they learnt to appreciate their own gifts and did not get weighed down by small beginnings such as limited resources or small towns of origin or modest formal education. By building inspiring visions for themselves and by dedicating themselves with 100% "availability", they realized their true potential!

Another important lesson we received from Swami Chinmayananda was on how to give constructive feedback to people who did not ensure 100% availability towards their own purpose. Instead of reprimanding them or reminding them of their weaknesses, he always provided feedback on the "efforts" made by us. He never asked us "who has done it?" if something went wrong. He always encouraged us to introspect on what kind of "efforts" we had made, the quality of the effort, the checks and balances that we had built into it (or failed to build) and thus he drew our attention to what is excellence without defining it. Thus and unobtrusively, he chipped away what was not perfection, leaving behind perfection alone! We learnt a priceless lesson from him" All gaps in performance are learning goals" and "Never give negative feedback on abilities and instead learn from the quality and quantity of efforts". Those of us who found fault with others' work learnt to now look at their effort!

Swami ji also shared with us that all of us have three "Gunas" or qualities within us that define our "energy" in a given situation. Very often the manifestation of these gunas impacted our full 'availability'. As he opened up the thought to us, we began to see how precisely they defined our ability to produce excellence or fail completely in producing excellence. The "Tamoguna" causes inertia and ignorance, the "Rajoguna" causes action and enjoyment through sense organs and the "sattwaguna" causes serenity and calmness. He said at night, you need "tamas" to go to sleep, in the sports field you meet "rajas" to exert yourself and to prepare for aspects such as meditation, you need "sattwa" to quieten the mind. He advised us that we could invoke the right guna at the right time to ensure that we were able to give our 100 percent towards our goals. For example, we could adopt 'tamas' to forget all fears and memories that created negative emotions like anxiety or irritation during a negotiation, leverage 'rajas' if we needed to build the right energy to put in efforts in new business and embraced the 'satvic' energy when we needed to reflect in order to add value and bring positive energy to our efforts.

At the same time, he shared with us that true excellence is reached when you cross beyond the "gunas" and serve your purpose with deep devotion. That is 'full availability' devoid of any worries about your "abilities".

He also explained that when we truly are immersed in our duty and deeply serve our vision and are not too sensitive to feedback from others (even if it is on ability) and treat honor and dishonour, friend and foe, with equanimity, we truly transcend the three gunas to discover our deep “SELF” – the Brahman. We each found ourselves reflecting on all these in the face of the stresses of work.

This is explained very nicely by Swami ji in his commentary on the Bhagwad Geeta, Chapter 14′ shloka 25:

manapamanayos tulyas
tulyo mitrari-paksayoh
sarvarambha-parityagi
gunatitah sa ucyate

The same in honor and dishonor; the same to friend and foe; abandoning all undertakings—he is said to have crossed beyond the GUNAS.

It is further explained very well in his commentary on shloka 26 of the same chapter.

mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa gunan samatityaitan
brahma-bhuyaya kalpate

And he, serving Me with unswerving devotion, and crossing beyond the GUNAS, is fit to become BRAHMAN

This wisdom helped us a great deal to appreciate, the talent of people, to mine their goodness and skills and enabled excellence almost always, - by drawing us to being ‘available’ and overcoming the obsession with and limitations of ‘abilities’.

Applying Gurudev in the workplace is a personal, subjective thing, but it always brought us a smile to realise that even our being available to his teachings was enough to see it pervade the rest of our attitude and work!

137. Re-employing Love in His Pursuit

21-09-2015

Man essentially divine, today suffers mortality and sorrow due to spiritual ignorance. This is said as Avidya Kama Karma Knots of the heart.

Avidya is removed through Gnana, Kama through Bhakthi (prema), and karma is accomplished through Karma Yoga.

In Vivekachudamani, verse 31, Sri Sankara says among the instruments and conditions necessary for liberation, Bhakti alone is supreme.

The same is said in NaradaBhakthi Sutra 25 –

satu karma-jnana-yogebhyo 'pyadhikatara
(The supreme devotion (Bhakti) is indeed as a technique even superior to the Path of Action (Karma), the Path of Knowledge (Gyana), and the Path of Disciplined Contemplation (Yoga).

Gurudev explains all this in Sutra 59. Then again, sutra 60, 61 and sutras 3 and 7 reinforce this very aspect again and again.

The votaries for Bhakti are found in Lord Krishna, in Sage Narada and in Gurudev. Narad ji says bhakti is possible for everyone and through it the Highest can be attained. And Gurudev reminds us of Lord Krishna's words, "I shall deepen and strengthen and give you more and more faith ..."

*Devotion is not proved by something else; it needs nothing else to establish it. Self-evident, it is the silent, incandescent light of Love, constantly glowing in the lover's own mind.
* Gyana can come only to intellectuals who have pursued the study spent their time in reflection and have received proper guidance from a qualified teacher. This contrasts against Bhakti which needs no qualification.
*There must be an involvement of the student in this study. (Whereas bhakti is already an involvement.)
*In Karma Yoga one needs a field of action where one can serve with right mental attitude.
*But in Bhakthi yoga no particular circumstances or favourable conditions are needed. [...] This love potential is already plentifully within every seeker but at this moment it is entirely invested and no "unemployed" love is lying idle in the [seeker's] bosom. To withdraw the love invested in unwise adventures and to reemploy it in the pursuit of His Infinite Grace is the Path of Devotion.

Sutra 60

*Bhakthi and agitations can never co-exist. When one is thinking of, or when one is with his Beloved, one's mind becomes quieter and calmer because Bliss is the very nature of Love.

Sutra 61

*I am not the mind and its sorrows □ I am the knower of sorrows and so these sorrows cannot be even mine." This is the Gyani's fort. How can the Bhaktha stand apart from his sorrows? To a devotee this is much easier than for anyone else. He is one who has already offered all of himself. He has laid at the altar of his Lord his entire being. [.....] His joy is only in going on striving for Him. All worries and anxieties thereafter are His. Then, on what account should he ever weep

Sutra 3

*In utter devotion when one individual lifts all his identifications from the realm of change into contemplation of the Changeless, Immutable, Lord, the constant agitations cease, and therefore, all sense of mortality too vanishes. This constant experience of the Changeless Infinitude and the consequent equipoise lived by a true devotee is the State-of-immortality.

Sutra 7

* ... desire departs from the heart in which Devotion has entered. The very essence of Devotion lies in the spirit of renunciation of all other infatuations and seekings. To a lover there is nothing more sacred than the beloved;

*A lover can express his love only in the language of ready sacrifices. Everywhere we find that all lovers are always ready to make sacrifices, each for the sake of the other. In fact, the spirit of happy renunciation is the very heart of love.

Sent by Shri Hemachandrudu (Hemu ji), Chennai

138. Only Mother

22-09-2015

To the ever-steadfast, worshipping Me with love, I give the BUDDHI-YOGA, by which they come to Me. (X.10)

Out of mere compassion for them, I, dwelling within their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the luminous Lamp-of-Knowledge. (X.11)

A mother has three children. One eight years, another six years, and another is a recent one, who is only two-and-a-half or three. He is an afterthought. He is an unexpected arrival – the number three.

Now all the three are fed for breakfast, and then they are sent out. It's a holiday, and therefore, they go to play. There are twenty-three pieces of toys there to play with. The elder two of them have engaged themselves in the game. The third fellow is standing in a corner, facing the corner of the wall, crying without a drop of tear, only sound. He cries, but nothing is happening, so he makes it louder, louder, so that it may go up to the kitchen and the mother must hear.

Mother hears, and mother howls from there to the elder fellow, "Are you not hearing that your younger brother is crying? Go and console him."

The older fellow says, "I can't console him because he is not crying for anything. He is just crying, for general health."

The mother comes there, and says to the littlest one, "Baby, never mind. You should not cry. (Then turning to the older ones ...) How many times I have told you elders that he is your younger brother and that you must give him everything? You have already played so long, and he has just now come. He wants whatever it is you play. Give it to him."

And the two children are thrown out, and they run away.

Mother says, "Baby, now you play with the toys. Your brothers will not come into this room. Ah, baby, play."

But there is more crying.

So she asks, "You want this?"

More crying.

"You want that?"

All the twenty-three items are shown. The boy is consistently crying. The mother understands. It is not for the toys that the child is crying.

In the crook of one of her hands, on the side of her hip, the boy sits. And sitting on the hip is a most painful seat. But the child is happy.

The thumb has gone into the mouth. Utter silence. Complete satisfaction. Reveling there.

And mummy goes to the kitchen and, with one hand, she continues her work.

Now at this moment, the two older children can come and complain, “Mummy, you love only that fellow. And you never have carried me so.” This is the eight-year-old, a hefty, huge fellow. If the mother takes him, the mother will collapse. The other is the six year old, a vigorous guy.

Why is it that she is taking that little one? The little one is a child rejecting everything, wanting nothing but “Mother, Mother, Mother.”

The other two children, they are very well engaged with the toys. Very happy.

Many of us are very happy with the toys of life. The Lord doesn’t even look at you. Let them grow up. But if there is a devotee, in the midst of all these, rejecting everything, wanting nothing but Him and Him alone, if there is such an individual, out of sheer compassion, an honest expression of motherly love, I shall come and lift him, from the darkness of ignorance, and shall bring shafts of light into his bosom, and his non-apprehension shall end in the apprehension of Reality.

▫ Adapted from disc 29 of Swami Chinmayananda’s Gita talks, recorded in 1991.

139. Be With Me Constantly ….”

23-09-2015

What I Learned from Gurudev About Sadhana

The following memories are not from just one specific lecture, but this is what I remember from listening to various satsangs and discourses of Gurudev.

Gurudev brought up sadhana at every yagna, especially so when discussing Chapter (5) of the Gita or the Vivekachudamani and definitely when it came to meditation.

Sadhana of a spiritual seeker is met with many hurdles, obstacles, and difficulties. A Chinmaya Mission worker should do his or her work, whether it is organizing Yagna, camp, building a mission center, or even working as a Sevak in the study groups as Sadhana. When mission members work in the organization, organizing a yagna or a camp, or even outside (at a career, say) and become successful in whatever they do, the natural tendency is for their ego to grow, which is the biggest obstacle in our Sadhana.

One should be very vigilant and careful and offer one’s success at the feet of the Guru. It is only by the Grace of the Lord that our Sadhana becomes fruitful. It is natural for the Sadhaks to get disappointed and despair that they are not making any progress on the spiritual path. Our vasanas are so strong, that it is not easy to overcome them. It is not easy to exhaust the vasanas in a single stretch, with a few rare exceptions. The goal of Sadhana should be to substitute “good vasanas” for “bad vasanas” and finally overcome the “good vasanas” as well.

The Sadhana should be a day long activity, not just in the prayer room in the morning or in the evening. Anything and everything we do can be part of Sadhana, whether you are completing your morning ablutions, cooking in the kitchen, raising the children, serving the guests, working in the office, or volunteering. Offer anything and everything you do, to the Lord and work with the attitude that you are working for Him! In Chapter 9, verse 34 Krishna points to this clearly when He says exactly this, thereby including every action into the holy yagna:

Fix your mind on Me; be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me; having thus united your (whole) Self with Me, taking me as the Supreme Goal, you shall come to Me.

And Gurudev adds to our advantage, an explanation that clarifies it all:

With "THE MIND EVER FILLED WITH ME, MY DEVOTEE MAKES ALL SACRIFICES, ALL SALUTATIONS TO ME," at all times, whatever be the type of work that engages him. In brief, the evolution of the mind is the very essence of all spiritual

reformation in life. Neither the conditions in which we are, our circumstances and habits, nor the available ways of life, nor our past, nor our present --- none of these is a bar for evolving spiritually.

“Whatever be the type of work that engages him…” In short whatever we do, we do our best and place it at His feet.

Once again this is reiterated in 9: 27

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give in charity, whatever you practise as austerity, O Kaunteya, do it as an offering to Me.

And exactly this attitude is what lies at the heart of all sadhana, or of every action that can be offered into the yagna of sadhana, so we resort once again to Gurudev’s words in the commentary to this stanza:

Through all activities of life one can constantly live in the spirit of "devout offering" unto the Supreme. Throughout the Geeta it has been, time without number, insisted upon that the mental attitude is of supreme importance, rather than the mere physical act. And, this is a fact which ordinarily the seekers forget.

All acts of perception and our reactions to the perceived, be they on the physical, mental, or intellectual levels, make them all a "DEVOUT OFFERING UNTO HIM."

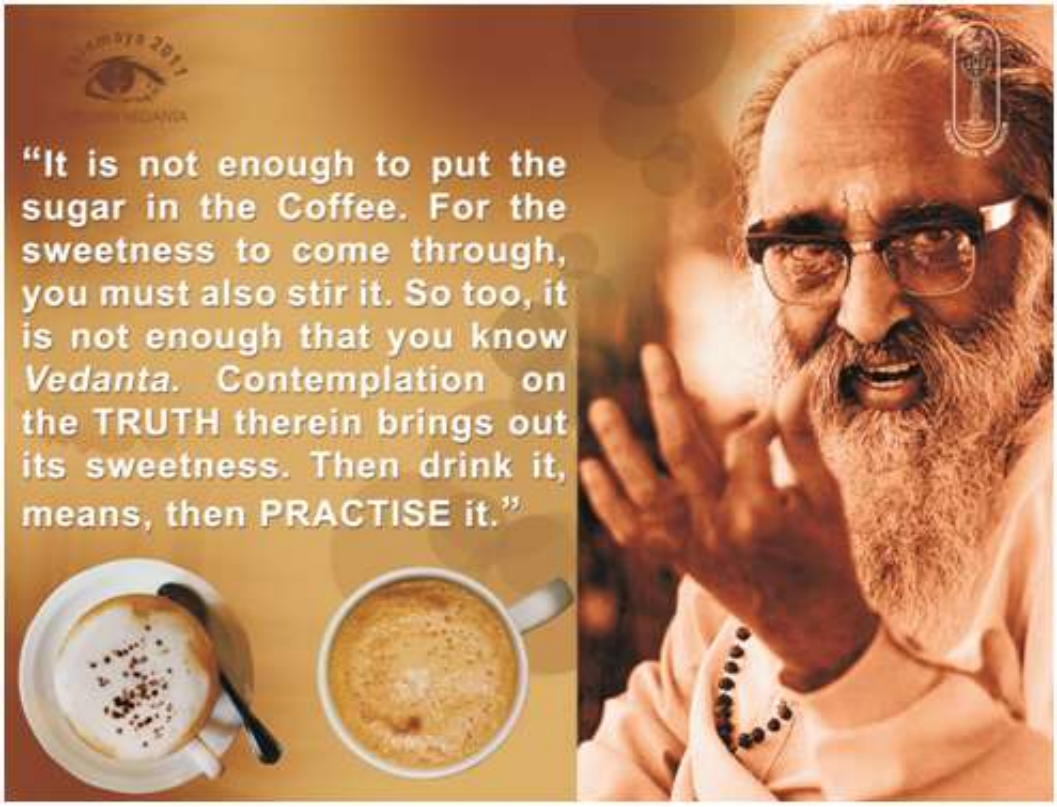
Our job is to travel well. Will I grow, will I evolve? We place ourselves at the feet of the Guru. Yes, growth may be slow, but it will happen! One may not notice the change in oneself, but the others will notice the change in us. They can smell the fragrance of change and will adore you and respect you, but don’t let this bolster your ego. During the conclusion of a camp in Michigan, when everybody was praising the organizers, Gurudev cautioned us not to get “bloated”, “as even this won’t last forever”.

A Guru’s job is to show us the path and a Sadhak should walk the path by himself or herself. Gurudev said “I can’t be with you all the time, but you can be with me constantly.”

Sent by Dr. Apparao Mukkamala, a longstanding devotee from Michigan, USA

140. Coffee Truth

24-09-2015



KITCHEN VEDANTA

COFEE TRUTH

Over Coffee, Gurudev said, " It is not enough to put the sugar in the coffee. For the sweetness to come through, you must also stir it. So too, it is not enough that you know Vedanta. Contemplation on the Truth therein brings out its sweetness. Then drink it, meaning, then practice it."

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

Shared with us, by Chinmaya Mission, Puducherry, India

141. Three laws of causation

25-09-2015

SadguruMaharaj has demystified certain important Vedic truths in the most ingenious ways, which helped people digest and practice those principles. One of the most popular one is the B M I chart which I am not now discussing.

Two other such important theories are 'The three laws of causation and The phenomena of the world which in Sanskrit is referred to as Adhyasa.

For this, Gurudev uses effectively two words – Non-apprehension and misapprehension. And the manner in which Gurudev easily and with great agility explain the words, and the Vedanta here, is such that the knowledge can never leave you. Gurudev says this world is essentially Eternal Blissful Conscious Existence. Not seeing this, we (instead) see the world of names and forms upon this Eternal, and see the finite changing world of names and forms that is responsible for our experiencing impermanence, change and sorrow which is a delusion related to the names and forms that are finite and changing anyway. Exactly like the fear and agitation caused by seeing the snake on the rope. This agitation is born out of Non-apprehension of reality.

The knowledge of rope removes the fear of snake. The knowledge of the rope happens when rope is apprehended. So too knowledge of our essential being removes the fear of ageing, hence death and fear of change and sorrow. To explain this Sri Gurudev uses three simple laws of causation.

The need for this arises because any other solution (than knowing' I am Infinite') can only give finite topical solutions. The knowledge of my being makes me appreciate the very problem is owing to a confusion caused by non-apprehension of reality. I am all that I am seeking □ deathless eternal conscious bliss.

Gurudev asserts that every spiritual pursuit of ours, only mines the roots of our existence, embedded in this Eternal, though unconsciously.

Now to quote Sri Gurudev, (page 7, The Journey Begins, VEDANTA: Swami Chinmayananda His Works, His Legacy (MANANAM SERIES)

"Remember the meaning of Sat-Chit-Ananda. It means Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Think! Isn't it true that you always want to live one day longer, than you always want to exist? Are you not always seeking to know more? And are you not always looking to be happy? You and I are always wanting to get back to the root of our existence. Those desires are inherent in every one, and that shows that our true Nature is constantly whispering to us to come back to the real "Self".

Page 5: "Now listen carefully! There are three irrefutable laws of existence"
An effect can never be without a cause. The waves cannot be without the ocean. Ornaments cannot be without Gold. Pots can never be without clay. An effect is not possible without a cause--That is law number one.

Effects may be plural, but they are nothing but the cause in different forms. The big wave ,the medium wave, small wave, ripples, the foam, the lather and the bubbles are all different forms of ocean, the cause. The jug, the cup, the saucer, the plates, the flower vase, are all different shapes and different names -- for what? Clay in different forms! The bangles, and the rings, and the chain, and the earrings, are all different names, different shapes, different uses, but all of them are gold in different forms. (Law Two)

From the effect when the cause is removed, nothing remains. If the ocean is transferred to the hills, there will be no waves. From a clay pot if all clay is removed--there is no pot. From a gold chain, if the gold is removed -- nothing remains. Since the effect is nothing but the cause itself in a different form, when from the effect the cause is removed, nothing remains. (Law Three)

Page 7: "The Cause of all existence is One. It is called by many names--Life, Truth, Reality, the Higher Self."

Non-apprehension of the Reality behind a thing, leads to mis-apprehending the thing to be Real. To see bangle and not gold is misapprehension. To see pot and not clay; to see wave and not ocean is to accord reality to bangle, pot, wave … which are nothing but mere names and forms of the Cause: Gold, Clay, Ocean.

Names and forms change, are finite. Cause is infinite, Eternal. Sat-Cit-Ananda!

Sent by Shri Hemachandrudu (Hemu ji) Chennai

142. Love And the Art of Single Minded Devotion

26-09-2015

Love- the greatest force that Organizations need

Business may involve money, men and machines. But what makes them produce great music is LOVE ▫ and no management guru will vocalise that. For, love needs an ability, a power that is far far beyondformal education… and Gurudev taught us that!

It was 26th of November 2008 and millions of Indians had just finished watching the telecast of the India- England cricket game.

Even as the thrill of the match had not digested, TV channels burst in with 'breaking news' -- terrorists had entered several well-known locations in Mumbai and were indiscriminately shooting and killing people.

We had been working on a crucial assignment with the Indian Hotels Company, the owner of the Taj group of hotels and so were disturbed to learn that several of these criminals were in the Taj Mahal Hotel.

I then saw the TV channels flashing the news that the entire Global leadership team of Unilever along with members of the India top team were also trapped in the Taj Hotel.

They too were a client and so we were all deeply worried about their wellbeing.

That night I kept exchanging text messages with the Taj and Unilever leaders offering them our support and prayers.

All through the night, I was sending emails to all our friends all over the world to join us in praying for the people of Mumbai.

I took an early morning flight along with Shailendra Kumar, a dear friend and colleague. We checked in to the other Taj Hotel, the President, where HN Shriniwas, the HR head and other senior leaders of Taj hotels were holding emergency meetings on how to handle the situation.

All that we could do was to offer emotional support at that time and kept on praying that the madness would end soon. We also started brainstorming on ways to provide emotional and psychological support to the families of those killed.

Then the news came that Karambir Kang, the General Manager of the Taj Mumbai had lost his wife and two children in the attack.

I was asked to convey the news to Karambir's parents as his father was a retired Army General, living in Chandigarh, and I could elicit the support and help of my sister and her husband, a retired Army Brigadier, who lived in the same city and the army fraternity and brotherhood would be useful.

They went there but were told that Karambir's parents were already on their way to Mumbai from another town, where they had been visiting.

That evening, Shailendra and I went to Willingdon Crescent near the Taj Mumbai, where Karambir's parents were staying with him.

As we entered the apartment, we saw Karambir sitting there with his parents. There was complete silence and the entire atmosphere was deeply sorrowful.

I gave Karambir a hug and sat down in silence. Words failed me as I did not know what to say to the family who had experienced a tragedy of gigantic proportions.

It was Karambir's mother who broke the silence and shared: "When Karambir was with his colleagues in the lobby of the Taj hotel and had to face the terrorists, who had started bombing the adjoining old wing of the hotel, he realized that his wife and children were trapped there and so he wanted to run there to save them but then a thought struck him that he was the son of a soldier and so needed to be with his 'troops'. So he called me on the phone and said:' Ma, I hope I am doing the right thing to be with my team. How can I, the son of a soldier, desert my place of duty and colleagues to protect my own family? I hope God will forgive me for making this choice'. I did not know what to tell him and so I said, son, you do what your inner voice tells you!"

All of us were moved to tears and sat in silence with the family. Karambir was completely silent and did not utter a word.

We returned to the President hotel and met many guests who had been rescued from the Taj and were being given rooms there.

They told us another moving story of Thomas Verghese, the restaurant manager who along with his staff, formed a protective ring, a human shield as the terrorists were firing in all directions from their automatic weapons. They ensured that every guest was evacuated and then Thomas made every one of his staff members exit safely. And just as he was about to leave, he was shot dead!

The guests were in tears and said this commitment to duty was beyond anything they had seen in their lives and could not stop talking about the heroic deeds of the Taj staff and Thomas Verghese.

Next day, HN Shriniwas then narrated to us that Mr Ratan Tata , Group Chairman, Tata Group (Taj is a Tata company) and Mr Krishna Kumar, the Vice Chairman of Indian Hotels met Mrs Verghese and said to her:' We cannot thank your husband enough for what he did. He was a very courageous man'. Mrs Vergheserepliied : 'I did not know that my husband was so brave. I only know one thing- he loved the people in Taj and loved working there!'

That night going to bed was not going to be easy, overwhelmed as I was by such unusual acts of love and bravery, in the midst of horrendous pain caused to good people and the Tatas who have always been known to be the mildest and most caring employers. As the night grew darker and dense, the words of Swami Chinmayananda came back to me: "The opposite of fear is not courage. It is love. When you love a cause and love a people, fear gets banished and you discover a capacity in you far beyond what you were aware of!"

I could not have assimilated this thought had I not been with Karambir Kang or heard Thomas Verghese's act. Had I not known them or been in their midst, I would have labelled it 'courage'. With the Guru responsible for all my experiences, and learning, I came to understand his teaching far too perfectly.

We had seen India go to war in 1962, 1965 and 1971 and each time we had seen Swami Chinmayananda inspiring the Armed Forces to serve Mother India.

The forces in uniform loved him because he invoked in them the deep love for the country that made them banish all fears from their hearts. Elsewhere on these pages where we celebrate Gurudev, a lady has penned her recollections of Gurudev addressing the army jawans in Bangalore. As real and heart crushing were his words always, when he spoke to the jawans. And they heard him so clearly, there was a special quality to how they heard him.

As the episodes and events seized my mind, again and again the words of Chapter 12 were to be hammered into deep understanding:

Chapter 12 shloka 6 and shloka 7

yetusarvanikarmani
mayisannyasya mat-parah
ananyenaivayogena
mam dhyayantaupasate

But those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme God, meditating on Me with single-minded devotion(YOGA)...

tesamahamsamuddharta
mrtyu-samsara-sagarat
bhavaminaciratpartha
mayyavesita-cetasam

For them, whose minds are set on Me, verily I become, ere-long, O-Partha, the Saviour,(to save them) out of the ocean of finite experiences; the SAMSARA

The 'renouncing all actions in Me' was never made more clear to me as it was that day. '..meditating on me with single-minded devotion' was never made more clear to me as did the attitudes of Karambir and Thomas of the Taj Group. If we grieved, then we grieved at a vyavaharik level. But the call was to a different level of vyavahaar – one of assimilating the true meanings of renouncing all actions into the Lord and being single-pointedly in the service of the Lord and the Lord alone. In

their attitude could be seen the Lord Himself, His vibhuti. As He has truly declared to Arjuna in Chapter X, verse 41:

yadyadvibhutimatsattvam
srimadurjitamevava
tat tad evavagacchatvam
mama tejo-'msa-sambhavam

Whatever it is that is glorious, prosperous or powerful in any being, know that to be a manifestation of a part of My splendour.

That very same quality Gurudev gave us through his powerful 'Chinmaya Mission Pledge':

'We stand as one family
Bound to each other with love and respect.

We serve as an army
Courageous and disciplined
Ever ready to fight against all low tendencies
And false values, within and without us.

We live honestly
The noble life of sacrifice and service
Producing more than what we consume
And giving more than what we take.

We seek the Lord's grace
To keep us on the path of virtue, courage and wisdom.
May Thy grace and blessings flow through us
To the world around us.

We believe that the service of our country
Is the service of the Lord of lords
And devotion to the people
Is devotion to the Supreme Self.

We know our responsibilities
Give us the ability and courage to fulfill them.

Om Tat Sat

This pledge has caused countless people to choose love as the core value of their being.

Gurudev lived this at every moment and we feel blessed that his teachings made so many of us adopt love and devotion to a Higher purpose the altar that inspired us!

It was thanks to hearing him talk of this again and again and again, making us memorise the Pledge mindlessly if need be, but memorise it, that when I saw ‘love’ being enacted, ‘love’ as Gurudev defined it, all the lessons of Chapter 12 came to a rolling boil.

The Tata Group is a shining example of a business house guided by this philosophy and we in India are blessed that this group took birth here!

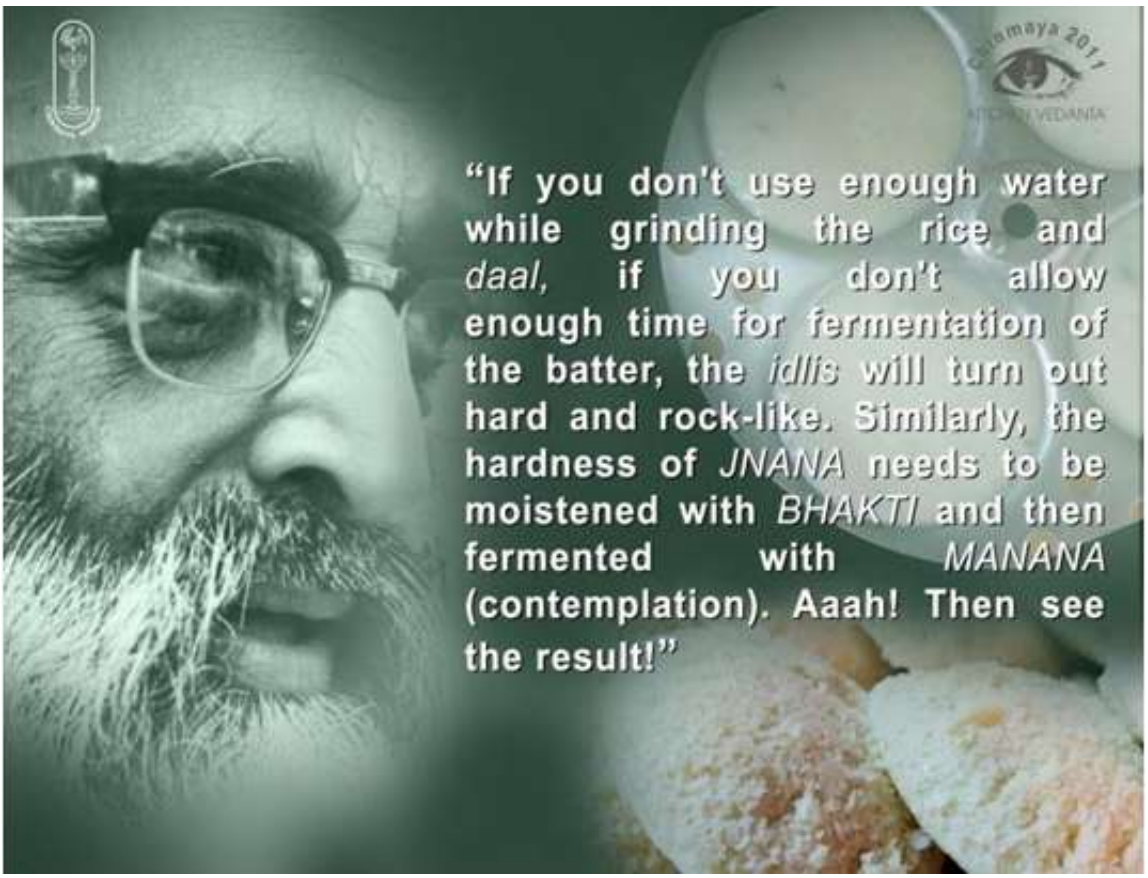
It is no wonder that so many Tata Group leaders were deeply inspired by Poojya Gurudev!

Jai Gurudev!

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, longstanding devotee of Gurudev

143. MAKING OF AN IDLI !

27-09-2015



KITCHEN VEDANTA (Contd.)

Making of an Idli!

One morning Gurudev sat down to breakfast. Somebody had brought idlisfor him. Pujya Gurudev picked one up and peered at it closely. "This is not an idli", he joked. "This is a cartoon of an idli!" He chucked his shoulders and laughed gleefully. "Here's another one for your Kitchen Vedanta. If you don't use enough water while grinding the rice and daal, if you don't allow enough time for fermentation of the batter, the idlis will turn out hard and rock-like. Similarly, the hardness of jnana needs to be moistened with bhakti, and then fermented with manana (contemplation). Aaah! Then see the result!"

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry, India n idli!”

144. A GODMAN

28-09-2015

Sometime in 1975-76, Pujya Gurudev was conducting a yajna in Coorg, Karnataka, staying in the house of General Cariappa, who was the President of Chinmaya Mission Coorg at that time. On the last day of the yajna, it was the turn of the host to offer mid-day bhiksha to Gurudev. After the bhiksha, while offering the fruits and dakshina to Gurudev, the General expressed his wish to ask a question. Then, gesturing him to be seated on a chair, Gurudev said, “Shoot your question.” General Cariappa replied, “I will not sit on the same plane with your holy Self. There, at the warfront, I order and the soldiers implicitly obey my words of command. Here, you are my spiritual general. So, may I be allowed to sit on the floor and ask my question?”

Thus, obtaining his consent, the General asked, “Why are you not declaring yourself as a Godman?”

Gurudev retorted, “Why should I?”

The General responded, “This answer is not enough.”

Then Gurudev explained, “Every day, thousands and thousands of people flock into my yajnasala and after listening to my talks, all of them go back to their homes with the feeling ‘I am God, I am God.’ What is the need to declare myself a Godman?”



***

(Shared by Swami Gabheerananda, published in Tapovan Prasad, May 2013)

145. Relationless Relationship - Surrender

29-09-2015

Swami Pranavananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission of Mauritius and Reunion Islands, studied directly at the feet of Sri Pujya Gurudev in the year 1972-75 at SandeepanySadhanalaya, whereafter he went back to spread the message of the Gita and other Hindu scriptures in Mauritius and elsewhere. Sri Pujya Gurudev then went himself to Mauritius in 1977 and many more years thereafter. Here Swamiji shares a fine learning from Gurudev on shloka 35 of the Vivekachoodamani.

The year was 1973, the month after February. The place was Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai. It was one of the morning's classes and the text was shloka 35 of Adi Sankara'sVivekachoodamani which states:

"O Master, O friend of those who reverentially surrender to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I salute thee; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of change, with a direct glance from thy eyes which rain nectarine Grace Supreme."

That morning, I wrote in my textbook the words of Gurudev which I could capture in his impeccable English and in his voice with the usual pitch of softness and authority.

"I surrender to you, you are a greater relation to me, to bless me. You are an ocean of Karuna, sympathy, love and kindness. I am the one who has unconsciously slipped in the ditch of change, the trap of finitude, a being identified with the BMI, no divinity in me.
You are an ocean of Karuna, I am drowning. Please lift me, save me. Please only look at me by the corner of your eye, by your spiritual look. I'll be able to manage the rest."

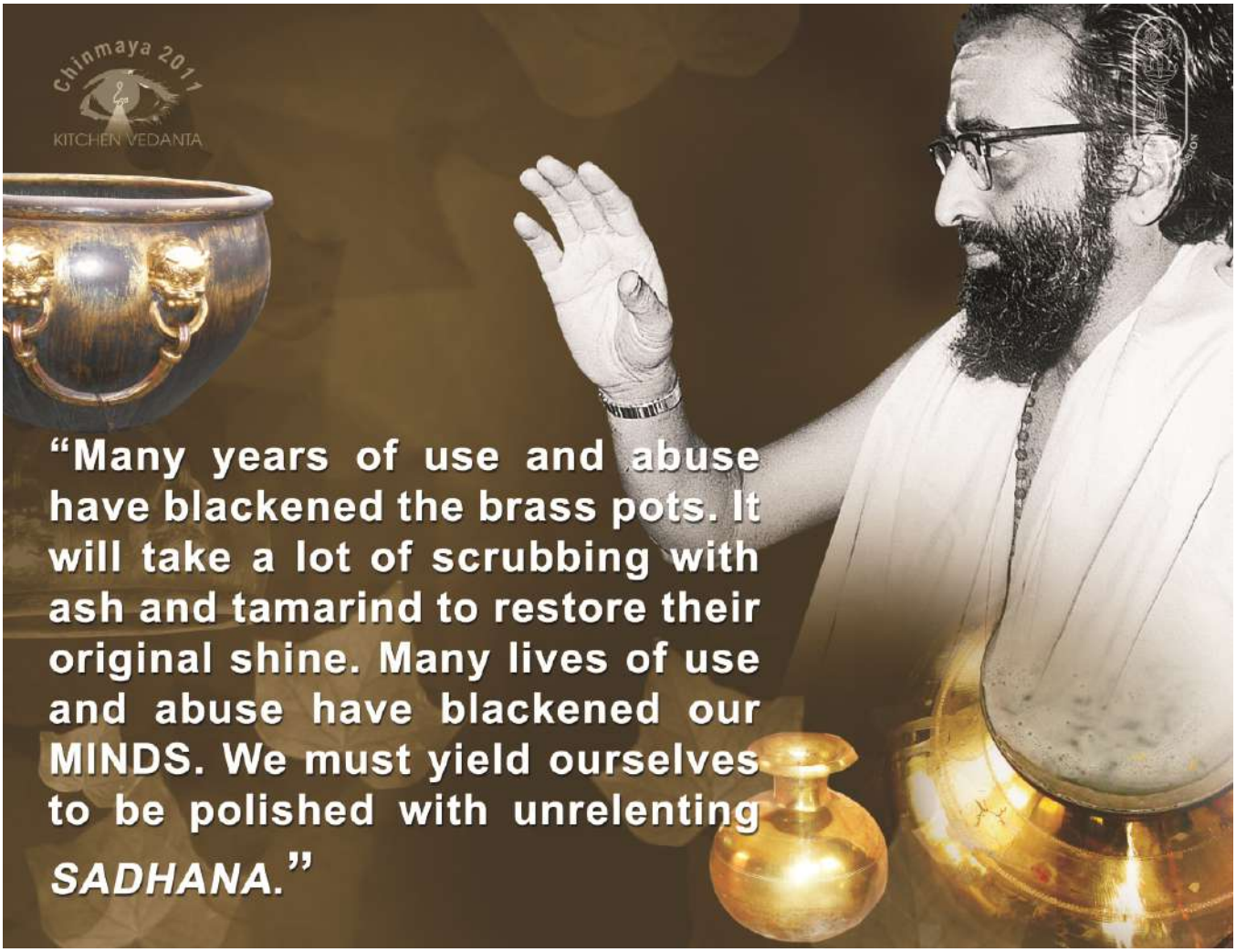
Listening to these words of Gurudev, the strong urge and need to surrender to the Master as a seeker became clear. In turn, the surrender of Gurudev, as a seeker to Swami Tapovan became even clearer. In an instant, the ageless Sishya-Guru Parampara became alive and meaningful beyond the limits and contours of the mind and the intellect.

146. POLISHING SADHANA

30-09-2015

Kitchen Vedanta (Contd.)

Polishing Sadhana!



The cleaning staff had carried the cooking pots to the courtyard tap where they were being scrubbed and washed. Seeing them, Pujya Gurudev remarked, “Many years of use and abuse have blackened the brass pots. It will take a lot of scrubbing with ash and tamarind to restore their original shine. Many lives of use and abuse have blackened our minds. We must yield ourselves to be polished with unrelenting sadhana”. Then he looked at me sharply and said, “Do you know the sand and sourness in me? Surrender to Narayana in His temple.” Half an hour later, the pots were drying in the sun, gleaming, pure, clean. “Keep at it”, he said encouragingly. “It will happen. Like the pots, a purified mind reflects the light of the Self, only more clearly, more intensely.”

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

147. ALLOWING VALUES TO BE CHALLENGED

01-10-2015

The Guru with the Gita in the Workplace

There have been several “testing” moments in my life which have created very difficult situations in which my values were challenged.

One of them happened when I headed the HR function of Eicher in the 1980’s. The Company was growing rapidly and we had hired a number of bright professionals from well-known management and engineering schools. These “handpicked” young recruits were sent for “Product Training” for several days at the “Tractor Testing Station” at Budni in Madhya Pradesh, run by the government.

When they returned from their training, it was found that each one of them had submitted “false” travel expense reports and claimed taxi fare whereas they had travelled by bus in the town of Budni; and claimed 1st class AC train fare in a train that did not have this “class” of travel.

This matter was brought to the “Management Committee” of Eicher by the Business Head and there was a discussion on what we should do. On one hand, these students were from good families and colleges □ and their misdemeanour was born out of youthful ignorance and absence of values. No doubt, we “needed” them (to man several critical projects) and that was how they had been tested and selected; on the other hand, we had a “zero tolerance” policy towards ethical misconduct. Debates shot up saying, the solution to misdemeanour was not always sacking. Our first duty was to save the individual from making a habit of that wrong behaviour.

Our business head explained that they had thoroughly investigated the matter and were convinced that a few of the recruits had influenced the entire group to make “false claims” with the misplaced confidence that they would never be “caught”!

Each of the members of the Management Committee expressed their own opinion on what we needed to do. Since I was head of HR, it was natural for them to look towards me for my advice, especially also since I had been responsible for hiring these professionals.

As the discussion was going on. I was caught up between my head and my heart. On one hand, I felt very “bad” for these young people, on their first jobs, being asked to face consequences for their conduct. On the other hand, I knew that they had to suffer the impact of their well-planned attempt to cheat the company.

As I was thinking about this dilemma, my spiritual teacher, Swami Chinmayananda’s words came back to me. He had said, “The sin is not in action; It is in reaction”. I knew that if our emotional side made us take the step of condoning their action, we

would not be able to forgive ourselves for not upholding our core values.

Swami ji's explanation of Shlokas 7 and 8 of Chapter XVI of the BhagwadGeeta came back to me:

Pravrttim ca nivrttim ca janavidurasurah

Na saucamnapicacaronasatyantesuvidyate

The demoniac know not what to do and what to refrain from; neither purity,nor right conduct, nor truth is found in them.

Asatyamapratisthamtejagadahuranisvaram

Aparasparasambutamkimanyatkamahaitukam

They say, "the universe is without truth, without (moral) basis, without a God; not brought about by any regular casual sequence, with lust for its cause; what else?"

Gurudev had explained that the people whose intellect gets deluded, often rationalize their action by justifying how the others were doing similar things!

It was then clear to me that just like Lord Krishna had to guide Arjuna not to get confused in the battle, we in Eicher had to ensure that our caring nature for employees was not to be misinterpreted so that it led to condoning such conduct based on false justification.

We therefore took the painful decision of asking the entire batch to leave the company! It was a wretched moment. I called each one of them to my room and explained why it was important for us to uphold the values so dear to us and why we were being forced to take this painful decision. At the same time, we were "compassionate" in the way we communicated with them. We were criticizing their actions and not condemning them as individuals and sincerely hoped that they would use this incident as an opportunity to learn and become responsible leaders in the future.

It was not easy at all, since I had personally interviewed many of them and had become quite fond of them. And the ego could come and stand before me, challenging the sense in what we were doing.

Since then, there have been many such situations that have tested the "values" that were dear to me.

On another occasion, the tables were as if shifted on us, challenging our values and ability to stay value-led. We were going through a difficult phase in our consulting business and did not have enough cash to pay salaries. Not paying salaries could result in staff leaving and existing business being jeopardised.

At that time, a large company of India offered us a consulting project worth a significant amount of money. However, this organization had a questionable

reputation and was perceived as “unethical”. Some of our colleagues struck the same arguments that others had presented in the case of the errant young trainees: “Why don’t we work with them and try to transform them and also earn the much needed cash and save our business in the process?”

In a going concern, the heart fights aggressively to survive. As the Founder and CEO of the company and the repository of the organisational values, the ball was in my court. The heart broke seeing the money go, but I was convinced that by working with them, we would compromise our CORE values. So we decided to refuse the business. Funnily everyone while being crushed that we let our last straw float away, were also quietly relieved that the devil had not been allowed in.

Poojya Gurudev always advised us on staying true to our values. He cautioned us to be careful of the people we spent time with. In fact he told us that we should not try to impart spiritual knowledge to those people who had questionable values described in the shlokas above.

He also warned us to be vigilant at all times. He said “You can cheat others but never your conscience, your God”.

This message has remained with us each time we were put in a difficult situation especially while confronting powerful forces and people with questionable intent. Thanks to His Grace, we chose a path that may have caused “short term losses” and “pain” but long term happiness and “sound sleep”. For the pillow does not spare a head that permitted deceit!

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, a longtime devotee of Gurudev.

148. KITCHEN VEDANTA (CONTD.)

02-10-2015

BITTER IS BETTER



One day over lunch, Pujya Gurudev said, “This gourd may be bitter, but it will cleanse your system. Don’t reject it. Learn to relish its bitter taste. Certain experiences in life may also be bitter. Learn to accept them with grace. They will cleanse and purify the mind. Just as the bitter gourd will not turn your insides bitter don’t allow bitter experiences in life to poison the serenity and beauty of our mind”.

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

149. The Body of Krishna

03-10-2015

Now behold, O Gudakesha, in this Body, that the whole universe centres in One -- including, the moving and the unmoving -- and whatever else you desire to see. (XI. 7)

In chapter 10, Shri Krishna explains that he is the essence in and behind all things and beings. However, some doubt still lingers in Arjuna's mind. As Swami Chinmayananda explains, mere analysis never fully satisfies the human intellect. Only when the synthesis gets demonstrated do all doubts get put to rest.

Gurudev gives the example of H_20. The scientist can logically believe that hydrogen and oxygen are the molecules which constitute water, but some doubt may remain regarding whether another molecule is necessary to form water. Only after an isolated and controlled experiment combines hydrogen and oxygen to indeed form water do the scientist's doubts end.

Similarly, in Chapter 11, Arjuna definitively asks to see the Form Divine of Shri Krishna. That Cosmic Form has been the subject of manifold scriptures in the Hindu canon, however the Bhagavad Gita brings it out powerfully and with special beauty. There on the Kurukshetra battlefield, Shri Krishna reveals himself to be the Lord of Lords, in Whom all the cosmoses and all the hosts of earthly and divine beings are supported.

It is a form impossible to conceive with the human intellect, however Swami Chinmayananda in his painterly discourse almost brings it into the field of our understanding:

"Why is it that your wife and children, who are not here with you, are so far away from you? Because of the intervening space, is it not? Why are you so many? Between your head and your trunk, there is no difference, isn't it? Why? There, is no space created between the two. If I were, with a sword, to create some space between the two, it will be two pieces and not one.

"So the many are because of the space that conditions me. Between me and you, there are two, because there is space intervening. If the space between us were to be sucked out, don't you think that you all will come together?

"Space is conceived by the mind. In deep sleep, there is no sense of space or time. Time and space are intellectual concepts. When you look through the intellect, there is time and space. In time and space quantum, as Einstein says, there is the world of plurality. So the plurality -- you and I are different from each other -- only

because of the intervention of space.

“If that yogeshwara, Krishna, were to suck from the mind of Arjuna his entire concept of space, and he has only a concept of six feet, sixty-two chest -- a canvas -- don’t you think that the whole universe that he was seeing before must be within the body of Krishna?

“So then, he says, see the whole universe of things and beings, not only of this world but of the heavens, the great deities, all of them you can see right now here, where? In my body.”

That Cosmic Form ultimately terrifiesArjuna because of its awesome grandeur, and he implores Krishna to return himself to his “gentle-human form” which endears itself to all Krishna bhaktas.

For further study into this explanation, refer to discs 32 and 33 of Swami Chinmayananda’s Gita talks, recorded in 1991.

150. Demystifying Death,Creation and Destruction

04-10-2015

Bhagvad Gita XI: 28

28. Verily, as many torrents of rivers flow towards the ocean, so these heroes in the world of men enter Your flaming mouths.

Here is Gurudev's commentary:

In this stanza, the analogy of the torrential rivers, gushing ahead to reach the ocean and become one with it, is used. [...] to a true observer, all rivers flow towards the ocean and they cannot, and will not, stop until they reach the ocean, having reached which, all distinctions end.

Each drop of water in the river came from the ocean --- in the form of a cloud it reached the mountains, and there in the form of rain it manifested; watering the lands on the banks and supplying life and nourishment to the fields, they gushed down in their torrential haste to the very basin from which they took off on this "MERCY FLIGHT." Similarly, from the Totality, the individuals have come to serve the race, to nourish the culture, to contribute to the beauty of the world...and yet, on their pilgrimage none of them can pause even for a moment en route. All must rush towards the Source from which they arose. The river loses nothing by reaching the ocean. Even though it gathers enroute certain special qualities, and therefore, a special name, and has, for itself, a separate tangible form, it is all a temporary phase, a convenience taken up by "the waters of the ocean" to make the dry land smile in plenty.

My understanding:

A Sufi saint said ▫ I died as a stone I was born as a plant. I died as a plant I became an animal. I died as an animal I became a man.
When did I become poor by dying?

The process of unmanisfest to manifest (birth) manifest to unmanifest (death) is the journey we undertake to wash away our impurities of different levels of vasanas until and at last, tired of this repeated cycle, we start seeking the Eternal state.

Everything has a purpose, everybody has a role. So too creation and creative destruction are with purpose and are also complementary.

What we call death is a perception in time and space, whereas we never lose our Being. Just like the water that rises from the ocean as vapour, becomes the cloud, then the rain, and collecting below, they assume form as the rivers, and those rivers

themselves merging back in ocean. In the process, that same water from being a vapour drop onward, blesses many many beings in many many ways.

So too all our sojourns are mutually beneficial.

Sent by
Shri L. Hemachandrudu (Hemuji), Chennai

151. KITCHEN VEDANTA (CONTD.)

05-10-2015

Aaa', 'aaa', 'aaa'



"A mother's first duty," Pujya Gurudev said, "is her child. Each time, every time. All other things can wait." He also saw to it that I fed the child before we went to the yajnashalaeach evening, as he would often be fast asleep by the time we got back. The feeding had to be done with some coaxing and persuasion, as the child was sometimes reluctant to eat so early. That Gurudev was observing uscame through in his talk one evening. "Just as a mother distracts a child, then says 'aaa', 'aaa', open your mouth, and pushes down the food, I distract you with stories and jokes and 'aaa', 'aaa', 'aaa', I push Vedanta down your throat!'

He also added, "You make tasty food, I make tasty Vedanta".

(Source: Article by Smt. BharatiSukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

Through the kindness of CM Puduchery

152. Work, Vairaagya and Vedanta

06-10-2015

Sent by Shri Apparao Mukkamala,

Often when we take up the study of Vedanta and the practise of seva, those working in the secular world start to feel a certain unsure-ness. The idea of earning a remuneration, and in some cases, enjoying glory or popularity, also causes deep confusion as to direction, intention, motivation, distraction…

The topic of work vs. Vairagya and spirituality was addressed by Gurudev on numerous occasions, including informal chats, satsangs, and discourses. Gurudev roared that Vairagya and spirituality are not for failures in life. It should be a deliberate choice made by people who are successful and strong. This could mean, the choice is to be made only after the targeted success has been achieved and when one can see that any further pursuit is detrimental to sadhana.

The GrihasthaAshrama is the most essential of all the four Ashramas, as described in the Hindu scriptures. The other three stages/Ashramas of life, i.e., Brahmacharya, Vanaprastha, and Sanyasa Ashrama depend on the Grihastha Ashrama. It is the working people that support the other Ashramas.

When I, myself, asked Gurudev if I should take early retirement and work fulltime for the Mission, Gurudev's answer was very loud and clear. "No, absolutely not. " You can continue to work as a doctor, and still support the activities of the Mission by contributing time, as well as monetarily.

Gurudev repeatedly said that even the Mission work should be a field for Sadhana. It is not the type of work we do, but the attitude with which we work that determines the quality of work. He always said "Do your best and leave the rest."

Gurudev said "work" should not and does not interfere with spiritual practices and spirituality. They are not contradictory, but they are complementary. People who are successful in their field of work also become successful in their spiritual progress, provided they have the right aptitude for spirituality. One is not exclusive of the other.

Gurudev said it is the same group of people that are successful in their careers, who are active in the society, build temples, take up active social work, are active politically, and are also the pillars of Chinmaya Mission. Gurudev's question was "If they all take Sanyasa, how will this work continue? Just think please."

To my knowledge, Gurudev did not encourage any of the devotees to give up their career and take up Mission work, except in a few rare instances. In the Gita, Gurudev has left significant pointers for the confused, to consider:

Quoting here some stanzas and Gurudev's commentary that are related to work: To business men he says quoting verse 3:9, "business is an area of service to the society. Having in-born aptitude for this area, the businessmen are advised by Gita to function inspiredly, exhaust their inner imperfections and evolve!

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोन्यत्रलोकोयम्कर्मबन्धनः
तदर्थङ्कर्मकौन्तेयमुक्तसङ्गःसमाचर ||3.9||

"The world is bound by action other than those performed `for the sake of sacrifice'; do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for that sake (for Yajna alone) free from attachment."

And such activities can be undertaken in a spirit of Divine loyalty only when the worker has no attachment.

2. Exhausting the productive potential:

देवान्भावयतानेनतेदेवाभावयन्तुवः
परस्परम्भावयन्तःश्रेयःपरमवप्स्यथ ||3.11||

With this do you nourish the Gods and may those Devas nourish you; thus, nourishing one another, you shall attain the highest good.

Gurudev's words, "The productivity that is dormant in any situation can be invoked only by man's sincere efforts. This potential which generally lies dormant everywhere is the Deva to be cherished by the worker through the Yajna activities and, certainly, it is sure that the Deva will manifest in turn to cherish or to bless the worker. "Thus cherishing one another, man shall gain the highest good," is the Divine intention, in the mind of the creator, says Krishna in this stanza.

The "productive potential" (Deva) when cherished through "self-dedicated work performed in a spirit of sacrifice"(Yajna) will provide the worker with the desired-for objects. This is the law of life.

And when we thus earn a profit due to our sacrifices, we have every right to enjoy that profit sharing it among ourselves. But no living creatures should enjoy benefits of others' actions without themselves contributing their share to the total effort. In the capitalistic system of life we notice the wrong tendency of self-aggrandisement of profits produced out of the corporate efforts of millions of workers. This creates sad mal-adjustments in all spheres of activity ultimately, and national and international peace are threatened when we thus upset the law of harmony in life.

3. Attaining perfection through right choice of field:

स्वेस्वेकर्मण्यभिरतःसंसिद्धिलभतेनरः
स्वकर्मनिरतःसिद्धियथाविन्दतितच्छृणु ||18.45||

"Devoted each to his own duty, a man attains perfection. How, engaged in his own

duty, he attains perfection, to that listen."

Each one is ordered by his own svabhava and each can discover his fulfillment only in that self-ordered field of activity.

It is no use employing our minds in fields which are contrary to our nature. Everyone has a precise place in the scheme of created things. Each one has an importance and none is to be despised, for each can do something which the others cannot do so well. There is no redundancy in the Lord's creation: not even a single blade of grass is unnecessarily created.

Thus the choice of work is as per our svabhava, vasanas and on the criterion of'giving more 'than' taking more' from the society.

How this helps us is seen in another chapter and verse: Gurudev says “if we live the field surrendering one's ego and ego centric desires to enjoy the fruits, we can thereby achieve a sense of fulfillment and a great peace arising out of the exhaustion of the vasanas. This is the only way to renounce the ego and its desires.” That is also what this human birth is for – exhausting vasanas.

In his commentary to BG 5:10

ब्रह्मण्याधायकर्माणसिङ्गन्त्यक्त्वाकरोतयिः
लप्यितेनसपापेनपद्मपत्रमविाम्भसा ||5.10||

"He who does actions, offering them to Brahman abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains unaffected by the water on it."

Just as there is a confusion as to ‘should I give up working?’, there is a related (and similar) confusion that comes from a dissatisfaction with the work environment, with the constituents of our work (such as a difficult boss, an unappreciative boss, mediocre support systems at work...) Gurudev says in Chapter 3: “Be detached. Drop your mental dependence on any particular type of work, type of result or appreciation by others etc. Free from such dependence, work enthusiastically knowing that you can be happy irrespective of such factors. The verse here is:

यस्तात्मरतरिवस्यादात्मतृप्तश्चमानवः
आत्मन्येवचसन्तुष्टस्तस्यकार्यन्नवद्यिते ||3.17||

"But the man who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, for him verily there is nothing (more) to be done."

And that would be, to stay “devoid of all the cobwebs of attachments with the equipments of perception, feeling, and thinking, and their respective objects, perceived, felt or thought of, is the vehicle that stands dissolved revealing THAT which pulsates through them all. A man who has earlier disciplined his intellect alone can come to attain it.” These are Gurudev’s words in commentary to the 3:17

Is there a real reason to work apart from the economic? In chapter 3, Gurudev says, “No one can escape work. Your own nature will propel you to work. Recognising

this, an intelligent man takes up work right away and does it rightly. He does not deceive himself, trying to avoid action or dilly-dallying unnecessarily." As long as "Man is ever agitated under the influence of the triple tendencies of unactivity (Sattwa), Activity (Rajas) and Inactivity (Tamas) inherent in him, [...] we are helplessly prompted to labour and to act.

What we can do is convert karma into karma yoga, as Gurudev says, "by the technique of renouncing one's sense of agency in one's actions."

Desire-led work is the cause of anxiety, fear and often disappointment. In place of such a (selfish) desire, a more mature man has inspiration of a noble cause, deep sense of duty and the spirit of offering 'work' to the Lord as this motivation. Further, he derives joy in the work itself and has not to wait for the results.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्तेमाफलेषुकदाचन
माकर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मातेसङ्गोस्त्वकर्मणि ||2.47||

"Thy right is to work only; but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction."

153. Mother Durga

07-10-2015

This is the season of Nine Nights when we worship the Goddess Mother. Every three days she assumes a slight change to her temperament and continues to have deep significance for our evolution.

The first three days are dedicated to the worship of Durga, the next three to worship Mother as Lakshmi and the last, Mother Saraswati. "Durga is the power terrible that manifested out of the Unmanifest eternal and is full in all respects and so has in That all the Powers," says Gurudev. Durga's form as dreadful was with the purpose to kill all the rakshasas roaming in the world of the faithful and devoted. "This is the story in a nutshell as we read it in the Puranas," says Gurudev. "The puranic stories are all, all figurative voiceless truths of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutra and the Geeta - the great oceans of the highest philosophies in the world."

And here Gurudev says something more: "These stories are vast canvases over which are painted in enlargements the miniature, subtle, deep inner happenings in man. Whatever we see without, must be in the within: for we see in and through our self. If the Self is not, the world is not."

This is the moment when we sit up and take notice of words so powerful. We have so many many enemies within, he says. Let us hear his words alone, "Man, the imperfect, has a thousand enemies within. He is riddled with negative thoughts, fears and yearnings. There are desires, passions, lusts, hopes, vanities, anger, greed, selfishness……If the sadhak has to get rid of these lawless villians within, in Mother Kali'skripa, these tyrannous monsters are to be annihilated […] the force of SreeRudra must be applied. [….] and unless the sadhak is ready to wear about his neck the skull-garland of these murdered false values, there can be no peace or order within.

"So then the first three days ▫ representing the initial stage of a sadhak who has started on [his] pilgrimage to Freedom and Perfection ▫ are the invocation of the Mother Terrible. This power is in us; it is only a question of invoking it. … every power is in it."

We invoke Mother Durga, Mother Kali "to help us by eliminating from within us all negative forces, all weaknesses. It is these that have removed us from ourselves – the Supreme Parameshwaraswaroopa which we all really are!"

It is now clear. Today is the day to ask for relief, for cure, for cleansing. This is the mysticism of Indian philosophy. Through stories (Puranas) we are caused to understand the Mother Goddess. As long as we act through the filters of our weaknesses and negative forces, we are verily uncultured. Meanings for cultured are:

enlightened, refined. Now we know we are uncultured. To reach up to the subtlety of the Upanishads may be difficult through such impurities.Hence we resort to the Puranas which tell us things as they are, as they are within us. This is the greatness of Indian mysticism, the understanding of the demons within and the way forward to reaching out for their exorcisement. In Vedanta, we do not becomeParameshwara or Brahman, but we wake up to the realisation that we are Brahman.

What stands between us and Brahman are these demons. Inner demons. And we act through them.

When he presents his book on the The Glory of the Mother, Gurudev says “mysticism in Hinduism is of such depths that the extremely poetic minds of our later Rishis tried to express it all in the form of stories. Such mystical stories have a significance of their own revealing final conclusions arrived at in our Upanishads.

“ Not realising these secret suggestions people read, sang and worshipped our deities and this maintained the dry skeleton without the soft flesh and its pulsating beauty …”

Now we know why we worship the Mother as Durga. May she remove all negativity, weaknesses, frailties that limit us to the ego we are.

Yadevisarvabhuteshushakti - rupenasamsthita
Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyainamonamah

154. The Anatomy of Fear

08-10-2015

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev

I was eight years old when my uncle (father's younger brother), an IPS officer, suddenly passed away at the young age of 42!My parents and the entire extended family were devastated and there was grief and sadness all around.

The following year, our beloved Prime Minister, Chacha Nehru, as he was affectionately called by all, especially children, passed away.

Our school participated in his funeral procession and I played the bugle along with many students on a day that moved millions of us to tears.

The year after that, my maternal uncle's wife, who was a very loving person, suddenly died at a young age!

So before I turned 10 years of age, these three events placed me in the environment of utter grief, the idea of death, the realization of its inevitability, and the uncertainty of life.

It was a real blessing for our family that our spiritual master Swami Chinmayananda had come into our lives a year before the first of these three events occurred.

It was thanks to His presence in our lives that the family derived the strength to accept these happenings.

We children often heard our parents and other elders talk about the meaning of death and its spiritual significance.

It was in my teens that I began to listen to Swami Chinmayananda's talks on the BhagwadGeeta. In one of those GeetaGyan Yagnas(a series of talks every evening for seven days), Swamiji was explaining to us the meaning of 'death'.

This was the famous shloka of the Geeta that says 'just like we change our clothes, the soul too moves from one body to the other'! In the Geeta, Lord Krishna guides Arjuna to conquer the ultimate fear, the fear of death by explaining that the real you is the 'Atman'(the soul) that never dies.

The body is made of the five elements and goes back to the elements after life leaves it.

Gurudev's teachings inspired us in the same way that Arjuna was transformed by Krishna, and it made many of our family members choose careers in the Armed

Forces and helped all of us overcome our fears and the limitations of our own thoughts and emotions.

Many years later, this education by Gurudev was to make a big impact on my life.

We were living in Greater Kailash Part two in New Delhi and the year was 1984. News came that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had been assassinated by her own security guards - Sikh policemen.

We then saw scenes that no human being should ever see in his/ her life.

Mobs of hooligans began to set fire to taxis owned by Sikhs; houses were looted and set on fire; people were being attacked and you could hear blood chilling screams from many directions.

Ours was a residential neighbourhood of regular people who led regular lives. We lived on the first floor of a house owned by a Sikh family, who lived on the ground floor. All too suddenly the implications of his being a Sikh, magnified in my mind shaking me at my very foundation.

I rushed down and removed the owner's name plate from the gate, a name plate that pointed to his Sikh origins.We asked his family to come and hide upstairs in our home. So did the families of the neighbors who were Sikhs.

As the mobs advanced closer to our home and we could hear screams and see smoke rising up in the air, we tried calling the police but were shocked by the fact that no one was answering the phones.

Then I saw from a distanceMr. H.D.S. Malhotra, one of my senior colleagues at Eicher. Malhotra was facing a mob of over a hundred hooligans and pleading with folded hands not to attack the Sikh homes. To see this very short and frail and much older colleague display this extraordinary courage was very moving.

I was deeply inspired and even though I was very fearful, I decided to go in my car to fetch the police or the Army to rescue the community.

I tried to persuade some of my Hindu neighbors to come with me but no one dared to come out. Times were treacherous- everyone was numb with fear. What we were enduring that day was blatant terrorism.

Much to the annoyance of my family, I drove off in my car and had to force my car through the violent mobs who could have attacked my car any time.

Till this day, I have no idea as to how I managed to do what I did. All I can say is, the Guru created a safe path for me. And the courage.

I drove to several police stations to persuade them to send their personnel. However, the few people who were on duty seemed helpless by the scale of the violence that had erupted. So I returned to my home and started pleading with people in the neighbourhood to come out of their homes to protect the

community.

Fortunately some people joined me and seeing us, more started gathering and soon we had several hundred people in a congregation in the Park next to our home.

We started discussing what we needed to do to protect our homes and each person had an idea of his own and there was plenty of confusion.

I silently asked Poojya Gurudev for His guidance and his words came back to me. 'When you are on the right path, the Lord is with you! Join hands and take responsibility as a family and He will lead you!' The memory of that moment is gripping.

I climbed on a high rock in the center of the Park and in a loud voice asked for every one's attention. Surprisingly all of them quietened down and started listening to me. I began to describe a plan to protect our community in which the men would work in teams to do patrolling armed with sticks, air guns and make-shift weapons and the women would serve on vigilance duty from roof tops and start beating utensils to create a din – as a warning should the mobs return (an idea learnt from the stories of India's partition!)

All of them immediately accepted the plan. I was surprised because I was very scared and yet a part of me was so inspired to serve, that the words that came from me sounded like the voice of Gurudev himself to me! The Arjuna condition played out in me to the full. Having started in fear, I also graduated to being healed! In Chapter II explaining Arjuna’s condition, Gurudev says, “Spiritual Grace must necessarily re-orientate the heart and burn away its negativities before the Spirit can radiate its sway upon matter. [...] when the silent Lord, from the Charioteer's seat, started speaking, His words gleamed and landed like lightning on Arjuna to burn his wrong mental tendencies in the fire of shame.”

In the days that followed, the entire community joined hands as one family and many of us did not sleep a wink for many nights! I can only think time and again, that Gurudev brought me -- who was otherwise risk averse -- the courage to dare.

Several more attacks were averted and the loss was restricted to what happened on the day of the assassination.

The events of those days again brought death very close to us - this time due to extreme violence and the dark side of people, unlike the deaths seen in my childhood.

Thanks to Poojya Gurudev's teachings, we developed the resilience and the capacity to take on challenges as the love invoked in our hearts made us, in times to come, far more capable in ways that we had not even imagined!(Shared in my earlier story about the attack on the Taj Hotel, on these pages.)

Life and it's meaning as explained by Gurudev has therefore taught me that once we understand our fear of death and appreciate its spiritual significance, we develop tremendous capacity to take on challenges. The following shlokas from the Geeta are

precious pearls that we should always keep close to our hearts and Gurudev's commentary on them explains this truth brilliantly:

Chapter II, verse 20:

najāyate mriyatevākadāchin nāyaṁ bhūtvābhavitāvānabhūyaḥ
ajonityaḥ śhāśhvato ’yaṁ purāṇo nahanyatehanyamāneśharīre

“The soul is not born, nor does it die; it did not spring from something, and nothing sprang from it. It is unborn, eternal, immortal, and ageless. It is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.”

verse 22

vāsānsijīrṇāniyathāvihāya navānigṛihṇātinaro ’parāṇi
tathāśharīrāṇivihāyajīrṇānya nyānisanyātinavānidehī

As a person sheds worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off its worn-out body and enters a new one

What holds us back is a false sense of self-preservation. But this knowledge is truly empowering and helps us to stay grounded and give off our best -- no matter how difficult the challenges that come our way! May we give of ourselves to preserve the teachings of Gurudev!

155. Mother as Lakshmi

09-10-2015

In the first three days of the Navaratrah we worship Mother as Durga. Gurudev had told us, " ... the first three days □ representing the initial stage of a sadhak who has started on [his] pilgrimage to Freedom and Perfection □ are the invocation of the Mother Terrible. This power is in us; it is only a question of invoking it. ... every power is in it."

We are on a journey to self-perfection. WE know we are imperfect, trapped in the encrustations of vasanas and karmas. Besides there are thousands of enemies inside, negative thoughts, fears, anxieties, vanities, lusts, meanness, jealousy, prejudices, greed.... And some of these are clusters, so that if one finds entrance, a few more come riding on its back. Thus greed comes with selfishness at times. Desire comes with anger; lust could come with dishonesty ...

Gurudev says, " ... a mere elimination of our weaknesses in itself is no achievement permanent; for if the bosom is thus empty, they will again enter by the back door. Or if you guard against them very strictly, some (hitherto) unsuspected vice will thrive the merrier within, for now the whole field is free for it to live upon!"

So alongside eliminating the goblins within, we also need to strengthen ourselves with 'new, healthy, enduring values'. Gurudev says mere 'negative sadhana' ,ie, a drive against the negatives, is not enough; "we must equally emphasise the positive side in our right effort; then only the Purushartha becomes complete and whole.

When we want to remove soap suds collected at the base of a bottle, we first flush it with clean water. As more and more clean water fills the bottle, the soap suds are evicted....

To grow, we need courage, 'bravery, heroism and leadership,' says Gurudev. This is the next stage in self-perfection – growth. "And this is the meaning of worshipping the Goddess Raja-Rajeshwari, SreeMaha Lakshmi, the lady of all aiswarya (divine wealth)."

Later Gurudev explains, "Lakshmi is not the Goddess of Rupees and Paisa nor has She any number in the (Foreign) Dollar-Sterling exchange dances! She is the Goddess of Aishwarya, Devi Sampath, divine wealth. She is the embodiment of love,charity, kindness, devotion, peace, tranquillity, honesty, courage, faith and mumukshatwa (desire for liberation).

"These are to be engendered and the vacancies created by the elimination of the negative qualities must be filled by these positive traits.

"Hence Lakshmi Pooja for 3 days following the Kali Pooja of the first three days.

How pregnant!" [Glory of the Mother, pg 6]

Uniquely, these words have been extracted from a letter that Gurudev wrote on the 20th of October 1950 from Uttarkasi which happened to be VijayaDasami. He wrote this letter to Shri P.B. Menon in Ernakulam. The entire letter is some 2800 (rough calculation) words which has been reproduced as a prelude to a book titled The Glory of the Mother. And the preamble to this prelude says Gurudev started this letter around midnight and completed it at 4 am, the Brahma Muhurta on VijayaDasami. We are lucky to have this prasadam this day.

My understanding:

Many people think of Goddess Lakshmi as the giver of material wealth and so Diwali is celebrated in a confusion of playing cards and gambling. Maha Lakshmi is the benefactor of auspiciousness. Auspicious tidings. She is Sree and Narayana is Sreepatih, the Lord of Goddess Lakshmi (naam 603, vishnusahasranamam). Auspiciousness is the opposite of negativity. Simply stated, it is the continuous experience of shubham. To Grow, to self-purify, to perfect ourselves we are removing the negativity, but alongside we need the experience that we will succeed, that all will be well, that all is well, that I will be able to eradicate all negativities and grow as my Guru wishes me to grow. For this sense of positivity, we need Goddess Maha Lakshmi to shower us with daivisampath. This daivisampath is also elaborated in BG 16:1,2 and 3]

Yadevisarvabhuteshulakshmi - rupenasamsthita
Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyainamonamah

156. I AM NOT IN THEM

10-10-2015

At the end of verse 36 in Chapter 3, Arjuna asks Krishna a question that we all wish to have answered: "What is the exact nature of this SATAN-in-our-bosom which thus systematically loots away the good in us?"

And Krishna replies, “Listen, I SHALL TELL YOU WHO THAT ENEMY IS [...] WHO IS THE SOURCE OF ALL EVIL...”

And in BG 3:37 the Lord explains who this is --

The Blessed Lord Said: It is desire, it is anger born of the "active, " all-devouring, all-sinful; know this as the foe here (in this world). (3:37)

Desire, anger, etc are the moods that loot away our innate nature, our Blissful Awareness.
We try to manage them again through thoughts and the ego. These negative tendencies cannot be weakened by direct combat, as in the case of Vali. He has to be fought through shrewd strategy.

We have to know all negative emotions belong to the mind which is not me.

This awareness and consequent indifference to the ever changing mind, plus being aware of me the Self as it's substratum and the One who illumines the mind, □ this awareness will make me transcend the mind, not identify with its play. This is a permanent solution in contrast to ‘managing the mind’ which also has its place.

Thus anger, desire etc are in me, but I am not in anger etc.

This is taught by Sri Gurudev emphatically and effectively through the mantra in BG 7:12 where he says:

Whatever beings (and objects) that are pure, active and inert, know them to proceed from Me; yet, I am not in them, they are in Me.

Na tuahamteshutey Maye

And Gurudev explains:

The Infinite Consciousness is the Supreme Reality, the Spirit, upon which matter, constituting Its lower-nature, is but an APPARENT experience. They all rise from the Truth, inasmuch as all the waves rise from the ocean, all mud-pots rise from the mud, all ornaments made of gold come from gold.

My understanding
Just as matter is just the lower nature of Consciousness and just an APPARENT experience by the Spirit, likewise my anger and jealousy etc are my lower nature and merely an experience experienced by Me. (The ghost is an 'appearance'; anger is an 'apparent experience'.)

The destinies of the waves and the bubbles, their sorrows, do not affect the ocean since the waves are merely an expression of its lower nature. They rise and fall in the Ocean. When a wave is born or dies, or crushed by another wave, the ocean is not affected, for the wave is a mere form of the ocean -- risen from water and it returns to water, a temporary name and form.

So too all my emotions appearing in me, sorrows, anger, agitations, confusions -- arise in me and disappear into me as though waves and bubbles. They cannot affect me, as it is only an appearance. They are in me, I am not in them.

POST AND GHOST

GURUDEV follows this with another metaphor that is often used in Vedanta and says, "The post can only explain that,"the ghost of your vision had risen from me alone inasmuch as I alone lend to it (the ghost) its existence; but I the post, am not in the ghost." So, too, shall the ocean cry, "the waves rise, stay and dissolve away in me; but I am not in the waves."

My understanding
The post is not in the ghost since when the ghost disappears, the post does not disappear. In the 'appearance (ghost)' the substratum is not there. But the 'appearance (ghost) 'itself depends on the substratum.

So too the waves are in the ocean. The ocean is not restricted by the waves since when the waves subside, the ocean is still there. This example is again to explain ONLY the superimposition of wave on ocean and the transient nature of waves.

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

157. If they were to bring the same enthusiasm…?!

11-10-2015



One day, a basket of fresh vegetables arrived from the fields across the highway. Thelocal ladies sat down on the verandah and started work on them. They shelled the fresh green peas and assiduously picked the leaves of the methi and spinach, discarding the stems. All the vegetable waste was collected together to be fed to the goats tethered nearby. Pujya Gurudev watched this from his upstairs window. “See”, he said. “Ladies practice viveka at all times, even while preparing vegetables for the pot. If they were to bring the same enthusiasm and vigour to practising sat-asat viveka…” He trailed off.

***

(Source: Article by Smt. Bharati Sukhatankar published in August 2004, Tapovan Prasad)

158. MOTHER AS SARASWATI LEADS US TO ....

12-10-2015

Nitya Mukta

Chinmayoham!

The Last Three Days of Navaratrah

Goddess Lakshmi is the embodiment of love, charity, kindness, devotion, peace and these are the qualities Gurudev wanted us to work on during the 2nd trimester of the Navaratri and fill the space left by the negative qualities that Ma Kali removed on the first three days of Navaratri.

Having done this, the jiva qualifies as a Adhikari to be initiated to the philosophical side of religion, says Gurudev. Here the student is told about the "Supreme Reality, the state of Sat-Cit-Ananda and the State of Sivoham" – and the final "waking from this dream of samsara into the realisation that "I am the all-pervading knowledge in itself …… where the experience is 'I am God'.

[…] This knowledge is the last and finalstage in the evolution of Man. …."

If we recall that this letter was being written in the middle of night going into Brahma Muhurtam, we can feel the passion with which Gurudev says these words one variation over another:

"There the mortal rises to become the immortal.

"Death has no more strings for him – beyond death beyond birth, beyond the maddening cruelties of "Dharma" and Adharma", pleasure and pain, heat and cold, success and failure, love and hatred. The Sadhaka drops his deluded conception - "I am man, devotee," and realises, remembers – "I am He!" NityaMuktaChinmayoham!"

One wonders at the passion driving these words and the burst of the explanations following one after another. And to experience the fire of Gurudev's words, they are being placed as separate lines… although he said them all in one sentence:

"With the knowledge "I and Siva are one –

I in Siva, Siva in me;

Siva is Jagat;

Jagat is naught but in Siva;

Siva alone is;

“I am” is a conception which is Jagat and Jagat is not in Him, the Siva!

Sivoham-Sivoham: the man has risen to Godhood.

Jnana is the last stage through which the sadhak – the bhakta walks to reach this Native House of his, the ParamPadam, the Godman Stage of Absolute Perfection.”

These words come out like tongues of flame of the same blaze that are passionately explaining.... Sharp, hot, red and powerful.

So how does Goddess Lakshmi lead to Goddess Saraswati? Gurudev says, “Mother Saraswati is the Goddess of Jnana. Her veena (a plucked string musical instrument) is tuned within when the heart strings are polished off its [...]asuric sampath, the non-divine traits.

“The strings are tuned when the inner heart strings are adjusted with the cultivated Devi Sampath.

“In the resulting peace, the bhakta sees his Lord in the Peaceful, Purified Within.

"The soft floating tunes waft from within as the Lady of Veena passes Her tender fingers blessingly over thy heartstrings.

“The music is the magic touch that turns the Premi into Prem!

"The Lover into Love!

"The Siva Bhakta melts in that music of the Within and becomes one with Siva!

"As SreeSaraswati sings Her Divine Song of Joy, the KalyanaMuhurta, the auspicious moment of wedding is on. The devotee is In wedlock BOUND TO THE Lord of her heart for ever! [Gurudev points out that the devotee is considered the bride - hence the feminine pronoun -- and the Lord the bridegroom!]

“This wedding is the Success Supreme – the achievement is incomparable, the victory absolute!

“After this marriage, there is no more kartavya (duty or obligation). “I am Siva! I am Siva!”

..... Now, I am He. He am I. This is the great victory, the total Victory, the Vijayam!

And now Gurudev sums it up with, “Thus in 9 days in three stages, even the ignorant is made to go through the right invocations in their required sequence of worship, ...

And tomorrow Gurudev will tell us about the 10th day!

159. OPTIMISING ON THE GUNAS

13-10-2015

“ We stand as one Family, bound to each other with love and respect”.....

This opening line of the Chinmaya Mission Pledge had a big influence in my upbringing. Swami Chinmayananda, the great spiritual master and our teacher, treated all of us like one big family. He lived the ancient Sanskrit statement “VasudhevaKutumbakam” (The world is one family). He treated everyone he met - children, grown-ups and older people with love and respect and made everyone feel special. He always had a kind word to say to the “back office” staff and the workers doing jobs like cleaning, cooking etc. and included them as “family”.

So it was natural that we took these lessons to the work places in which we worked. This encouraged people to form special bonds and stay “connected” long after they stopped working in the same organisation. This also enabled people to seek each other’s support when faced not just with professional challenges but also personal crises.

An important aspect that we learnt from Gurudev was to appreciate each person for his/her strength and uniqueness rather than compare one with another and focus on weaknesses. In a family, he said, we do not abandon each other if a member has some perceived short coming.

One particular example of this comes to my mind. We had recruited a colleague of ours from Eicher as a senior manager. He had very good educational qualifications but was not “fitting into the company”. We rotated him across two different locations in two different divisions and yet he was “assessed” as unsuitable for our requirements and I was given the unpleasant job of asking him to leave the company (I was the Head of HR of the group at that time). I was however not convinced of the decision and persuaded my seniors to give him one more chance (we normally gave only two chances to enable a person to perform under two different supervisors). They reluctantly agreed. I then moved him to my own extended team that was responsible for both the HR and TQM functions. We decided to welcome him as “family” and over the next one year, decided to change our approach in dealing with him.

When he moved to our team, he had come with the experience of being given continuous feedback for a few years on his developmental areas, where he had been struggling inhis work. We decided to appreciate him for his “capacity” and found many reasons to recognise him and told him that we believed in his “potential”. He was also given lots of training in many new areas. To our surprise, he went on to become a real asset in our firm and later became a top level “star” consultant in our consulting business!

Point being made is, Gurudev himself had brought us up like that, so that he mined our latent skills and converted them into assets. Never had he made us feel worthless or inferior and in the context of the Mission where work is immense, being ineffective could be a difficulty for other workers and sevaks.

And that was how we came to learn that everyone does not come with badges on his lapels. It is the job of a team leader to mine the skill in a team player and put it to use. Had we not watched him do it, we would not have handled this colleague with such respect.

In a similar situation, we were to be faced with a colleague's marriage prospects ruined by exactly this rejection of weaknesses. This is what happened. Her parents of modest financial means had been unable to find her a match. Before long a business partner of our company introduced her to a nice man settled in the US who was of Indian origin. They liked each other and she was convinced that he was the "right" person for her. Her parents then began the process of matching their "horoscopes" with the help of a family astrologer.

Now this matching of horoscopes is a matching of gunas and doshas, putting people behind labels. As it happened, the astrologer rejected the alliance saying they were poorly matched and even threatened that one of them would die!

Our colleague's parents therefore refused to permit the marriage. This broke the heart of the young lady.

My wife Neera and I, then met her parents. We explained how Gurudev discouraged us from following superstitions and instead advised them to look at the character and values of the groom (as Gurudev would have done) rather than matching their so called 'stars'! After two hours of talking to them, the girl's father was teary eyed and said, 'We leave this as the responsibility of your Guru!' and gave his consent to the marriage.

Today 17 years hence the lady and her 'mismatched' husband remain in happy wedlock, sealed with two children!

The important point here is not so much the happy ending but the ability to convey Gurudev's teachings to non-devotee friends and help them see the illogic of superstition.

Gurudev's teachings guided us to remind us that just like a family does not disown a member, likewise, if we wished to build a similar "community" in organizations, we have to enable each person to succeed by bringing out the best in him/her. He encouraged us to develop a "sattvic" vision by which we would recognize that all human beings had the same "indestructible reality or consciousness"
and he explained it so well in his commentary of Chapter 18 verse 20 of the BhagwadGeeta:

Sarvabhutesuyenaikambhavamavyayamiksate

Avibhaktamvibhaktesutajjananamviddhisattvikam

That by which one sees the one indestructible reality in all beings, undivided in the divided, know that “knowledge” as SATTVIC (Pure).

And in explaining this shloka Gurudev with reference to the gunas, said, “These detailed descriptions […] are given here not for the purpose of judging and classifying others, but for the seeker to UNDERSTAND HIMSELF. A true student of culture and self-development must try to maintain himself as far as possible, in the Sattwic temperament. By self-analysis, we can diagnose ourselves, and immediately remedy the defects in us.”

He further advised us that we should not try to find faults in others by observing ”entities of distinct kinds” and labeling them as bad or incompetent. He said such judgements founded about others to suit our own selfish desires were of a “Rajasic kind” and has explained it very well in his commentary on Shloka 21 of Chapter 18 of the Geeta.

Psthaktavenatu yajjnanamnanabhavan prthagvidhan

Vetti sarvesubhutesu tajjnanamviddhi rajasam

But that “knowledge” which clings, sees in all beings, various entities of distinct kinds,(and) as different from one another, know that knowledge as RAJASIC(Passionate).

Thanks to his Blessings and guidance, we were naturally groomed in the art of managing with love and compassion for which words will never suffice in expressing gratitude.We treated each other as one family, helped and supported one another and attempted to look at positives in each other in good as well as challenging times. This is the reason why many Chinmaya Mission family members are seen to bring this philosophy in all the communities and organizations that they are part of in all parts of the world. This is his glory, his grandeur. We often felt he gave us far more in lessons than what our parents did.

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, a long standing devotee of Gurudev

160. The Tenth Day - Vijayadashmi

14-10-2015

A Sadhana So Rare....



Gurudev has explained the significance of the 9 nights for a sadhaka, in most spectacular manner in a letter to Shri P.B. Menon, written non stop from 12 midnight, on VijyaDashmi day, sitting in Uttarkasi, completing it on the dawn of Dashami, at brahma muhurta.

While this should have been posted on Dashami, there was a delay. But reading this – even if late -- we will now be fully equipped to know what attitude we must have

during Navaratrah and what we must aim to accomplish and what the Mother is accomplishing for us. Or we create our own 10-day cleansing period!

Once Goddess Saraswati has worked Her wonder and the jeeva has been wedded to the Lord Supreme, he cries, “I am He, He am I!”. This is the great victory, the Vijayam, says Gurudev.

Now we read on:

“Thus in nine days in three stages, even the ignorant is made to go through the right inviocations in their required sequences of worship, and on the 10th day, make a huge bonfire of the ‘devil – the samsarin in me, the mortal who dreamt and wept his dreams. The ever weeping, stupid, limited, wretched, self-arrogating Ego, “I, Mr. so-and-so,” is a lie, a dream phantom! Only the Lord is: Thou art the Lord.

“With the jnanam “I am He”, the wretch the perishable body with its bundles of relationhsips, duties, hopes and desires, that Gross Caricature of the Lord (I, Mr. so-and-so) is hooted at, laughed at, and in a merry procession, taken to the burning place and burnt by the very hands that made it: you yourself in festive joy will then once and for ever light this bonfire of the Devil (namely) – ‘I, Mr. So-and-so.’

“With the end of this mithyajnan, false notion, ends all sorrows all limitations.

“I am God – I am the All – All are in Me.”

“The great day of Dassera literally means “Dasa – papa – hara” – the end of the ten sins, the Vijaya Dashami day, the day of SreeParameshwaraprapatti, Attainment of the Supreme Lord!!

“The main ten sins are the temptations of the 10 indriyas. Through the indriyas, the sense impulses reach the mind; these impulses form the food of the mind. The mind thrives and grows fat upon these impulses. The mind is the Ghost stuff that throws the terrible shadow of the “I, Mr. So-and-so”. The ego comes to be. And identifying oneself with this ego, one becomes mortal, afraid, bound, gagged, weeping in agony and despair!

“Dassera is the victory over the senses, over the mind which ends in the disappearance of the dreadful shadow “I”, that cauldron of weaknesses, yearnngs, slavery, imperfections. When mind is off, what remains is the Blissful, the Omnipotent and Omniscient mass of beauty and grandeur, the Supreme Mother!!

“Bring about a Dasshera in thy life. Celebrate the life’s VijayaDashmi – through purushaartha, which in the bhakta is not a stupendous task of adventure and strife, but a pleasant Pooja festival – a Mahanavami Celebration.

Sing His Names. It is only for the beginner the rule: “Half hour japa in the

morning". But to the developed, it is a purposeful self- charging: this morning and evening japa. All the rest of the time, mental smaran (remembrance) and Jap must go on. The sastras declare that 'Nitya-nirantara' God Consciousness is the way and the goal. "Nitya" means daily, day-by-day, so long as this body is alive. "Nirantara" means ever – every moment of each day's wakeful hour. In short, now you, by wrong Abhyas (practice) through millions of births, have come to keep a 'nitya-nirantara-dehasmaran' – "I am Mr. So-and-so." This is never forgotten, and without any particular conscious effort on your part, it is ever and ever ceaselessly chanting from within, "I am I"; "I am I".

"In a perfect God-man also there is such an endless inner music: I am I", "I am I" – only with this difference : in the samsarin, I is the body; to the God-man, I is the Lord, the Supreme Reality.

"Replace the body consciousness with God consciousness – is the WAY for the Goal to be reached – where is eternal peace, all Power, Pure Existence, Light-Bliss-Knowledge-GOD.

"Now you know everything. As a Guru, Chinmaya has initiated you to the Vidya Supreme – the Para Vidya. You are told about the Destination, you are told the route. Enough 'means-to-go' has been placed at your disposal: NishkamaSeva (selfless service), Divine Life, the Mala (Rosary), the Diary and the knowledge.

"Now – so long! Fare thee well!! Good bye to the samsarin!

"Step on the accelerator: dash through the open wie road of bhakti (devotion to the Lord); only don't sleep at the wheels!!

"Be alert, avoid the wayside 'lamp-posts' and 'trees'. They are sufficiently far way from the route. Have enough 'food and water' with thee.

"Replensih the stock" on the way – never spare any chance to serve even the poorest of poor. Love all, even the criminal, the liar, the thief.

"Show love to hatred; answer with kindness, all injury. Embrace even a serpent or a tiger with as much affection as your child. Respect every woman as your Mother; keep unfailing brahmacharya!

"This is the water to sustain thee on the way, very precious. Tell yourself: "I am the servant of all; for the All is my Master, My Lord.

"Be good, do good, be kind and pure. No anger, no hatred, no pride. Meek and modest, level in both joy and sorrow, praise and curse, a Shanta Murti, embodiment of peace, of immense power, yet kind and humble, live thy life of Dassera! Burn down the ugly monstrous Rakshasa roopa, (demoniac form), that we have ourselves built up in the previous nights; and in the joy and holiday and revelry, dance around the wrecked blazing monster – the 'I'.

"Renounce 'I' – you have renounced all. And thus become a Jnanai, a God-man at home!

“This is possible; in a wink this transformation can take place. Have confidence , courage, and determination: Perfection is then already thine!!”

Hari Om.

161. WHEN FAMILY DOES NOT SUPPORT SPIRITUAL PATH

15-10-2015

The texts often talk about 'staying in abidance'. The Gita uses this phrase too. I cannot recall if Gurudev used this phrase, but he said something else which enables this abidance. Gurudev talks about 'the fragrance of an integrated personality'. And in his commentary in Chapter 5:12 he says, "Peace is an unbroken sense of joy, and it is the fragrance of an integrated personality."

Peace. This quality is shaken when a devotee does not have the support of family in his or her spiritual pursuit....like when spouse does not wish to join in; like when children are against all things God... or when devotee wants to invite an acharya home for bhiksha but senses that there may not be all-round support. Then peace is crushed.

Yes, such questions were gently posed to Gurudev in various informal chats, satsangs, and during His discourses on Bhagavad Gita -- what one has to do if the spouse and/or the family do not support the spiritual pursuit.

Gurudev's answer was very straightforward and clear, in His usual fashion.

"We all come to this world with our own bundle of Vasanas. You are exhausting yours by pursuing the spiritual path. Your family has different vasanas and they are exhausting theirs in a different way. You can try to convince them to come for satsangs or attend discourses or spiritual camps, but if they don't want to, do not push them or put extraordinary pressure on them. Not only may they not agree with you, they might even turn antagonistic, obstructing your own pursuit. When they come in contact with a Mahatma, either by choice or by accident (?), they themselves will realize that spirituality is not a bad thing and may start their own pursuit. I have seen this happen many times where the spouses or the children that did not have any interest in the spiritual path have themselves become staunch devotees and true seekers."

"The children have a tendency to disagree with the parents, not only about spirituality, but about many other things. It is natural that they think that they are smarter, more analytical and logical than their parents. Many of them equate spirituality with orthodoxy. It is not their fault. It is because the parents, themselves, do not know how to answer their queries and thus they are not convinced. When once they meet the Swami, their doubts are cleared. I have seen many children of our devotees who had reluctantly attended Balavihar and CHYK classes, but they force their own children to attend Balavihar classes. The foundation and the seeds that were sown never go wasted. They will germinate and blossom at the right time."

Even with all this understanding we want to know why we get disturbed. Gurudev

points to attachment. “Personal attachments cloud our objectivity and our sense of dharma,” he says in Chapter 1.

तस्मान्नार्हावयंहन्तुंधार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान्
स्वजनंहिकथंहत्वासुखिनःस्याममाधव ||1.37||

"Therefore, we should not kill the sons of Dhrithrashtra, our own relatives; for how can we be happy by killing our own people, O Madhava?"

Like Arjuna asks, ‘how can we be happy killing our own people?’ our restlessness sprouts from ‘how can I be happy with my Guru when my own people are not partaking of that same happiness?’ So we seek to bring them all into the fray.

Attachments cause agitations. There is a shadow of like and dislike. Family member not accompanying me is dislikeable, but we do not wish to feel that dislike: one because that is family member and two because we have been taught by Gurudev not to harbour likes and dislikes.

In BG 3:34 Gurudev explains lucidly what these likes and dislikes do.Likes and dislikes belong to the ego, he says there. “In order to detach ourselves from both our likes and dislikes, we have to get rid of our false ego-centric vanities. (Likes and dislikes belong to the ego.) Therefore, all egoless acts as we have explained earlier accomplish a purgation of Vasanas. Vasanas create the mind; where the mind is, there revels the ego. To the extent the Vasanas have been reduced, to that extent the mind has become non-existent. Where the mind has ended there the reflection of the Consciousness in it, called the ego also has ended.”

Just a little earlier, in this same chapter, Gurudev suggests that, attachment comes bearing a certain poison.

सक्ताःकर्मण्यविद्वांसोयथाकुर्वन्तिभारत
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसङ्ग्रहम् ||3.25||

"As the "ignorant" men act from attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the "wise" men act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world."

What I understand therefore is that, one should act without attachment here and not desire that family and others also join me in spiritual study. Instead one must, wishing greater good, work on the environment in which we live. It would seem that even attachment to spirituality is an attachment but we can use this for greater good of a vaster community.

As Gurudev says in his commentary to this same verse, giving Arjuna a way forward --

“Here the practical method suggested is that Arjuna should work, unattached to his own ego-centric, limited concept of himself and his relations, and he must enter into the battle-field as a champion fighting for a cause, noble and righteous, against the armies that have come up to question and challenge the deathless values of higher living as propounded and upheld by the Hindu culture.”

This should be our attitude. Stay steadfast with our spiritual drive and sadhana, unattached to our definition of family and the desire that they follow our path. Knowing that they have different vasanas and a different journey therefore, we extend our service to the larger community.

As only Gurudev can say, “Jana-seva is Janardhana-seva. Nara-seva is Narayana-seva.”

Sent by Shri ApparaoMukkamala

162. The Battle of Illu and Billu

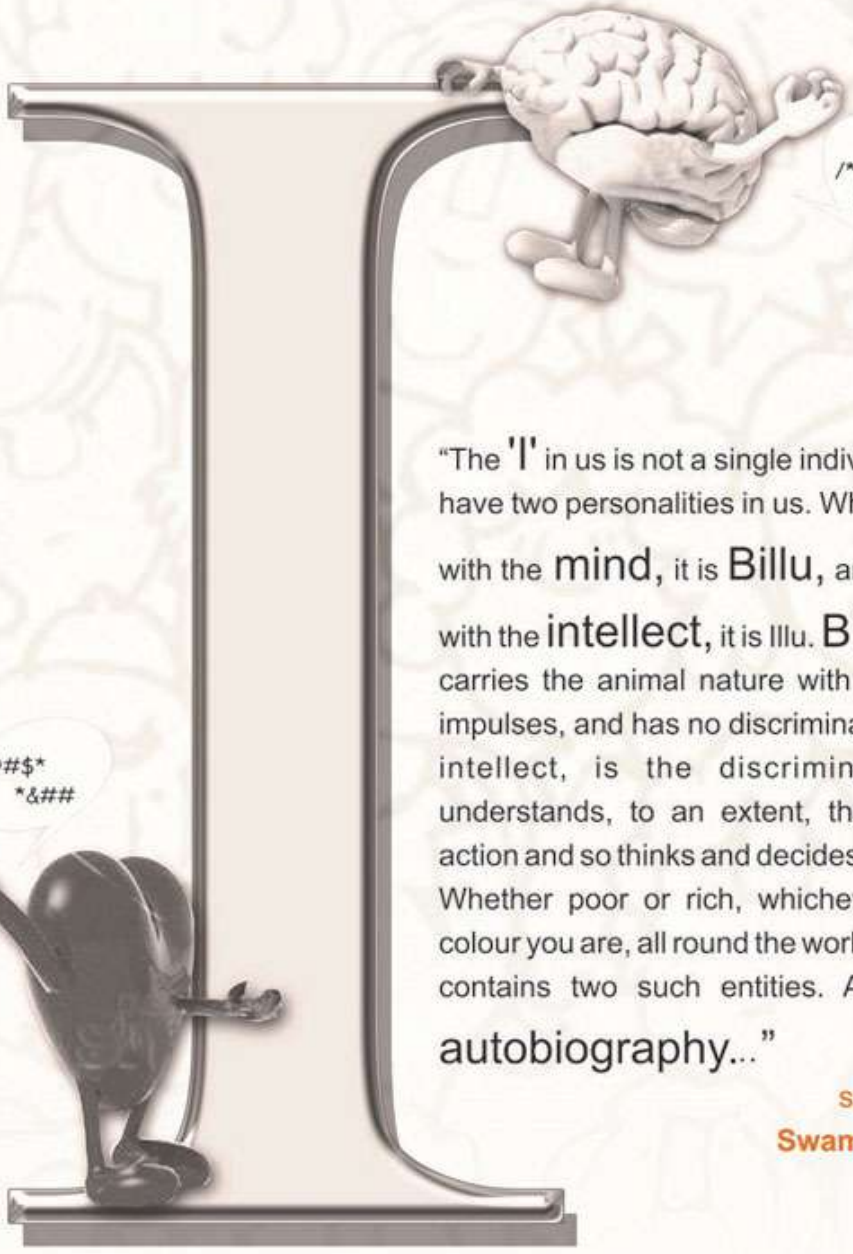
16-10-2015

Chinmaya Puduchery had collected these great lessons from Gurudev and wished to compile it into a calendar but for various reasons it did not happen.

But Gurudev wishes that these little nuggets enrich our lives during His 100th year with us.....

Billu & Illu

CHINMAYA 2015

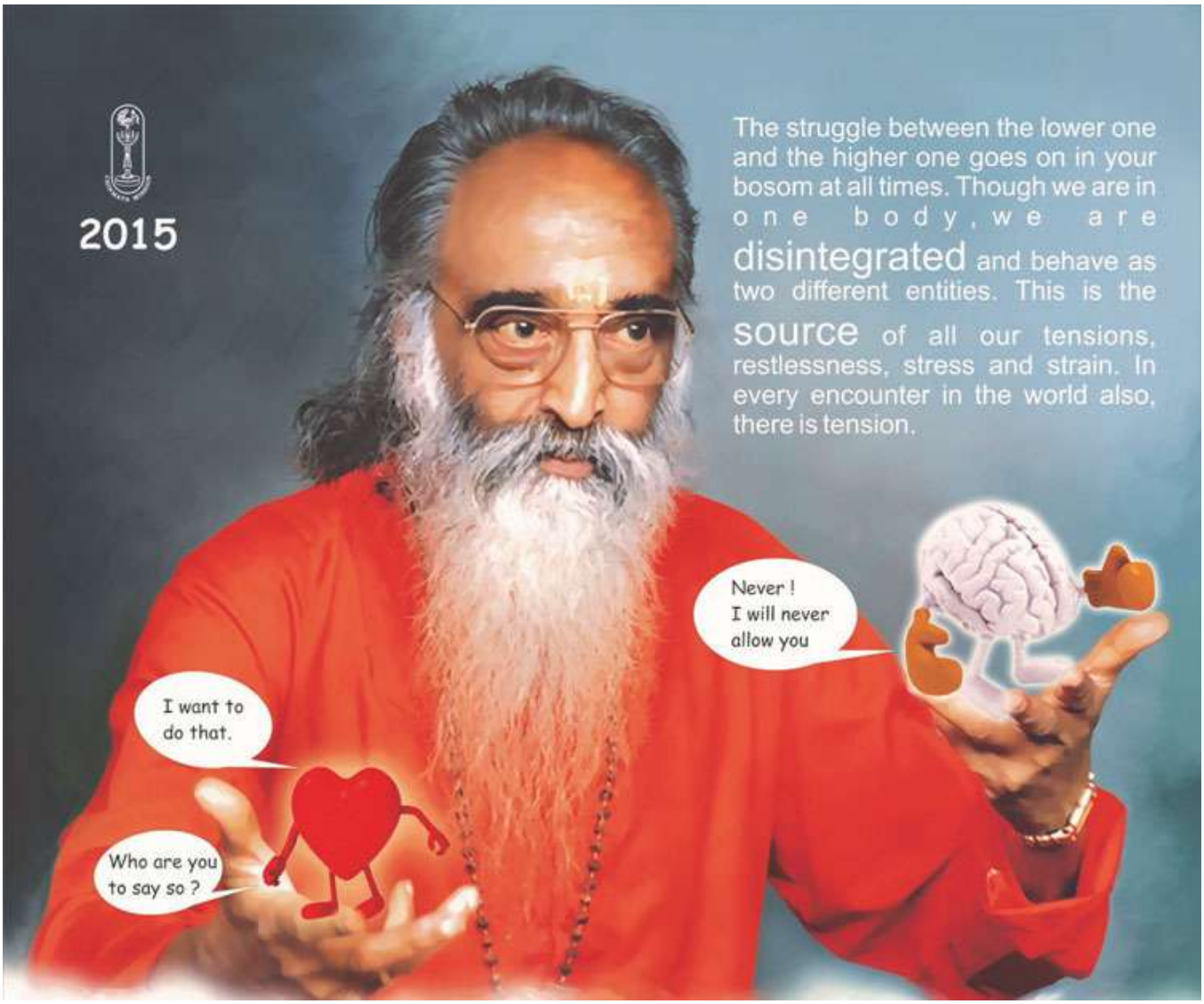


"The 'I' in us is not a single individual; it is a pair. We have two personalities in us. When we are identified with the mind, it is Billu, and when we are one with the intellect, it is Illu. Billu is undeveloped, carries the animal nature with all its instincts and impulses, and has no discriminative power. Illu, the intellect, is the discriminative power. He understands, to an extent, the consequences of action and so thinks and decides.

Whether poor or rich, whichever caste, creed or colour you are, all round the world, the human bosom contains two such entities. All this is our own autobiography..."

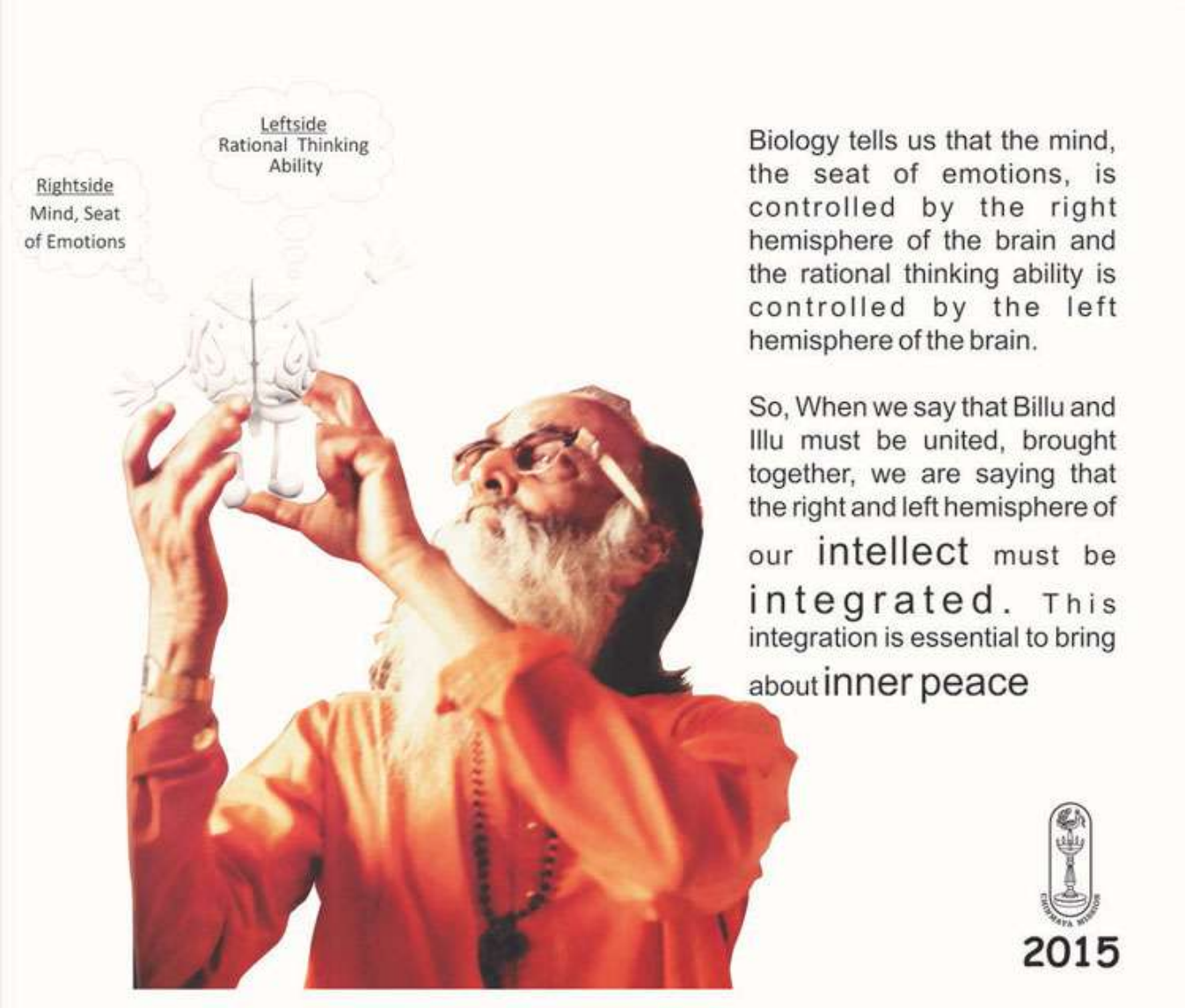
says **Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.**

The Battle of Illu and Billu



163. Balancing Act With Illu & Billu

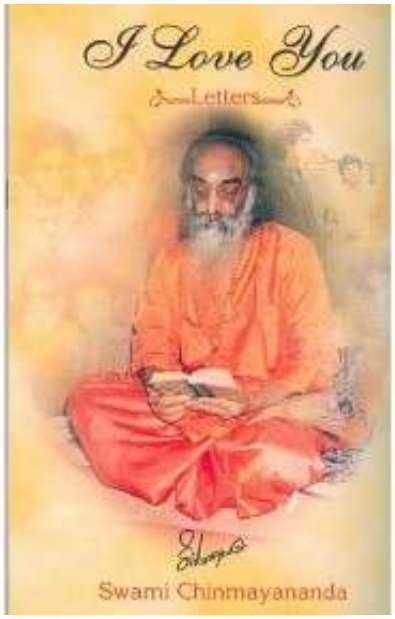
17-10-2015



164. LOVE – THE BEST YOGA

18-10-2015

As we evolve in our sensitivity, we grow increasingly disillusioned with even the best that the world can offer, since we know they are finite, shallow and conditioned.
It is then that we start seeking solutions outside the known fields.
Initially, till we have developed the subtlety of intuitive grasp and till we meet the right guru, we have lots of concepts □ rather, misconceptions, about this state beyond materiality; this state where we are disillusioned by the world. rejecting anything that the world tries to give us to hold our interest. This state of utter dispassion and vairagya where the world is not able to hold our interest. Until we reach that state, we have only heard acharyas and texts talk about this alluring state. And they talk with so much attraction for this state, whereas at best we think of this state as 'heaven'; as a state of no birth; as a state where we reach God and so on.



Even when we are lucky to get a reasonable understanding of what this state is, we are confused about the paths we may adopt to get to this state – Karma, Gnana, Yoga, Meditation, upasana, Bhakti, or a combination of some of these, or all of these, or which is better, which is all comprehensive.... and so on.

Amongst all these, the path of love is best suited for all since there is no one who does not know or like love! It is in accordance with our essential nature. Where

there is love there is happiness.

Total love leads to Total happiness, our goal. Isn't that what we aim to achieve – the state of complete, unchanging Bliss? And to attain that, all we need to do is upgrade the love we know, till we reach the perfect state of love. This also makes our material life comfortable, enjoyable. This therefore is THE solution for all our needs ▫ material and spiritual.

Now to hear it in the rich and profound words of Paramapujya Gurudev – there is a little compilation of his letters to children called I Love You! – a CCMT Publication. Here are some lovely nuggets from that book – in whose very construct we see the yoga of love clearly.

** "The only moments when he is happy and at peace are the moments when he discovers an impersonal union with others in love." [Letter 4]

** "Love no doubt is the only solution for man's problem of existence." [Letter 2]

** "The Lord in our heart is the very centre of all love and hence we express in all our love outside only love for ourself. The outer world is but an expression of the One Self which is in all---Sri Narayana." [Letter 9]

** "From the Self alone all is known in its entirety. Until we discover this Spiritual centre in ourselves, the God in us, we will be confused, miserable, unsatisfied, disturbed, and an enigma to ourselves and to others."

** "Love alone is the path. It alone has the necessary penetration to reach the required depth to rediscover the Real Essence in us and others around us the One Infinite Self. [Letter 8]

** "It is the privilege of man to love. It is the dignity of a devotee to love all His creatures. It is the beauty of life that we have this faculty in us to love. Only we have to cultivate and enrich it in our heart. [Letter 5]
** "One who knows how to give love, is living God upon earth. To gain this mastery is highest achievement in life. Thereafter you are never lonely--the whole world is yours." [Letter 9]

Here is a passage from the book Twelve Precious Pearls, published by Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. Quoting Sri Gurudev --
"Love is the heart of religions, the theme of all classical works of arts and literature and the song of all devotees. Scientists know only what love does -- not what love is. Love can indeed empty our asylums, perhaps all our prisons, may be all our hospitals. People suffer in life due to lack of love. Love is to human hearts what the Sun is to flowers.

"Love grows with the knowledge of the beloved. To love therefore is to know--yet to know is not necessarily love.
"We may often give without love, but we can never love without giving.
"Love is at once noun and verb. Love is something to be sustained and fulfilled by loving. By loving alone can love be made to grow and thrive.

"And our work is love made visible! When love is made to manifest, work is done. When we work only to produce profit or wages work becomes crushing, sweating, joyless labour.

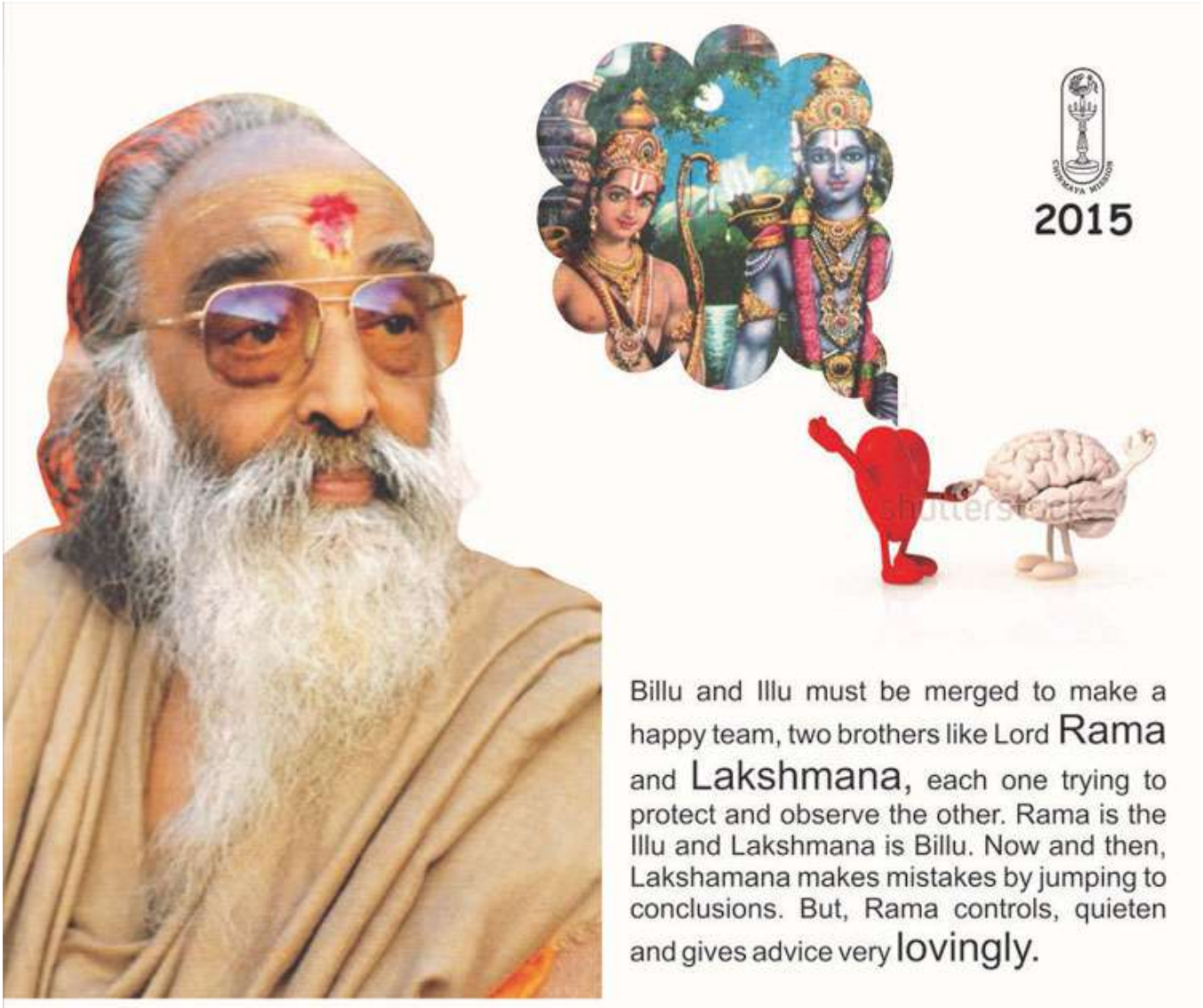
"With love in our heart, let us put forth effort and flood the world with our work!"

Yes, let us...!

Sent by
Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

165. Billu and Illu - Brotherhood

19-10-2015



166. Building Stamina- The Cause is the Key

20-10-2015

Ever since I can remember, I was deeply inspired by the “Presence” of our Spiritual teacher, Swami Chinmayananda.

Whenever, he was in “our city”, we would go to meet him in the “early hours” of the morning. I often accompanied my father at 430 am to visit our “Guru”. We would stand outside his room, waiting for him to open the door. His “table lamp” would be switched on and through the gap in the curtain on the window, we could see that he was already at work at 5 am! He would personally read every letter addressed to him(emails had not started then) and reply to each person in his own handwriting! At 530 am, we would serve him his morning coffee and he would go back to work!

He conducted four classes a day, held several meetings and worked tirelessly from 1951 to 1993- the year he attained “Mahasamadhi”. What was even more amazing was that his schedule was published 15 months in advance and he did not spend more than 1 or 2 weeks in one place. He travelled the world and in his work-lifetime of 42 years, the Mission established 300 centres, nearly 100 schools, orphanages, hospitals, and old age homes.

He was a diabetic and had heart surgery on more than one occasion! In fact with a fraction of his heart working, he was travelling and delivering talks to huge audiences and inspiring people in his inimitable style in different corners of the globe!!

And through all this, he was always “smiling” and loving even when his body gave him trouble!! A quote ascribed to him: Brood less, Smile More, Serve all….

We often wondered where his inexhaustible energy came from. And the answer came from his own words – “When the cause is such that it inspires you and makes our world a happier place, the Lord makes you His instrument to do His work”.

Two incidents from my own life come to my mind as I reflect about how that impacted me and my colleagues. In 2006, we decided to work on a lifelong dream of entering the field of education. We chose to transfer our HR consulting business to our global partners and raised “Capital” to set up the School Of Inspired Leadership, SOIL. We were inspired to take the message of Gurudev to the world of business by starting a new MBA Program that would be a game changer in the field of “Higher Education”.

It took us two years to start the work on the Project as I had to handover the responsibilities of leading the consulting business to our Global partners and the transition was planned to take that much time.

Meanwhile, we applied for permission to the local authorities to ”demarcate” the land that we had purchased for this purpose many years back.

Then began the nightmare of dealing with the Government servants. No matter what we did, the process did not move forward.

After making over 30 trips to meet these officials, we were told that another Government department had made a road on a portion of our land and till that matter was resolved, we could not start our project!

All along, there were local touts approaching us to ‘get approvals’ for a fee! Many of the officials themselves seemed to suggest that we could get our work done by following a certain ‘process’.However, we were very clear that we would never bribe any official and listen to these middlemen. That was not the foundation for our school! That would be a violation of what Gurudev had taught us!

So we kept pleading with the authorities and approached senior leaders in the Government for their help.

This process was extremely trying and after 18 months of intense follow up, our file was still not approved!

Meanwhile, I had handed over my role in the consulting business to my successor, and hired a team to begin working on the new project.

Our Founding team invited 25 friends from Industry to gather over three days at the beautiful Ashram of Chinmaya Mission at Sidhbari in the Himalayas from 30th September to 2nd October 2008.

We had some amazing dialogue with this group and co-created the Vision and adopted a set of values for the School Of Inspired Leadership (SOIL).

On the last day, a friend asked a critical question: ‘When do you start?’ and I answered that we hope to hold our first class with our first cohort on the day of the Full Moon to honor our Guru in July(on Guru Poornima)! So the friend asked: ‘Is your campus building constructed?’ and I was embarrassed to say that we had not even managed to get the land ‘demarcated’!!

Then I poured my heart out and shared stories of extreme difficulties of dealing with the Government authorities and as I shared more, people started getting angry with the system!

All too suddenly I began to realize that all this focusing on the negatives, was causing the positive energy of the previous days to diminish.

Then a friend suggested that we should go and listen to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was giving talks at Mcleodganj, just 30 minutes away.

The Dalai Lama was a friend of Gurudev and many of us had met him in the past and were very inspired by Him. So we readily accepted the suggestion.

That day His Holiness delivered a talk on 'Forgiveness and Reconciliation'.

We came back to the Ashram after a very moving experience and gathered in a circle near the 'Memorial ' of our teacher(the shrine in which His body has been laid to rest).

We decided to pray and asked for forgiveness for the corrupt and sent a text message to the senior Government official of the following kind:

'Dear Sir,

We are a group of 25 leaders who have gathered here in the Holy Ashram of Swami Chinmayananda and have co-created a new vision for building leaders who will make our world better.

After listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama today, we sincerely pray that you will give us your blessings by approving our case'.

We closed our eyes and sat in silence.

After a few minutes, my phone beeped, announcing an incoming message.

The message read: "Your file has been approved"!!!

We could not believe our eyes and it took us some time to realize that after a very frustrating and back breaking period of 18 months, finally, we had got the green signal to begin work on our dream project!!

Then began work at a frantic speed to meet our deadlines.

We had to find an architect and contractor who was willing to accept our work with such challenging time frames.Many of the top architects refused our work!

We spoke to Swami Tejomayananda, the World Wide Head of Chinmaya Mission for advice and he said: 'Invoke the name of Gurudev and start the work by choosing people who want to work with you rather than the big names who do not want to risk their reputation'!!

We found two such local agencies who had never done such projects but were willing to give it their best shot!

We began work and the next seven months were a period in which the small start-up team of SOIL worked day and night and found inner reservoirs of energy and stamina which we did not even know existed!

We still do not know how we completed this 5 floor building in 6 months- furnished and ready to hold its first class!

On Gurupurnima day, we had a very joyful function with over 250 people- friends , Business leaders, NGO leaders, spiritual teachers, potential students etc!

Looking back, I realize that the stamina to believe in our cause despite the enormous difficulties and the vision to make a difference came together to enable SOIL to be born.

It is as if Gurudev and the Lord Himself was testing our values to earn the right to set up a school that would teach 'Inspired Leadership! Truly, truly!

Gurudev has brilliantly explained in his commentary to Chapter 12 of the BhagwadGeeta that a person who is a true practitioner of the path of 'Yoga' or the path of devotion develops enormous resilience.

As given in shloka 15 of this chapter, neither does he agitate the world nor does he get agitated by the world! He who does not harm anyone in the world and from whom the world is not agitated, and he who knows no joy, envy, fear and anxiety, that devotee is dear to me.(BG 12:15)

When we combine the two learnings above we realise that resilience is a function of inner quiet and inner quiet is a function of absence of agitations and that is a function of an integration within. In Gurudev's words: PEACE is the mental condition in the bosom of the individual when his inner world is not agitated by any mad storms of disturbing thoughts. Peace is an unbroken sense of joy, and it is the fragrance of an integrated personality. [...] this can be brought about through selfless actions undertaken in a spirit of YAGNA.. (commentary to BG 5:12)

And earlier he explains the wisdom of BG 12:2 that those who dedicate their work to higher purpose and the Lord Himself and have supreme faith are the best in Yoga' and that is the source of limitless stamina!!

sri-bhagavanuvaca

mayyavesyamano ye mam
nitya-yuktaupasate
sraddhayaparayopetas
te me yuktatamamatah

Those who fix their minds upon Me, who constantly glorify Me and possess great faith – I consider them to be most perfect.

And if work is indeed worship, then in Gurudev's commentary to BG 12:2, "True Upasana (worship) is an inward act of attunement with the Higher Principle so as to get ourselves completely merged with It."

It is this continuous food of the Gita that has energised this BMI. The body completed 61 years of age last month and thanks to Poojya Gurudev's grace, it has been able to work 50-60 hours a week; thanks to his grace, it enjoys the work he sends – be it teaching 70 hours a month in the class room, or serving the Mission or working for governing Boards.

That is how he uses his instruments, for His work and how he gets it done; and he provides the energy and spirit to accomplish it; all with merely our being

available. Of course there are days when the body does get tired.However, each time the teachings of Gurudev and His own example renews my energy.

I ask myself: If despite his body causing him so many difficulties, Gurudev kept on doing so much till His last breath, what business do we, the disciples have to say 'I am tired'?!

For He was ever in abidance; ever with mind fixed upon His Guru, constantly glorifying the Lord.

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev, longstanding devotee of Pujya Gurudev

167. Idol of the Ideal

21-10-2015

Why do we worship the Guru's feet

We take birth into a family and then amid the noise of the revelry over our birth, our journey into confusion begins. Various things are done to the baby according to the cultures prevailing. Some shave the head, some pierce the ears, some clasp anklets on his ankles, some force pry his eyes and apply collyrium (kajal)… and when the baby howls, they all laugh for joy: his cry is so much like his father's or his mother's…

All this remains celebration at his body level only.

As for the baby, he is very confused. He has barely begun to sense his 'I' but he is dealing fiercely with the 'You' and 'They'. He wishes to understand what are these many voices and where he is or is he at all….

One wonders if anyone has whispered to a child and told him, welcome, you are here to realize the Truth… your time begins now…



Guruji with Gurudev at His Pada Puja

In the stories in the last 160 days, different devotees talked about their experiences. Some have been blessed enormously, for they were born almost into Gurudev's lap. Some were also 'Butter babies', the babies-in-process that consumed blessed white butter that Gurudev fed to the mother-to-be. Some he held in his arms and cooed into their ears. Likely he said Narayanaaaaa! Some he remembered even as they were taking birth and he wrote a letter to the parents asking, "Has not the baby arrived?" at nearly the same time that the baby was taking birth!

Some continued to be in luck as he also fed them their first morsel of cooked grain (annaprasna). Some had their vidyarambham (initiation into writing and study) sitting on his lap.

But some others (many of us, that is) arrived anonymously and reached the gates of the Mission and got drenched in his love. Some of these worshipped his very feet and wondered how one could ever stand up again, away from them.

And many others he continued to draw into his embrace; these many came after he left his earthly body. Reminds one of straying sheep who are brought back to the fold by the Lord as Agranee and Gramanee (naam 218 and 219 of

Vishnusahasranaamam). They were all only attracted to him. Many cannot even vocalise why they like him, why they wish to be with him…

Many do not know that what we are here for is to find that treasure called TRUTH – the qualification for exiting SAMSARA.

That TRUTH lay concealed in his feet, the feet that so many had the fortune to worship. It also lies in his padukas, which many people worship whenever they can find a pair of his padukas.

In a stunning lecture, Gurudev left for us the reason why we worship the Guru's feet, or his padukas. In the Indian context, touching the feet of an elder is tradition and reverential. Over the years this practise has thinned. In an article for Mananam, Gurudev says eloquently, "Prostration means that one touches the feet of an elder with one's head. Why? The feet stands rooted in that elder's love for me, in the sacrifices that he or she has made for me, something that I admire in that person. That ideal I want to bring into my head. It is symbolized in the prostration. I surrender myself in order to invoke that great essence or quality into myself."

It is verily this quality that propels us to place our head at the feet of the Guru.

But Gurudev startles us with his opening line in a talk he gave:

"We will try to analyse and see whether there is any justification for reverence towards the teacher." And thus he begins at the level of our own scepticism, thereby walking with us as we discover the answer.

"In the Puranic age we had Rama, Krishna and others, the ideal men who lived these ideal lives; and to revere, to love that ideal man, it was easy. And so the Bhakti marga started.

"But in the Vedic period, this bhakti marga of the puranic age has not yet evolved by the help of Vyasa. But before Vyasa's time the teachers were giving them only an ideal upon which to meditate upon □ as the worship of fire, the worship of the Ganges, the worship of the sun the moon, the stars, were all for them the point of their contemplation, where they poured out their love, their emotion of devotion towards it, as a representative of the great ideal."

No wonder that when we read the stories of Sri Rama and Hanuman ji, and watch their immense love for nature, the reverence of Hanuman ji for the Brahmastra that caused him to not resist it, the joy that Rama found in the forests of Chitrakoot, we wonder how could just trees and birds, even if beautiful, hold them in raptures! These were representatives of that ideal they worshipped!

After sometime of living with the teacher, the student found that all the beauties of perfect living which he has read in cold print or he has heard from the teacher when he has contemplated or reflected upon and understood, he found that all those beauties of life are pulsating in the dynamic life of the old man, the teacher. He found what he wants to achieve himself □ a prototype of that perfection □ in the Guru Himself. And therefore he started worshipping the teacher himself. Ultimately it

came that the teachers allowed the student only one day in the year to do their worship.

Only worship is done on the feet of the sacred teacher.

Now one would think why is it that they are worshipping the feet?"

Here Gurudev examines the symbolism of action, the act of prostration to the Guru.

"In teacher worship, the crown of our head touches the toes of the teacher. What I am revering is not your head or theheart, nor your feet, but I am worshipping that on which you are standing, the ideal for which you are preaching and living. That on which you are standing is the great ideal; it is too delicate and subtle for me to understand. I cannot comprehend it. I have to come to experience it. In my own spiritual maturity alone, I can conceive of that idea. But here I show my reverential devotion to that ideal upon which you stand.

"And when he is thus standing upon his own feet, we worship his feet.

"Similarly the Paduka becomes an idol of an ideal. They, in those days, took the paada of the teacher as the living idol of the ideal for which the teacher has taught him as the living idol and he himself has come to appreciate it. And with all devotion they worshipped it as if it is Vishnu himself, the reality, the Atman itself. It is for this technical purpose of becoming ideal, that the devotion was necessary. And the Vedantic devotion the idol that was representing the ideal was the feet of the teacher, and therefore we worshipped the teacher's feet."



Tarkas ji pranaam

In an article in a Mananam publication, Gurudev analyses this for us in our context, using the example of a candidate in an election: “We may not like the personal qualities of this representative but our vote for him demonstrates our faith in his party’s philosophy. In the same way, when we worship a person, it is not the person that we adore, but the ideal he stands for. Since at this moment we cannot have a direct experience of that ideal we take a symbol that represents that state — a Teacher.”

And then he adds, “Therefore, we borrow the feet of the Teacher for some time, and the Teacher allows us to play with them!

Just as a Shiva Linga represents Siva, a Saligrama represents Vishnu, in the same way, the Padukas (sandals) of the teacher represent to the student not the sandals, but the concept behind. What we are invoking is Brahman, the Lord. But we cannot directly go to Him. We want a symbol. There is no symbol more sacred than the Padukas of the Teacher. We wash the Padukas and worship them, as though they are the Lord himself. We clean them with love, put sacred ash, adorn with sandal paste and do all that we do in a Puja at the temple; we worship the Padukas as though they are that Siva Linga or a Saligrama, invoking Him, the Ideal.”

In an article, Swami Swatmananda says, “One Paduka represents the Truth or Self-Knowledge in which the Master is established, which lies dormant in our hearts and to which we have to awaken. The other Paduka is the symbol of awakening other people.”

In Gurudev we saw both via his names: Tapovanashishyah, Brahmanishtha and Vedantavedavit. Established in his teacher first, he came to be established in Brahman (Self Knowledge) and then began spreading that Knowledge to the world. And corroborating this he wrote in Mananam – Guru: The Guiding Lightabout how when his feet are being worshipped, there is sensation as sometimes very hot water is used, sometimes cold water, but there is no reaction from him, because, “Why? Temporarily they are not my feet, they have been lent! During that time, both you and I are in adoration of something else. What we are invoking is as much my substratum as yours. This teacher holds on to his teacher's feet and thus, the teacher and disciple lineage (guru-śiṣya-paramparā) is formed. You are not worshiping me. Don't misunderstand the fact that you are invoking Him through the feet of this teacher. [...] All through the pāda pūjā, understand the significance that the feet are borrowed from Swami Chinmayananda. You are not worshiping the Swami. If you say or feel so, it is a disaster to me because my vanity will increase. All of us are worshiping Him. I will be turning my mind to my teacher and you are turning your mind to your teacher and the Lord.”

So while at the level of the body we may be differentiated, at the level of the substratum we are the same, says Gurudev. And the prostration irons out all differences by holding out the common father.

For us there is just one thing to hold onto from Gurudev’s words, “Once we understand the import of this symbolism, a pāda pūjā becomes a great beginning in that search for Reality.”

May we take up this worship during and from this glorious year.

Harih Om

168. 'I Love You' - Present Continuous With Gurudev

22-10-2015

I first saw Gurudev in 1986/87 in Coimbatore when he conducted a Geeta Gyana Yagna at Nehru Vidyalaya grounds, near where I lived. I was studying in class 4 or 5 at Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Thadagam Road.

The reason I went to listen to Gurudev, was because I was studying in a school named after him and I wanted to see who he was.I recall being very impressed by his style and vocabulary.

Years later I met Gurudev through his I Love You letters which were part of the Value Education curriculum at school and some years afterwards my first visit to Uttarkashi with Swami Mitrananda turned out to be very nostalgic, because Gurudev had written most of the I Love You letters from Uttarkashi!

In January 1991 when Gurudev came to Coimbatore for a camp at our school premises , I was part of the Scout and Guide team that did a welcome parade for him. It feels very good to recall all this....

Unfortunately I never saw Gurudev in person afterwards or had the opportunity to attend any of his camps.

It was customary for Gurudev to come and bless the class 10/12 students before the board exams but our batch didnot have that privilege, as Gurudev's health was failing and he was restricted from too much activity.

Whenever I go to Sidhabari or hear anyone recount their personal experiences with Gurudev, I regret not having had the chance to spend time with him.

My close affiliation with Chinmaya Mission began when I met Br. Swabodh Chaitanya (now Swami Mitrananda) in 1993 when I was in class 11.Swamiji was posted in Salem then and he came every month to Chinmaya Vidyalaya,Vadavalli to meet and address the higher secondary students.

The very first time he spoke on one of Gurudev's significant messages - Keep your mind where your hands are at work.

That marked the start of my association with Br. Swabodh ji and a waking up to Gurudev. I am blessed to be still connected to him today as Swami Mitrananda – for it is through him that I was drawn closer to Gurudev's teachings.

I started to attend Swabodhji's discourses whenever he came to Coimbatore and through him I had the opportunity to know Gurudev.I also joined the Sunday study class for junior CHYK conducted by our school Principal 'Chandramathi Miss'.

I joined Coimbatore CHYK after I left school in 1994 and have remained associated with Chinmaya Mission ever since.

I may not have met Gurudev or sat in his presence or talked to him... but he has left for me a great wealth which I continue to uncover with every passing day. For instance Gurudev's My Trek Through Uttarakhand (CCMT Publication) spurred my interest in trekking and my love for the Himalayas. That was one huge lesson Gurudev gave me quietly through the book.

Treks and trips with Swami Mitrananda have been great opportunities to travel and unravel one’s inner self.

He continues to teach from beyond; I continue to learn from here ...

Sukanya Subramanian began as a chyk in Coimbatore. Today in Chennai, she is part of CSK (Chinmaya SethuKari) Chennai

169. “Never should you reach the goal!”

23-10-2015

Living with Inspired Enthusiasm

Mostly we live life from the tips of our fingers and toes, the hands and legs deciding what work needs to done and the communication goes from hands to head. Or from legs to head. Not the other way round.

The driver of all actions are usually our desires and wants, which are a laundry list (called dhobhi list in hindi) we call the To-do list. Our goals are usually about accomplishing tasks, events and mostly we do not know if that act of accomplishing adds value to our life in any way. Yet we have lists, goals, objectives and some of us are even appraised for our ‘performance’ on those objectives. No boss reflects on whether such accomplishment made his organisation more relevant for society or the world.



Let my Footprints be here.....

Whereas Gurudev says, “By far, your sweating and toiling actions, prompted by your ego and egocentric desires, in which the millions are sweating andtoiling from morning to evening, that karma is only prompted by instincts and impulses. It is like animals suffering and running about; it is pure labour. It is not the man of achievement. This is unnecessary – this toiling and sweating in the world outside, complaining of the stresses and tensions and strain of life.

That is not real work...!”

Not real work?That feels terrible condemnation of all the hard work we think we do.

Gurudev says in his talk on chapter 2 that “Work is ‘inspired work’, where the worker never understands tiredness, exhaustion; the joy of that work itself replenishes the worker!”

durenahyavaram karma
buddhi-yogaddhananjaya
buddhausaranamanviccha
krpanahphala-hetavah [2:49]

Explaining this stanza, Gurudev says, “As compared with buddhi yoga, where you have an ideal and you are pursuing to reach that ideal, it is an inspired enthusiasm with which you are living; that joy of true work is anyday nobler than all the sweat and toil that you bring out of you, the exhaustion and fatigue that you bring about physically -- that is only labour! That is not work!

“[By all means] work in the world outside,” he says, “But buddhausaranamanviccha – maintain your ideal and work on in the world outside.”

Often our ideals are small, measurable – hence limited. Such as, I must build a large house in the city center. Or must get my daughter married. Or must get that PhD. This too does not wash with Gurudev, for he says, “And let not that be a small ideal, like – ‘I want one million dollars...!The moment I have achieved that I will retire...’ ”

Gurudev scoffs at this and says, ‘Eh? Because you may get it, then after that in life you are dead! You have nothing to do!

“Never! Keep the goal highest!” he says ashe wears the expression of an aggressively encouraging team leader, and then adds to your astonishment – ‘so high that you will never reach!’

We have mostly only heard about fixing goals and then after fixing the goals, we have got distracted. But Gurudev says, you may ask “Swamiji why should I set goals that I cannot reach?”

In reply, Gurudev says what we have always ignored, failed to hear – something we need to hear with open ears:“.... Reaching the ideal is not the goal; striving to reach it, that is the moment when you grow.”

The point we may have missed is this:

Growth is why we are here.

Growth is not in the event but in the activity

Growth is not in the arriving but in the travelling in joy..

Gurudev says, small goals are easily achieved and then everything ends.In his words, “Because you have finished, everything has been done! Never should you reach the goal! Keep the goal high. Don’t say it is an impractical method, because reaching the goal is not the goal; striving to reach the goal is the goal!!”

“Try to reach out to the goal – you grow day by day, week by week! Hence buddhausaranamanvechha.”

And then with the most dismissive, even derisive expression, he adds, “krpanahphala-hetavah… Those who are only seeking the phala, the results, and wanting that you sweat and toil only to get something – they are krpanah, miserly!”

And lest you have a doubt as to the meaning of miserly, he adds with childlike delight, “A miser is the guy who has the money in his pocket, but he doesn’t want to – even though very hungry – he doesn’t want to eat. He goes in front of the restaurant and smells the various foods! That is a miser.”

We are misers? By definition it would seem so. We have the hugest wealth of a human life which we need to spend to reach the BIGGEST goal. Instead we don’t use this life for that. We do little baby stuff, stuff that does not matter at all, pandering to the ego, cuddling it, feeding it and thinking we are working very hard. Fulfilling selfish desires is not inspired living. He makes this very clear in this stanza. And selfish desires are those that massages the ego. Simple.

What Gurudev urges for us to have instead is inspired enthusiasm for applying this life for a really relevant goal. “There is a wonderful chance of living your life in inspired enthusiasm at all times at the peak, yet you and I will not do that because of our attachment to the ego and selfish desires. And make a mess of our lives! You are kripaNa!

“When you are inspired and working you will not know the exhaustion of work.”

Gurudev himself has never experienced exhaustion, because he has always been inspired by the work he is doing. “People who are inspired don’t care about worries and anxieties.”

No wonder then that Gurudev worked tirelessly even through ill health. It were devotees who stopped him. There are many stories of devotees fretting over an unwell Gurudev running from meeting to meeting. Why, there is the story of how AdiSankaraNilayam (where CIF is housed) was prospected and found by Gurudev. The day Shri Shankar Namboodiri’s family wanted to sell the place, Gurudev, raging with fever, went to see the property. Walking through the shrubbery, poking his

walking stick on the ground and fending off the tall grass that leaned towards him in joyous supplication, Gurudev they say was practically running, as if he had to feel this great property all at once. This property where Sri AdiSankara was born to the Holy Aryamba.....

And when devotees urged him in hesitant whispers, ‘Enough Swamiji, you are unwell, let us go...’, he stood adamantly there and said those most famous words, “Let my footprints be here...”

Inspired enthusiasm.... A life dedicated to our liberation...

Jai Gurudev!

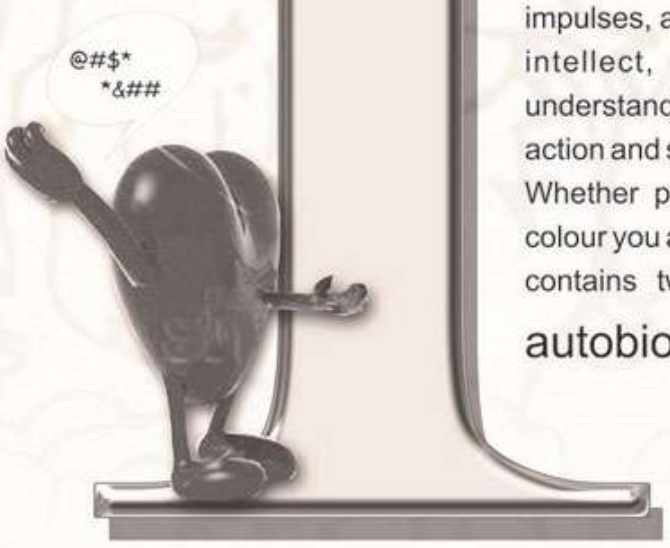
170. Big Brother Bullies

24-10-2015

Billu & Illu

CHINMAYA 2015



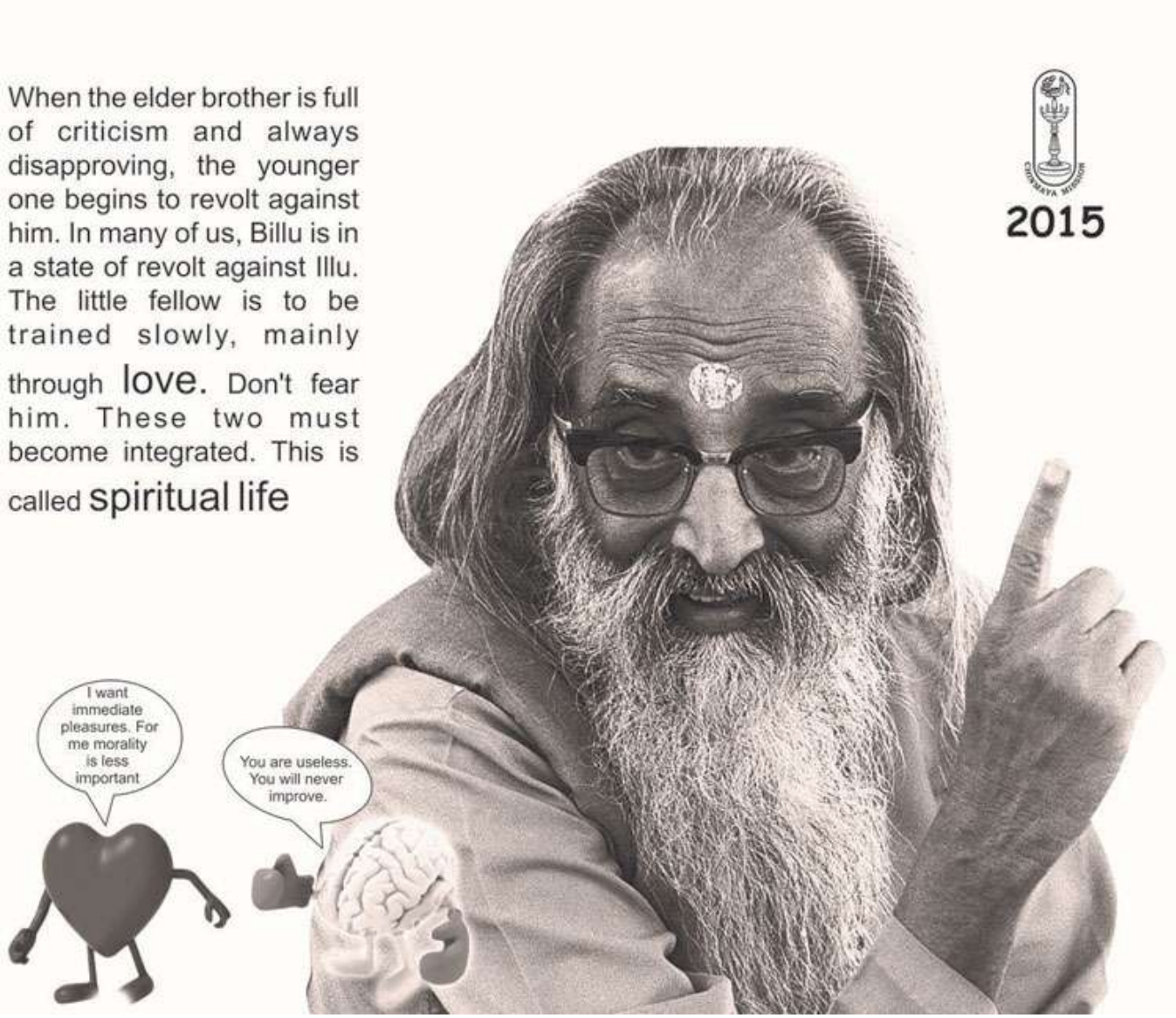


"The 'I' in us is not a single individual; it is a pair. We have two personalities in us. When we are identified with the mind, it is Billu, and when we are one with the intellect, it is Illu. Billu is undeveloped, carries the animal nature with all its instincts and impulses, and has no discriminative power. Illu, the intellect, is the discriminative power. He understands, to an extent, the consequences of action and so thinks and decides.

Whether poor or rich, whichever caste, creed or colour you are, all round the world, the human bosom contains two such entities. All this is our own autobiography..."

says **Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.**

Big Brother Bullies



Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry

171. In The Temple of the Mind

25-10-2015

On Meditation

In a letter to a devotee, Swami Tapovanam said, “Meditate more than you read. Meditation strengthens one’s resolve.”

We often encounter exhortations to meditate, and that, right during our struggle with simple study and contemplation. That gets us down and we wonder how we will ever achieve this. But Gurudev’s instructions are so precise and sharp, engineered to get it right most times.

But process apart, it is attitude that Gurudev focuses on. The attitude to the mind, the critical equipment of the meditator. All meditation begins here – first with attitude then with approach then with attention. And all of them depend on the mind.

In a talk on Meditation, Gurudev says, to beginners, right in the first few sentences, “ ...it will be difficult to gather our mind from its wanderings. Under no condition should you curse your own mind. Have a decent respect for your own mind.”

We are known to dilute the mind’s effort by belittling it in our frustration. Gurudev warns off this right at the start by urging us to have respect for the mind.

“Mind is wandering out because that was its nature till today. We have been employing the mind to gather data for us from the outer world, and therefore it has become its habit. Don’t expect the mind to overnight change its habit. But to help such students, togather the mind from its wanderings and lovingly persuade its attention to the deeper depths in us …… the great Masters have given various training, all based upon unquestionable logic.”

The handling of the mind is the primary focus of Gurudev’s teaching. In other talks on other subjects too, Gurudev has urged us to treat the mind, where it is reluctant, reticent, with kid gloves at first; gently urging it, being patient, giving it an incentive and thus leading it towards the path of good.

Here too in teaching the beginner in meditation, Gurudev says, “ … lovingly persuade its attention…”

Which means in the initial stages of our attempts and study, the warning is that the mind will be reluctant, even stubborn. Uncooperative. And Gurudev adds, “Under no condition should you curse your own mind. Have a decent respect for your own mind.”

Gurudev helps us see the role of the mind through our experiences of sleep and says, “In sleep the mind is not wandering. And as sleep reaches us, our body becomes relaxed and in deep sleep the body is totally relaxed. As the body relaxes, our consciousness and preoccupation with the body is drained away from the body.” What this points out to us is this: Our attention is upon a thing only when it is agitated. Disturbed. Uncomfortable.

“In deep sleep we are not conscious of the body at all, (because the body is in a state of rest, relaxed.) …. Hence we are not conscious of the outer world and the mind is not wandering into it.”

Here is the logic: when we lose consciousness of the outer world, the mind does not/cannot go there. Hence the method urges us to first get the body into a comfortable state in a comfortable environment.

“Based upon this (data observation) the great rishis evolved a technique wherein we keep our mind bright and alert but deliberately relax the body….. as beautifully relaxed as in deep sleep. Thereby we drain away the mind’s preoccupation with the body. Our attention becomes centred in the mind only. When we have brought about such a situation, we remember with the mind, the Lord of our faith or devotion or our Teacher and we surrender mentally at His feet. Thus our ego, vanity, our arrogant assertion aggressive sense of individuality are all mentally surrendered at the altar of the Lord or the Teacher, asking them nothing else, but strength to walk the path, light on our way. When this is sincerely pursued day after day, from our awareness, the body gets removed and as the little ego gets more and more surrendered in devotion and reverence to the Lord, the ego who whips the mind to activity is also mellowed, not destroyed; curbed; tamed. In that quietened mind we are asked to repeat the Lord’s name…. while thus repeating the Lord’s name, our attention becomes completely riveted upon that One Divine Ideal.”

And then Gurudev adds for the benefit of a doubting mind: “I am explaining this so that when we do it you know what we are doing, why we are doing it.”

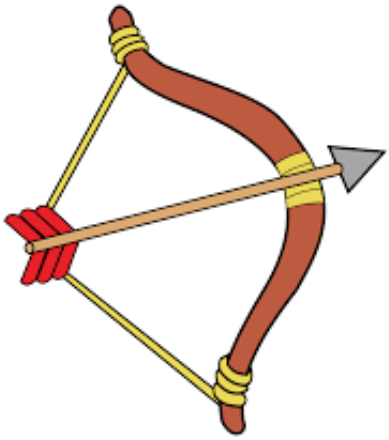
His explanations and his detailing are precise and perfect, as if he knows your mind’s doubts and capriciousness.

- Be extremely conscious of the mantra chanted by your mind. Each mantra rising in your mind and slowly disappear in your mind.
- Be very conscious – the mind is chanting. And you are getting more and more intensively conscious of the mantra chanting; the procession of the chant….. the rise of the mantra and the disappearance of it.
- Become conscious. Stay conscious of the chanting. Do it in the mind. Not in the mouth.
- Be conscious intensely of the chanting and be conscious of the silence.

As we see, the mind is the place where the meditation is experienced. The mind it is that we hence respect as the temple which is being prepared for the Naam, name of the Lord to enter and reside … now and forever.

172. You are Divine

26-10-2015



When a bow is bent and the string tied, the tension of the string will depend upon the curvature of the bow. But the bow always tries to return to its straight shape, trying to go back to its original nature. In the same way, all living beings – plant, animal, and human are searching for greater happiness, a larger sense of fulfillment, because that is their true nature.

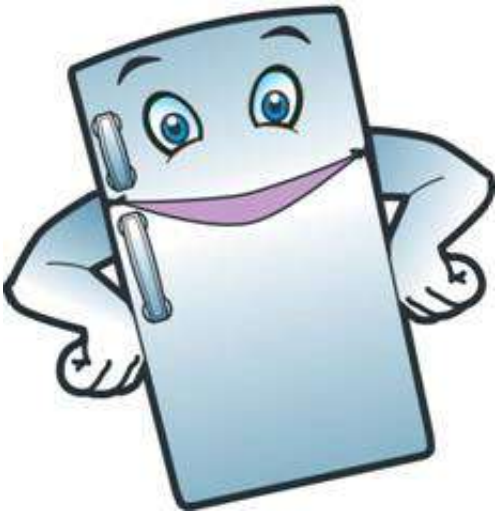
We are essentially divine, infinitely blissful, extremely content. But by shifting our attention away from the divine in us, we act as limited egos, dragging to discover a little happiness by possessing the objects of the world.

Extract from an a talk by Gurudev; Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puducherry

173. The One and Only...

27-10-2015

There was a little boy whose mother used to cook food and give him. One day the mother had to go out and she told the son that she would not be at home when he came back from school that day and asked him to eat the food kept in the fridge. The child began to think that all food comes from the fridge. So he told the mother that he did not need her any more! In the same way, the scientists open the door, see some things and call it scientific discovery. Then they start feeling that they know a lot. They do not give any credit to God. The point is that you may discover the gravitational force of the earth, but you are still ignorant about who put it there or how it came about.



One scientist met Lord and told Him that He is not needed any more as he could also create like Him – test tube babies, cloning and so on. Lord wanted to verify his ability before He gave charge to him. He asked, “Can you create everything?” The scientist nodded, “Yes.”

Lord said, “Make a pot.” The scientist picked up the clay.

Lord said, “Stop! You have to create your own clay first.” The scientist was baffled and gave up.

Lord’s play is fascinating. In empty space, myriad cosmoses revolve, held in place by their mutual attraction. Imagine the power and glory of the Lord whose play it is!

Having created the elements, the Lord modifies them – pacyamscasarvanparinamayed. Milk turns into yogurt. Hydrogen and oxygen combine to make water. It is marvelous. Hydrogen is a gas that burns and oxygen helps in burning. But the combination of the two – H2O – is water which puts out the fire! And H2O2 becomes hydrogen peroxide which will bleach your hair. Thus the Lord converts one thing to other and then different qualities are born from different combinations.

The Lord alone is the rules (adhitisthaty-ekah). He presides over the entire world (sarvame-tad-visvam). He creates the different qualities of different substances– gunamscasarvanviniyojayed. When we make coffee, we put together water, milk, sugar and coffee powder. We make use of the qualities of different substances. Space, air, fire, water and earth undergo the process of grossification, of mixing with each other, and many things are created. Lord is a great cook indeed!

From a talk by Gurudev, sent by Chinmaya Mission Puduchery

174. Lift the mind to higher realms

28-10-2015

Avoiding the prattling of the mind

Let us pull down the mind. How to do it? Think.

The mind exists only because of four things – guna (attributes), kriya (activities), visesa (particular and unique features) and sambandha (relationships).

When we look at an object, through our mind, we never see the object as it is. We always see it coloured through our mind. Pasyannapi ca napasyatimudhah – one who does not have the right knowledge, even when looking at it, sees it not. He sees nothing but his own projection. Look at a flower and write down the thoughts that come into your mind: “It is a beautiful flower. It is reddish in colour. Its botanical name is such and such. I’ve seen such a flower in Gopalakrishnan Iyer’s place. It was in Coimbatore that I first saw it. It was in Chettiar’s house. But he is not a good person,” and so it goes on. You are thinking of the Chettiar while looking at the flower. You never see the flower. It is only a spring-board for the mind to shoot ahead. Think.



If you can see the flower as flower, as it is, you see Brahman only. Remove the guna, kriya, visesaandsambandha. These four are but interpretations of the mind. The mind sees the qualities of the object. Or it starts thinking in terms of its activity: 'The fragrance of this flower is good', Or the mind begins to think of its name or relationship where you saw it first etc. In the process, you do not really see the flower.

These four are nothing but the prattling of the mind. When the mind functions in these channels, the mind always gravitates towards objects, emotions and thoughts. It is tied to the lower depths of cravings. Remove them and look. There is nothing but a spread of alertness, awareness or consciousness alone.

Lift the mind. Expand the mind. Sublimate the mind. Purify the mind. Spiritualise your existence. These are the words used by the teachers. Avoid the prattlings of the mind and soar to the higher realms.

From a talk by Gurudev, sent by Chinmaya Mission Puduchery

175. Earning the Respect of the Intellect

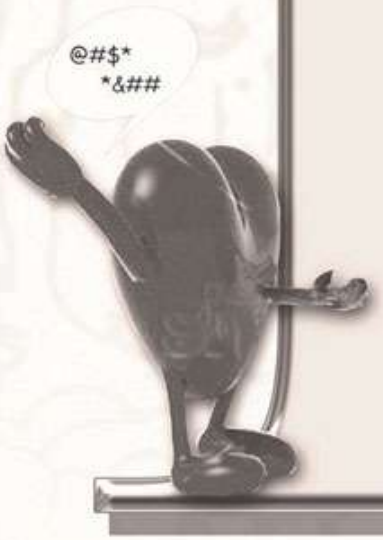
29-10-2015

Billu is appeased....

Billu & Illu

CHINMAYA 2015

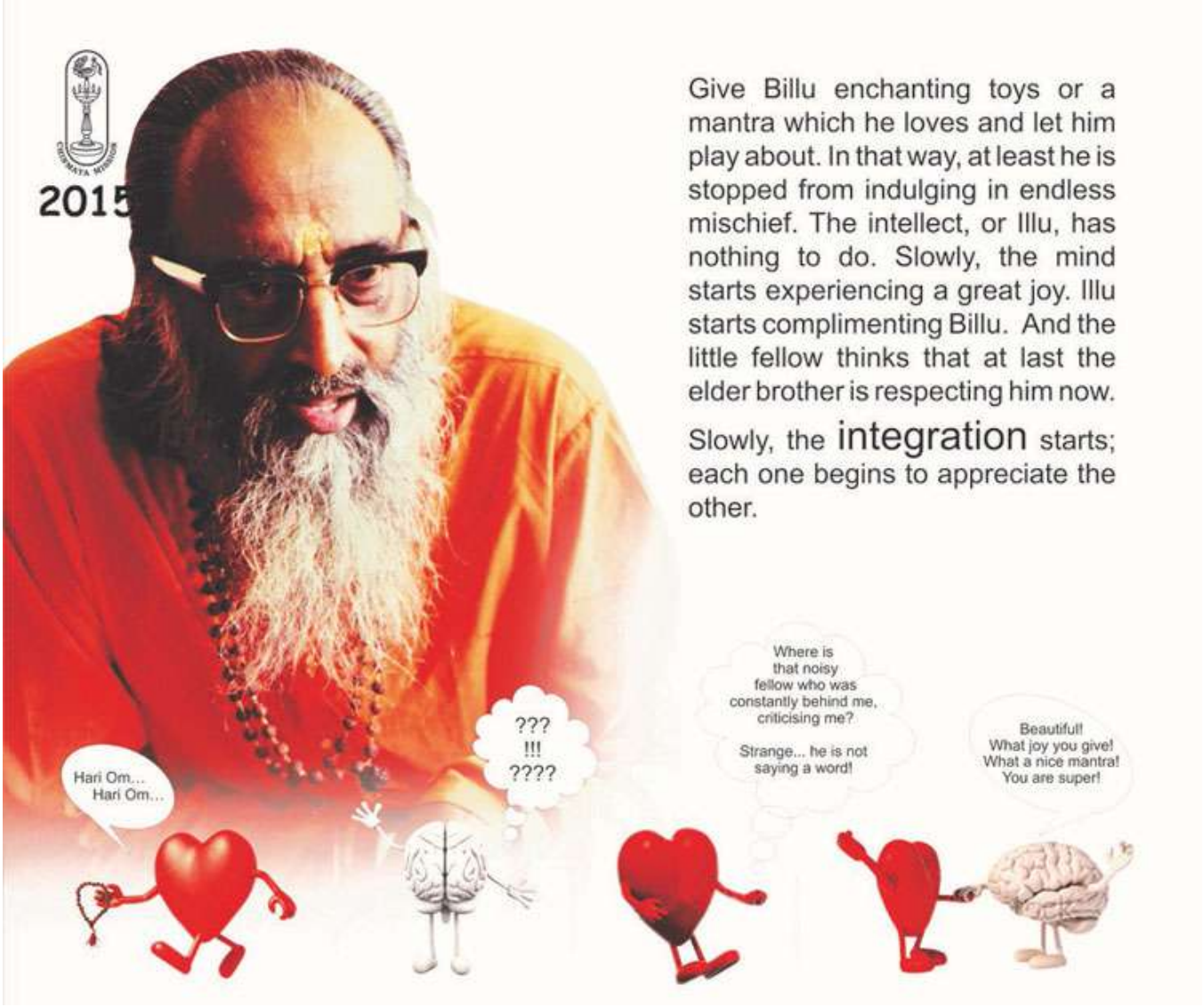




"The 'I' in us is not a single individual; it is a pair. We have two personalities in us. When we are identified with the mind, it is Billu, and when we are one with the intellect, it is Illu. Billu is undeveloped, carries the animal nature with all its instincts and impulses, and has no discriminative power. Illu, the intellect, is the discriminative power. He understands, to an extent, the consequences of action and so thinks and decides.

Whether poor or rich, whichever caste, creed or colour you are, all round the world, the human bosom contains two such entities. All this is our own autobiography..."

says **Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.**



Sent by Chinmaya Mission Puduchery

176. Guru’s Love- The Biggest Force in Our Life!

30-10-2015

Our spiritual Master Swami Chinmayananda loved all beings ▫ human, animals and plants alike ▫with all his heart!

However, every of his devotees were convinced that he loved them the most! Each one continues to experience that love even today, long after he left His body in 1993!

I too feel the same and there have been many instances in my life and that of others in our extended family that have made our faith stronger with the passage of time.

Let me share two of them with you.

In 1983, we were delighted, when Gurudev agreed to our request to permit us to host his week- long GeetaGyana Yagna - at New Delhi.

I had just been appointed the General Secretary of the Chinmaya Mission in our city at the young age of 29 years and this was my first major opportunity to organize such a large event.We all worked very hard and we were confident of putting up a good show.

On the evening before the opening day, we all had been working late in the night to decorate the grounds of BhartiyaVidyaBhawan,the venue of the talks.The next day, the excitement amongst all of us was palpable as a large enthusiastic crowd had gathered to listen to the Master.The venue was looking very beautiful and all was set for Gurudev to arrive.

As was the custom, a group of devotees were singing devotional songs and the atmosphere was full of happiness. Thirty minutes before the scheduled inauguration,

the power supply failed and unfortunately, those days the venue did not have a suitable power back up!

We frantically ran around and telephoned the electricity department but they could not give any commitments on when the power would be restored as there was a major break down!

So we all started praying to Gurudev and I offered a silent prayer to him saying- ‘Gurudev, you have given me the role of the Secretary and now you are testing me!Only you can save us from this trouble!!’

As was always the case, Gurudev arrived sharp on time(you could set your watch with his arrival!) and at 625 pm, he stepped out of his car.We ran to greet him and shared the bad news that he himself could witness, as there was no sign of electricity.

He smiled and patted me on the back and walked up to the stage at exactly 629 pm, one minute before the start of the function!

As soon as he reached the dias and the clock turned to 630 pm, the electric power was restored!

We were overwhelmed by the experience and I could not thank Him enough for saving all of us.

A similar incident assuring me of the timely presence of the Guru in our life was to repeat many years later, as if to reiterate a learning. After our first born Saahil, we wanted to have another child but years passed and my wife, Neera was unable to conceive.In 1985, several medical tests established that she had high prolactin levels, a hormone in the blood, that was preventing conception and Doctors suspected that she had a small tumour in the pituitary gland in herbrain that they called ‘microadenoma’. CT scans seem to confirm their diagnosis and yet they were not sure.

Soon thereafter, while I was on an exchange program in the US, my wife, son travelled around and met our close friends, Vidula and Milind Agtey at South bend, Indiana.There my wife consulted a wonderful doctor who prescribed a drug called Bromocreptin. That worked amazingly, for within a few weeks, on return to India, she conceived!We were delighted and shared the good news with Poojya Gurudev and he blessed us. On 15th April 1986, our daughter, Mehek was born!

As our daughter was growing up, the doctors told us to monitor Neera'sproclactin levels every few months as any spike in the reading would confirm that the suspected brain tumour had begun to grow.

A few years later, we found that the prolactin had gone up alarmingly and Neera was also experiencing bouts of severe headaches.

Then began a series of visits to doctors and hospitals in India and they did more CT scans and came out with an alarming diagnosis that she had an aneurysm in the brain that could burst anytime and cause brain haemorrhage. For the next several weeks, we were feeling very low and Neera was particularly worried as she had a 'short lifeline' in her palm. Although I kept on encouraging Neera and started joint meditation with her every morning to create positive energy in us, I was really scared at the same time. So I wrote to Gurudev and explained the entire situation to Him and said to my family: 'Gurudev will look after us!' I was fully convinced he would.

To get a second opinion on Neera's diagnosis, we decided to visit Chicago to consult top doctors there. Thanks to our friends, we got appointments to meet some doctors at short notice.

Just before we met them, I got a letter from Poojya Gurudev which said : 'All will be well. Your wife Neera needs more attention from you. There is nothing wrong with her brain!' All I conveyed to Neera was, " I am very sure the doctors will clear you and all will be fine."

We spent several hours with the doctors and got fresh CT scans done and this is what the doctor said to Neera : ' You have a persistent trigeminal artery which is like a vestigialcondition that has been mistaken by the doctors in India for the dangerous aneurysm. You are perfectly fine and the micro tumour that you had earlier, has also disappeared!!'

From a situation where doctors were about to do a brain angiography and surgery in India, we were given the precious gift of knowing that all was well!

All through our return journey, we had tears of joy and could not thank Gurudev enough for his deep love that had healed Neera.People have different ways of explaining these kinds of miracles. Some say this is due to the power of positive thinking (and thereby ascribing it to our effort) and how the mind can help the body to heal. But energy has a source too, and I was convinced that the Guru's love is the strongest cause of positive energy!!

And Gurudev had taught me all that dueing a Gita class. In his commentary on Chapter 12, verses 6 and 7, Gurudev has explained that the Lord Himself becomes the savior of the devotees who worship the Lord by dedicating all actions to Him in complete faith!

Ye tusarvaNikarmaNimayisannyasyamatparah

Ananyenaivayogenamaamdhyyayantaupasate

But those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single minded devotion(YOGA) (12:6)

Here Gurudev says, "..... in the beginning, a seeker needs some assurances from his teacher in order to instil in him the required self-confidence to start his practices. [Then] the devotee grows mentally to stature so divine and high that, thereafter he needs no help from anyone at all.

Teshamahamsamuddhartamrtyusamsarasagaraat;bhavaminachiratparthamayyaveshitachetsaam

For them, whose minds are set on Me, verily I become, erelong, O Partha, the Saviour (to save them) out of the ocean of finite experiences- the Samsara (12:7)

Says Gurudev in his commentary, " Krishna assures him that he need not wonder

how he will go beyond the shores of sorrows, agitations, and imperfections, which are the lot of all mortals. "I SHALL BE THEIR SAVIOUR" is a divine assurance and an infinite guarantee. It is possible that seekers may become rather impatient when even after months and years of practice, they do not come anywhere near any spiritual experience."

And then Gurudev explains what it means to say - TO THOSE WHOSE MIND IS SET ON ME . He says, "The mind generally takes the form of the object it contemplates upon. When an integrated mind-intellect-equipment of a devotee, through constant practice, gains the capacity of engaging itself entirely on the concept of the Lord (and I would add, 'Guru'), to the exclusion of all agitations and undivine thoughts, the entire mind assumes the stature of the Infinite. It is the mind that gives us the hallucination of our egocentric limitations, and again, it is the mind that rediscovers the Infinitude. Bondage and liberation are both for the mind. The Self is ever free; ever liberated; never bound."

It is said that the Guru is, in the eyes of the devotees, even greater than God as He is the one who helps people to connect to the Higher force within themselves!

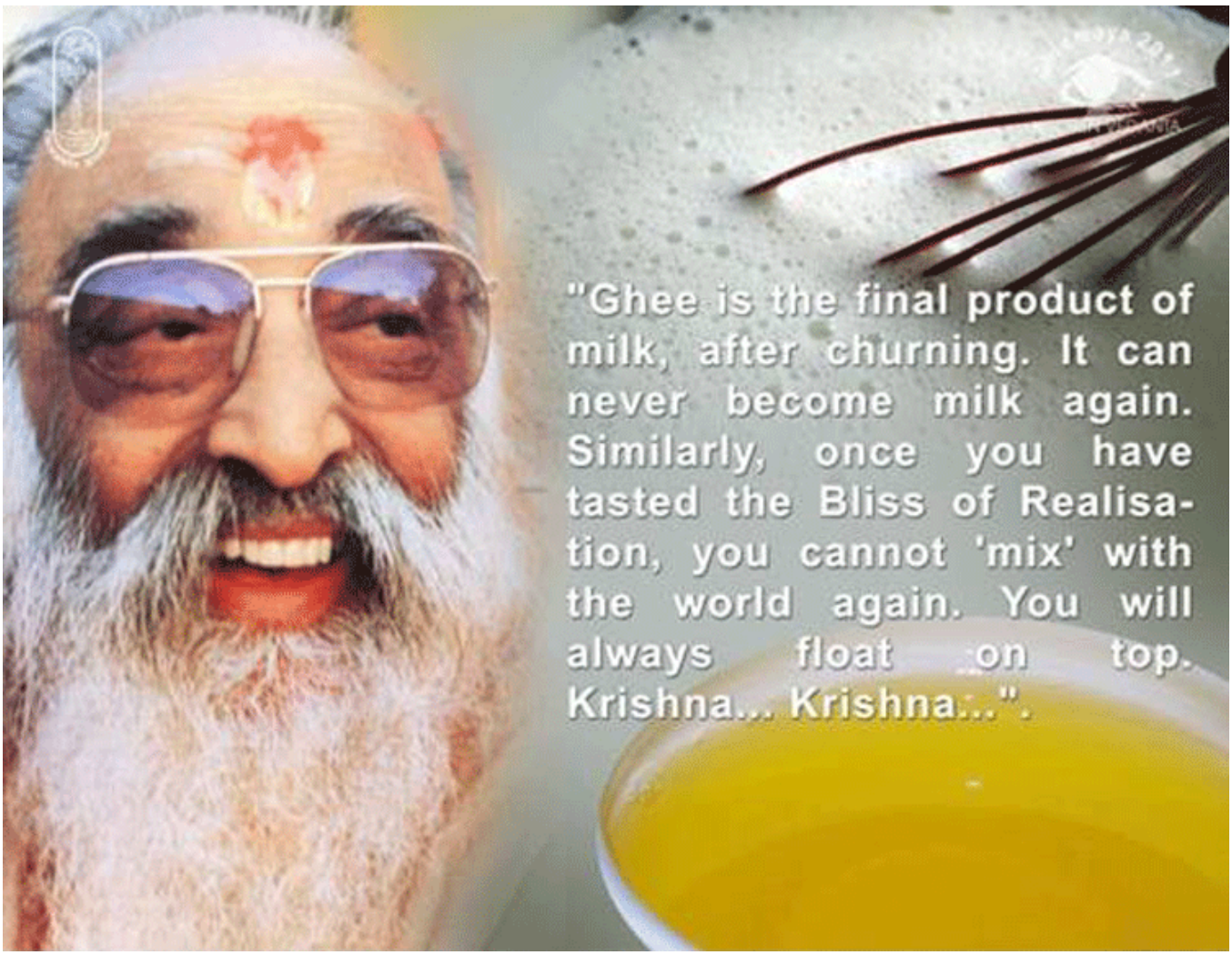
For us, Gurudev was the Lord Himself and we were very fortunate to live in the same time as this great teacher!

We feel blessed and can feel that love every day and can feel His presence in our hearts at all times!!

177. FLOATING ON THE TOP

31-10-2015

Kitchen vedanta (contd.)



Floating on Top...

“Ghee is the final product of milk, after churning. It can never become milk again. Milk can say, ‘He used to be one of us; he used to stay with us as one of us. Now he floats on top. Now he’s different. Now he doesn’t mix as before’. Really speaking, ghee cannot become one with milk ever again. It will always float on top although it came from the milk, it is made up of the elements present in the milk; its very origin is in the milk. Similarly, once you have tasted the Bliss of Realisation, you cannot ‘mix’ with the world again. You will always float on top. Krishna… Krishna.”

178. CRICKET – A DIVINE GAME

01-11-2015

(In the year 1988 Sri A.H. Balakrishnan, wrote an article called Cricket – A Divine Game and sent it to Pujya Gurudev who forwarded it to Tapovan Prasad, but it never reached its destination. The article along with Gurudev's letters to the writers, finally reached TP through Swami Mitrananda and published in TP, August 2002)

Cricket elementHuman element

Ball - Mind of the Human Being

Bowler - Human Being

Bowling - Meditation of the Mind

Batsman - Maya

Bat - Maya's Weapon

Stumps - Sat, Chit, Ananda

Wicket Keeper - A state beyond satchidananda

Fielders - Protectors of the mind during meditation

Batting - Power of maya to block the meditation of the mind

Below, for every cricket element the human element can be seen

Batsman :

Strikes the ball and drives it away when the bowler bowls. (Or Maya strikes the Human being and disturbs his mind during meditation.)

Maya:

Pulls down the mind when it starts meditation and pushes it to the materialistic world.

Runs of the Batsman :

If the bowler does not bowl in a well-planned and accurately-aimed manner, the batsman easily hits the ball and scores runs.

Wins of Maya

If the human being is not able to train his mind for proper concentrated meditation, focused on the aim (satchitananda), maya very easily drives the mind away to the mundane world.

Loss of the Batsman

If the bowler bowls in a correctly aimed manner and hits any stump, bypassing the attack of the batsman, the batsman is declared out.

Maya's powerlessness

Properly directed and concentrated meditation aiming at the correct goal, takes the mind to satchidananda state and maya's efforts to block the mind are foiled and defeated and maya finally withdraws.

Loss of the Batsman:

If the bowling is so accurate as to reach the hands of the wicket-keeper directly even after it is hit then also the batsman is declared out.

Maya's Powerlessness :

If the meditation is so intense in its right path as to over-power maya and reach supreme Reality, then also maya fades away and dwindles into nothing.

_____

Loss of the Batsman :

(Possibility One) Due to incorrect bowling, if the ball is hit by the batsman anywhere in the field and, if before it falls on the ground, a fielder catches it and aims it direct to hit any of the stumps or through the wicket-keeper, then also the batsman is said to be out, provided he is out of the crease.

Maya's powerlessness:

Due to improper meditation, if the mind is driven by maya to the mundane world, one of the protectors of the mind, (in order) to save it from getting into the mundane world, takes it direct to Supreme Reality or through the state of Samadhi. In this process, if maya is not alert in its swabhava, it gets weakened and dwindles away.

_____

(Possibility Two) If the ball hits the ground and then is caught by any of the fielders, there is every chance for the batsman to score runs and a lot of effort will be needed before the ball can be stopped.

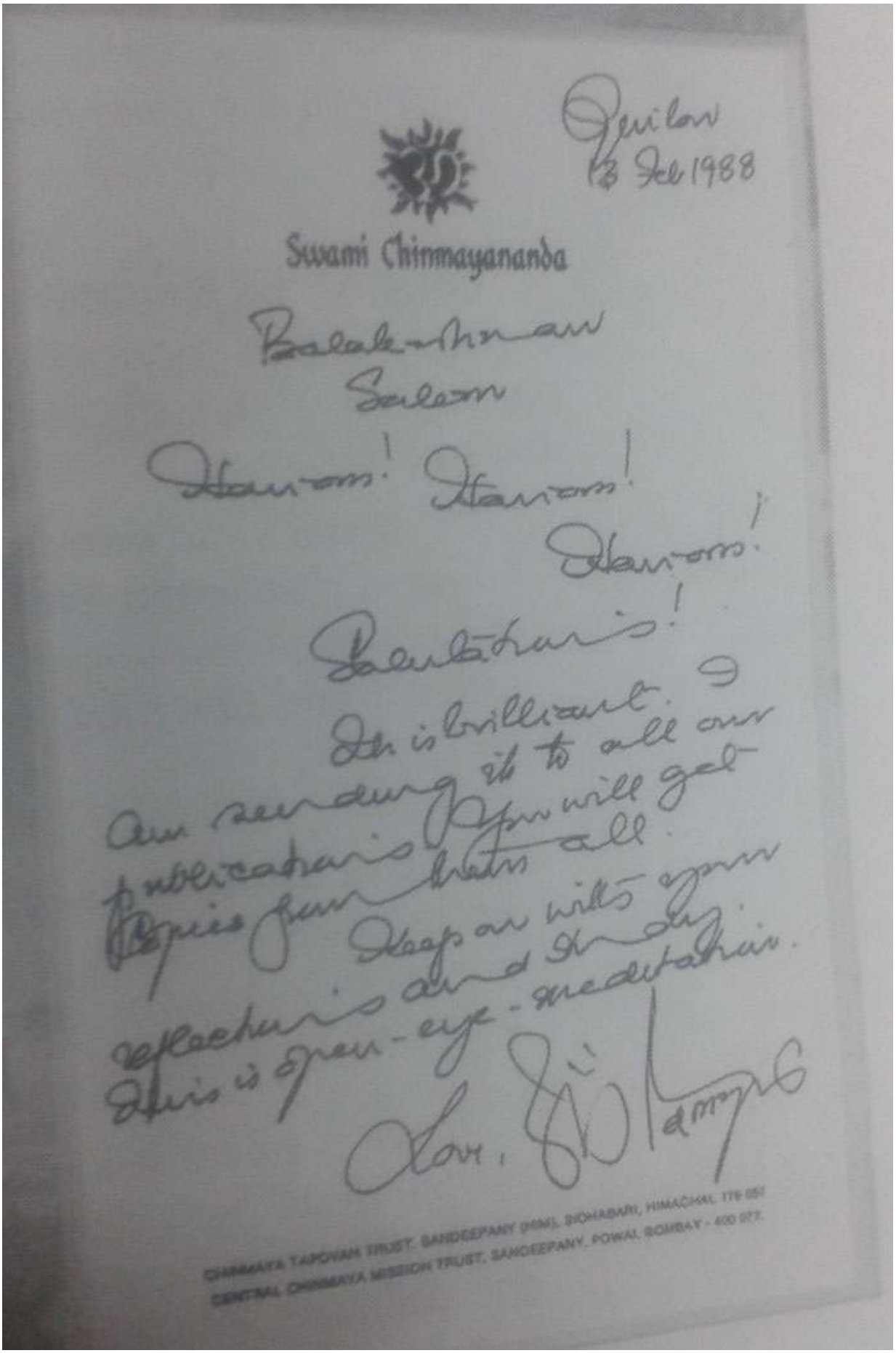
Due to imperfect meditation after being taken down by maya to the mundane world, the protectors of the mind will once again have to work very hard to save and elevate the mind.

Gains of Batsman :

If the batsman is capable of driving the ball beyond the reach of the fielders to the boundary limits or even beyond that, then the batsman is lucky enough to score four or six runs, as the case may be.

Maya's Gain :

If maya is able to execute its power over the mind so forcefully as to divert the concentration of the mind away to such a state as not to be able to rise up for meditation, making the protectors of the mind powerless, then Maya become supreme and controls the mind and keeps it under her influence.


Swami Chinmayananda
Hari Om! Hari Om!
Hari Om!
Sachin!
CHINMAYA TAPOVAN TRUST, SANDEEPANY (HIM), SIDHABARI, HIMACHAL 176 057
CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST, SANDEEPANY, POWAI, BOMBAY - 400 072.

179. The Basis of Any Religion

02-11-2015

When we talk of religion, we mostly seek the underlying philosophy. So to look at the fundamental definitions of Religion and Philosophy:

Religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to an order of existence.

'Philosophy' comes from the Greek word 'philosophia' which means 'the love of wisdom' – which too, the Greeks feel does not precisely explain the word 'sophos'. Greek Philosopher Socrates used the term 'philosophy' to mean or intend, 'the search for wisdom'. Funnily, as we explore the meaning of 'wisdom', it grows huge and wide and varied. But it comes down to a virtue of having the disposition to act 'with the highest degree of adequacy for a given circumstance.'

And that disposition is made up of knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight - a simple dictionary definition – which concludes, "In short, wisdom is a disposition to find the truth coupled with an optimum judgement as to what actions should be taken."

In India we never had any name for the set of values, culture and tradition that were followed and which were transferred to generation after generation for thousands of years.

During different periods, knowledge has been revealed to few people, who again shared that knowledge with those who yearned for it. That knowledge is called Sanatana Dharma in Sanskrit and is the term used in the Bhagwat Purana as well as Manusmriti – the eternal values that have been practised and proven to be right for a good quality life.

To know and observe the various forces of nature, respect them and worshiping them was a way of life at one time, when man's evolution led him to think that without these natural forces we will not be able to live in this world.

Later, as life grew, deeper knowledge came to be revealed – about the living beings, the world and the creator of both these. The name given to this creator is – Isvara – meaning, one who governs and control the world. Those portions which deal with - revealing the truth about these three aspects Jiv- Jagat - Isvara is called Vedanta.

Still later, as time passed and life grew, people came to live in groups sharing commonality of social and cultural values and in different geographical areas there came by different preachers of values who came to be known as prophets. And thus began the concept of Religion suited to a geography or culture.

Since many religions came to be with underlying philosophies, they also labelled Sanatana Dharma also as religion.

But SanatanaDharma never had any one prophet as its founder and no one can ever point to its origin, its founder, its period and so on. But as an eternal law, and hence before the brith of any religion, Sanatana Dharma has always existed. Translated into the English, it means ‘Eternal or Absolute set of duties’.

So, someone once asked Gurudev if Vedanta is a religion.

His answer will allay the fears of those who hesitate to partake of this great philosophy.

Gurudev replied emphatically, “Vedanta is NOT a religion; it is a philosophy.”

And then he went on, “That philosophy is the basic knowledge of the world that it embraces all religions. If these fundamental truths are not recognised in any religion, that is not a religion. It becomes at best, only a creed. A sect. But not a religion. So the science behind all religions is Vedanta. Based upon that science, are all religions. That there is a greater reality, a supreme intelligence behind this world of plurality. Everything in the world obeys the supreme Lord’s laws, called the Universal laws. Nobody dares disobey! Never shall the sun disobey and not come up early morning! Never shall the sun refuse to go in the evening. The water flows from the higher to the lower. Everything obeys implicitly its laws. It’s only manwho has the freedom to disobey, but also the freedom to suffer for it. When an individual has thus disobeyed the laws and comes to suffer, he comes to regret. And comes to live again the laws of nature. It’s called dharma. He comes to the path of spirituality. This great grand scheme of the universe of infinite forms and colours, their behaviour, the fundamental law of it, is being propounded in the Vedanta.

Vedanta is not a religion. It is a philosophy.”

180. Laying Claim To Power Through Prayer

03-11-2015

"CELEBRATING GURUDEV" enters Phase 3 with this story # 180

By Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

It is only fitting that we begin with an article written by Gurudev.The examples he used to talk to us, were seen in His mind's eye, and they were about people like you and me, about experiences like yours and mine and often, about thoughts that come to you and me – thoughts which we internalize and do not bring to the tongue. Every family has an insignificant member but more than that everyone of us has an insignificance in certain roles which we are forced to play. We sense it but we gulp it down and suffer it. In the case of Gopala Iyer, he derives his power and being in his role as policeman but in other roles he diminishes into the target of pranks or ridicule.

Gurudev's language is heartwarming as it is entertaining as it is crisp and picturesque. Like when he talks about the human behind the policeman-Iyer lounging in his verandah in dhoti and shirt, being persecuted by his family members. The loving, yet light-humour laced address of Gopala Iyer as 'Sri Iyer' in the very sentence that his powerful role as policeman is being introduced, is cause for the beginnings of a smile to crack our Vedanta anxious faces.... And from that tenor of engaging with us as ordinary householders, Gurudev launches us gently to examining ourselves, where again he uses a smile-causing turn of phrase – 'ever-sighing limited creature' to lightly tease us for taking our status so seriously..... before he carries us right into Vedanta heartland and the layers of our personality.

And the impact of his analogy is suddenly made clear when he talks about how the policeman garb gives power to Gopala Iyer and the transformation of the weak Iyer into the terror cop. But, with an ensuing message.

Here is Gurudev's Gopala Iyer, verily you and me...

Gopala Iyer is an insignificant member of a big family, and in his own house, is a victim of the mischief of even his youngest son. Sri Iyer earns his livelihood as a police constable in the local thana (police station). Thus, he has, in fact, more than one layer of personality in him – the father , the unhappy husband and the mighty policeman.



When exactly does the ineffectual Gopala Iyer become the mighty ‘hand of law’ as a policeman - a terror to all mischief-makers, a looming phantom for the indisciplined cyclists, and a fearsome ghost haunting every rash driver? Certainly, the policeman in him is not seen when he is in dhoti and shirt, lounging in the verandah of his house, persecuted by the tantrums of his son or bullied by the claims of his wife. The moment Sri Gopala Iyer gets into his khaki shorts and puts on his red turban, out of that very same personality, the policeman rise up and thereafter he is a potent power to be reckoned with by every citizen.

Similarly, my friends, each one of us is not merely an ineffectual, fearful, ever-sighing limited creature, but has within himself a personality supremely omnipotent, fearless, unlimited, all-blissful and godly. Just as Gopala Iyer becomes a policeman by a process of self-invocation, and thereafter the policeman forgets to act or live the weaknesses and limitations of Gopala Iyer, so too can we, through prayer, invoke the divine in us and come to transcend our present personality and its defects and limitations. Prayer is the technique by which we tune ourselves to the highest perfection and thereby come to invoke in ourselves a greater perfection of both the mind and the intellect.

To pray is to be seated with the Lord at His Feet. To pray is to aim at the target of Godhead with the arrow of intense longing, which has the sharp end of full faith. To pray is, again, to receive consolation and inspiration as a disciple at the hands of the teacher. In prayer are included praise, love, adoration and holiness.

An article by Pujya Gurudev
‘Prayer as Invocation’ published in Tapovan Prasad, November 2009

181. Writing to Swamiji in 1964

04-11-2015

By Anjali Singh

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda used to reply to each and every letter ever written to him. It did not matter whether it was a known devotee or an unknown person who had written for the first time. Anyone who had a query of any sort would get an answer. This I discovered soon enough in 1963.

I loved receiving Swamiji's letters. It would thrill the heart to see the majestic flow of his handwriting on the envelope. The writing had a character that indicated that here was a person in full command of himself, a person with great confidence. He would write the the name, especially the capital letters of the first and surname in bold, definitive strokes, as if your name meant something else other than you, the individual. He knew we are Brahman and therefore all his envelopes made a statement equivalent to a mahavakya. His love for the country can be seen in the pride with which he wrote 'INDIA'. The envelopes too have a story to tell - the history and journey of this great master and his indefatigable spirit.

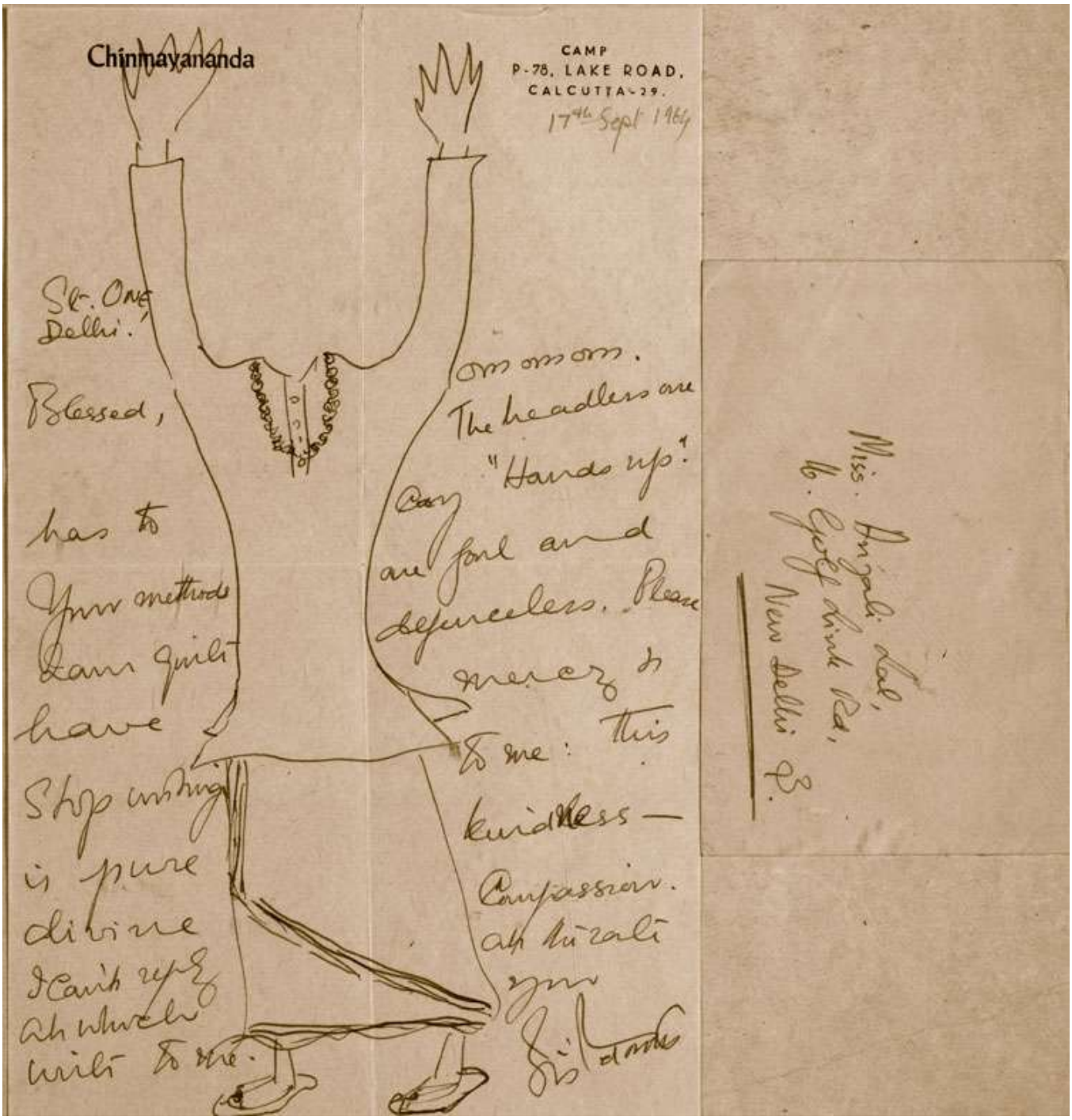


I used to spell my name wrongly, and in the earlier letters he would try and convince me to spell it correctly. Even on the envelope he would put a dash on top

of the added ‘a’. But where does a person ever follow the Guru’s directions? I only changed the spelling to how he wanted it, after his Mahasamadhi.



Knowing that I would get a reply to every letter, in 1964 I increased the pace and started writing to him even before I received his reply so that the overall tempo of the letters would increase. At first it would be about one letter in about two weeks but when Swamiji wrote one or two letters on his own initiative, I thought maybe he likes getting letters from me, so I increased my letter writing to about an average of once a week. That too was fine with Swamiji; but one time when I increased it to twice a week, he replied back to me by drawing a headless swami on the letter paper and wrote, "I cannot write at the speed at which you write to me!" He said he would not write any more letters to me for six months!



If it was my ego, that Swamiji likes to get my letters, then this one letter deflated it. The second reason could be, that he was extremely busy and I was being insensitive to the fact and misusing his time. Instead of spending time in writing extra letters to me, he could reply to genuine students who had questions to ask.

Instead of listening to Swamiji and wait for six months, I put my mind to devising new ways to get replies from him. More on this, tomorrow....

I wrote a letter to him in the name of my friend Shashi who was studying philosophy with me in college. I had written on her behalf saying that I had attended his talks at Delhi and had a few questions to ask.

I had warned her that she might be getting a letter from Swamiji, but that letter was for me.

In his letter to her, he started by congratulating her for asking such intelligent questions! As if that was not enough to fan my ego for the second time! This time he answered the questions in a typed letter, which he must have dictated.

(This letter will appear in Part 3 of this story - so that his time spent in dictating these answers does not go to waste.)

Since this letter was such a success story, since my questions seemed to have gone down well, I wrote Swamiji another letter in the name of my brother Umang Kumar who was managing my father's printing press in those days. I gave the office address which was unknown to Swamiji as it was only from 1976 onwards that we started printing the New Delhi News Bulletin and several yagna souvenirs over there.

My father had brought me a finger painting set from USA that year. I dipped my fingers into the paint and made some random designs with the dripping paint on the paper. I made four or five with different colours and sent them to Swamiji in my brother's name as designs for his Upanishad covers. Then I warned my brother that he would be getting a letter from Swamiji but that letter was for me.

After a week or so I get a perturbed phone call from my brother when he got a letter from Swamiji telling him that he did not like the designs. He said that our Scriptures were not to be clothed in cheap garments! However, he thanked him for thinking of him. My brother asked me what was it that I had written to Swamiji that he needed to admonish him! He had no clue as to what it was all about!

SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA
(TARA CULTURAL TRUST)
PHONE: 581824
SAKHI VIHAR ROAD
POWAI, BOMBAY-76

11.11.'64.

Sri. H. Kumar.
New Delhi.

Blessed One,

Omnamas!
Salutations!!

Your kind note & the designs. I did like them. They are very good for cheaper literature — to flavour style to attract readers. Lessons in dignified subjects like Vedanta & our Hindu Scriptures are not to be clothed in such cheap garments. However I am so grateful at your kindness & loving remembrance of me.

Thy Own Sdy
Sd/- Chinmaya.

This put an end to my letterwriting in other peoples' name!

To Be Continued ....

END OF PART ONE

182. Yearning for Letters from Swamiji (Part Two)

05-11-2015

Part One can be read in Story 181

Sent by Anjali Singh

Yesterday we saw how Anjali Singh plotted and planned to make Gurudev write to her when he had sworn off letter writing for six months. Creativity is the mother of invention and in this part of her story we see what that brought out in her....

Now I had to think of some other means to get him to write to me. While I was doing 'mananam' on this mischief, I remembered Swamiji's words in his talks at the yajnashala where he said how people live their whole life running after an unfulfilled desire such as "I wish I had a son. I wish I had a son." I thought that ever since Swamiji stopped writing to me I could think of nothing else but "I wish I had a letter from Swamiji!"

I realized how much one could suffer from wanting something. But how to convey to Swamiji, that I was really unhappy at his having stopped writing to me. It was such fun hearing from Swamiji as it would light up the day! Instead of putting the purport of Swamiji's talks into practice in my life (I was too spiritually young for that) I thought of ways how to fulfill that desire. In a way that was the correct path at that time because one cannot get rid of desires just like that, one has to sublimate them. Wanting letters from Swamiji was a sattvic desire so it was right to want his letters, I reasoned.

Anyway, all this thinking led me to drawing my first cartoon, in which I drew myself languishing in the thought "I wish I had a letter! I wish I had a letter!" The cartoon showed Swamiji as unmoved by the suffering of another human being!



I thought the cartoon would definitely pierce the armour! Apparently it did not.

Then I drew a second cartoon and sent it to him.



It seems when he got the letter he laughed at the cartoon and showed it to Asha Chanrai and said that he still would not write to me. She pleaded on my behalf, and apparently it is then that he relented and finally wrote one letter. Then he did write one or two more, but each time saying it was not to be considered as a letter and at the same time indicating that he would not to write any further till the six months were over.

This incident was to have several consequences, some positive and some negative. I lost out on a total of twelve letters, well not quite, if you count the three or four that he did write. This was the negative bit. The positive result was that when I first became the editor of the New Delhi News Bulletin from 1976 to 1980 I began putting cartoons like the first one I had sent him, on the third cover page, along with a commentary by Swamiji taken from his books, on the topic of the cartoon.

This made our bulletin very popular. Thirdly, in 2007 when I wanted to make a book out of the cartoons with the blurbs, I modified it with photographs instead, and out came a book called "Say Cheese."

Our life is made up desires - some good, some not so good. Each of them have compounded ripple like effects at the physical, mental and intellectual levels. In my case I wanted more than my fair share of letters. By my action I got even less than what I would have got. But because the letters I wanted were from a saint, my desire got sublimated and this set me on the path for higher evolution. If one holds on to the good desire, or to the Guru or to God, good alone can be the outcome.

183. Letter to ‘Shashi’

06-11-2015

Cause-effect, the value of virtues and the role of means in achieving the end.

Anjali Singh was to no more receive letters from Gurudev for 6 months, but anxious to have him write to her, she wrote to him in the name of her friend Shashi Bahel. In most humourous Anjali-Singh-like manner she notes in her story # 181:

“Instead of listening to Swamiji and wait for six months, I put my mind to devising new ways to get replies from him. I wrote a letter to him in the name of my friend Shashi who was studying philosophy with me in college. I had written on her behalf saying that I had attended his talks at Delhi and had a few questions to ask.

I had warned her (Shashi) that she might be getting a letter from Swamiji, but that letter was for me.

[Readers will recall story 182, where in a similar bid, Anjali ji had first written in her brother’s name and her caveat to him (Shri Umang Kumar) was identical, ‘I had warned him(brother) that he might be getting a letter from Swamiji, but that letter was for me.’]

In his letter to her, Gurudev started by congratulating ‘Shashi’ for asking such intelligent questions! As if that was not enough to fan my ego for the second time! This time he answered the questions in a typed letter, which he must have dictated.”

A brilliant letter from Gurudev – below, explaining very basic concepts in most simple and most effective manner:

ॐ

136th Geeta Gyana Yagna, Nagpur.

Camp : "SHIVNERI"
Oppo. Ramdaspeth Park,
NAGPUR-1

1st November '64.

Kumari Shashi Prabha Bahel,
4, Lodi Estate,
New Delhi - 3.

Blessed Self,

Om Om Om ! Salutations !

Your kind and indeed so very beautifully written letter. Very rare do I get such smart notes.

In fact these questions are not generated by my books; they are precipitated in your mind as you listen to Krishnamoorthy.

'Krishnamoorthy' is an unchartered wide path where everybody can walk to the best of his abilities: Those who have the ability to understand and consistently walk the path that he indicates can certainly reach the goal; but those who have, unfortunately, not the necessary inner ability and strength, fall on the road-side to rot. In Vedant not only the Great Grant Road is indicated, but methods by which the existing mental conditionings are removed for the benefit of the seeker, are also propounded.

Your questions :-

(1) It is an intelligent question. Can a personal-God interfere with the cause-effect-chain ? It can be answered to your satisfaction in case you

... 2 ...

ॐ

136th Geeta Gyana Yagna. Nagpur.

Camp : "SHIVNERI"
Oppo. Ramdaspeth Park,
NAGPUR-1

yourself for a moment consider this cause-effect-relationship. The tree is the cause for the seed and the very same seed is the cause for the tree. You yourself is daughter of your father and yourself will become soon mother of your children. Now then are you a mother or a daughter; you are a mother with reference to your children, and you are a daughter with reference to your father. That is, you are a mother or a daughter only with reference to something that is precedent in time or in terms of the future. Thus, the present is caused by the past and the future is being caused by the present. The present is thus a meeting ground of both cause and effect.

This cause-effect-relationship is to be known by the Consciousness because to the dead there is neither cause nor effect. Thus the Consciousness that illumines this concept of the intellect (cause-effect) must be beyond both cause and effect. If I pray to my personal Lord - who is none other than the Supreme consciousness - am I not trying to heave myself beyond both cause and effect? Naturally, therefore, to the extent I can tune up to my personal-God to that extent I am living away from the chain-of-cause-and-effect; being a devotee I attribute this as a result of my devotion unto Him. There is neither any foul-play here nor any indigenous device of the religious reformers in this.

... 3 ...

ॐ

136th Geeta Gyana Yagna, Nagpur.

Camp : "SHIVNERI"
Oppo. Ramdaspeth Park,
NAGPUR-1

(2) Good and bad are not human judgements. That action after having done brings into your mind reactions that agitates your mind are foul sins, and those actions, which, after their performance, brings in your mind a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, and consequently a great peace and tranquility, those actions are called moral virtues. Unless we live a morally Virtuous life, we will not develop the necessary mental equipose and quietitude - without which our mental and intellectual equipment will not be ready for contemplation upon the Absolute. From the stand point of the Absolute no doubt there is neither good nor bad, but in order to reach it the seeker must pursue the good and a personality so prepared alone can dehypnotise itself from its own sense of limitation and experience the Absolute.

(3) I have listened to Shri Krishnamoorthy and I have got admiration for him. He is indeed a great master; only, the students who have already evolved to a great extent can follow him. We are at this moment completely conditioned and to tell us that we must give up all our conditionings is impractical. In the early stages we need a path and a way, or a method and technology by which alone we can dehypnotise ourselves. Krishnamoorthy will not allow you to follow a path, for these conditionings because he understands that even that

...4...

ॐ

136th Geeta Gyana Yagna, Nagpur.

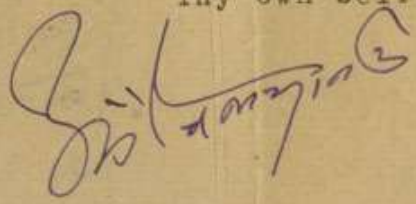
Camp : "SHIVNERI"
Oppo. Ramdaspeth Park,
NAGPUR-1

path is a condition. In order to shine a brass vessel, it is necessary that we put some brasso upon it; at the same time we are dirtying the dirty vessel ~~all~~ at the moment, but after a time when I rub off the brasso I remove not only the brasso but the oxide that had been conditioning the beauty of the vessel. In the same fashion our mind that is dirty with its conditionings, must undertake Sadhana in order to cleanse it, and in the higher stages these very Sadhanas are to be given up.

Indeed I would welcome all your letters and if you don't receive a reply immediately, as readily as at this time, I pray you would not misunderstand my silence, but will continue writing. I am one of those who has taken upon his shoulders too much of work and as such ~~more~~ very often I find no time to attend to correspondence now-a-days. And yet, be rest assured that you will get the answer through the post, or during your silent moments of prayers. Be regular in your prayers. No amount of study can take us even an inch nearer the Truth as prayer can.

With Prem and Om,

Thy Own Self,



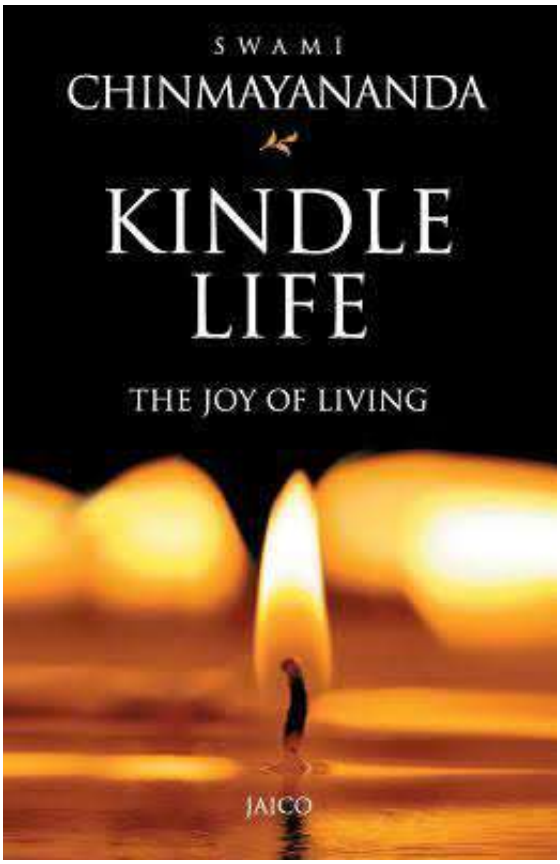
Shared by Ms. Anjali Singh

184. Kindle Life

07-11-2015

Sent by Anita Raina Thapan

Kindle Life is abook of deceptively simple articles by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. It is the first text recommended in the syllabus of scriptural study for the Chinmaya Study Group. Often people who join the Study Group comment with some degree of disappointment on how simplistic it is. Some even state that they will join when the second text, BhajaGovindam of AdiShankara, is taken up. They feel that it is only then that real serious textual study will begin.Alas, they realize only too late that those who have gone through Kindle Life already have a pretty clear idea of key concepts and basic terminology.BhajaGovindam becomes smooth sailing for them.



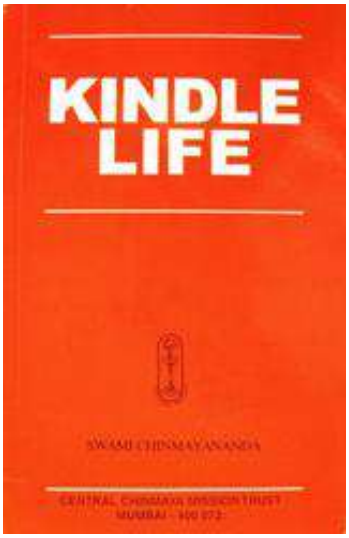
Pujya Gurudev in his immense wisdom and foresight prepared this text as an introduction to the study of the prakaranagranths. For the student of the

shastras of yesteryears, a study of the prakaranagranths was mandatory as a preparation for the eventual study of the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. In the case of the modern day student, however, the lack of basic knowledge of philosophy, Indian tradition and, more often than not, of Sanskrit, makes the immediate study ofthe prakaranagranthsquite challenging. Therefore, did Gurudev prescribe Kindle Life. It serves as a prakaranagranthin English toAdiShankara'sprakaranagranths in Sanskrit.

Even if one has been listening for years to talks at the Mission, the ability to independently reflect, analyze, and think an idea through to its logical conclusion, and then articulate it, are not skills that everyone has necessarily developed. Kindle Life ensures that this process begins from the very first lesson.

The first short chapter, presents us with Gurudev's vision and the purpose of this great scheme of study: 1)individual self-development resulting in the experience of the Supreme Reality; and 2) at the collective level, national integration.Each chapter offers us a flavor of scriptural style. There are examples from everyday life that everyone can relate to and which drive home the ideas presented by the Master. We come across analogies and metaphors that are a recurring refrain in scriptural literature such asthe turbulent waves of the ocean and the peaceful harbour of perfection; or the men of perfection standing tall and unshaken by the world around them like the Himalayas that tower above everything else on planet Earth.

We find that we are continuously jolted by Gurudev's to-the-point and no-nonsense presentation into re-examining things we had never given a thought to before or that we may have superficially prattled about: what life really is, what happiness signifies and what constitutes true freedom. We realize that despite our many varied experiences and skills we have never seriously reflected on the why and wherefore of our own existence.



As we continue with the weekly readings and discussions,we findourselves looking increasingly critically at our own lives – has preyas always been chosen over shreyas? Does my constant malaise in situations and relationships spring from the fact that my personality layers are not integrated? Is my problem that I am too emotional? Where do I stand in the scale of evolution? Plant-man, animal-man, man-man? I find myself closely looking at others aroundme, but Gurudev constantly hammers home the fact that the search light needs to be turned inwards, for the only power of transformation I have is over myself.

We come to understand how vasanas determine our inclinations and actions, and how we can slowly transform the negative vasanas into positive ones. We begin to understand the practices that enable us to empower ourselves,

By the time we have gone through this vital text,we have a reasonably clear idea of our own shortcomings. We can discern why they exist and what we must begin to do to walk the path of self-transformation. We have a clear idea of the various kinds of scriptures and the four paths they prescribe. We have analyzed the various layers of our personality and how they make us what we are. We are able to distinguish these from the Supreme Power that lies beyond them but which enlivens them. The difficult concept of maya, its three gunas and its two great powers has been outlined. Above all, we have come to appreciate the scientific precision with which Vedanta analyzes life and comes to its conclusion of the overarching unity of creation. We have begun to acknowledge that Vedanta is indeed the crown jewel of pan-Indian philosophies.

Perhaps the most useful insight has been that our mind is our only real enemy. Activities that help us purify and uplift our mind such as japa and upasanas have been explained at length. We know clearly where we are headed. Confidence has begun to grow with the Guru's constant guidance. His presence is felt through his words and faith in him has taken root in our hearts. We feel committed to this study, recognizing that it will be a journey of self-unfoldment and self-upliftment. Kindle Life has set us on course.

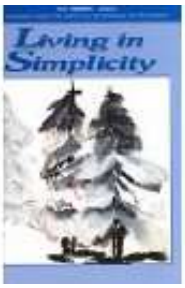
By the time we have concluded several texts in the prescribed syllabus, we recognize the wisdom of obeying the Guru's instructions without questioning. Do what he says (in this case begin your study with this Kindle Life) for in it lies our growth. Nothing that we can think or do will be wiser or better for us. He has thought it out, keeping the total picture in mind and the well-being of every creature at heart. To attain the result He promises, we need to uncompromisingly follow His precise guidelines! The rest will be taken care of by Him.

185. Non-Attachment

08-11-2015

From an article written by Swami Chinmayananda

When the children first come into the school they all cry. One child cries and all the other children join in, out of consideration for the one who started! And it generally goes on in waves. As soon as the class begins there is crying, then they cry again when the class is over. I was wondering why this happened and asked the principal if she needed some more help to look after the children. She said, “No, Swamiji, this happens only for the first two weeks. Afterwards, everything will be all right.”



“How is that?” I asked. The principal explained that the children begin to cry the moment their parents leave them, but once the children have played for a while, they forget all about their parents. At the end of the day, the teachers take the toys from the children and put them away. When the children have to give up the toys, they cry again. One child cries the others join in. Once their parents arrive, the children become quiet. Within two weeks, the same children, who are only two or three years old, have learned that the toys they play with every day have to be left behind when they go home. They also know that their parents will return and that the toys will be there to play with the following day. Once they know this, all crying ends.

Like Children, we want various things to play with, but then identify with them saying – “My house, my wife, my children, my money, my investments.” If only we could understand that everything that is given to us is to play with for some time and that when we leave we will return again to play with the same world of things and beings! Once we have understood this, the fear of death or change is taken away and we can truly begin to enjoy life.

***

(From the Book – Living in Simplicity, Mananam Series)

Contributed by Chinmaya Mission, Puduchery

186. Love – the means to the Virat

09-11-2015

Dropping the individuality to realize the true purport of the Cosmic Vision

- Shri Arvind Kannan is a graduate of the Vedanta Course (Batch 15) as Day Student. He is currently assisting CIF's website management.

The 11th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita explains the ViratRoopa or the Cosmic Form of the Lord, which Bhagavan Sri Krishna showed to Arjuna. All of us may be aware of this and would have read and heard from our childhood. No doubt this wonderful form is a form of meditation, upasana or for cultivation of devotion to the Supreme Lord.

But this often quickly read Chapter also has a wealth of philosophical significance that underlies the Principle of Vedanta- about the nature of Oneness that webs this multiple plurality that we see. This becomes clear only when we read and listen Pujya Gurudev's commentary of this and reconcile what is said here with his other works. To quote from the Holy Gita, Chapter 11, Gurudev's words in his commentary:

"The declaration that the mud is the essence of all pots, is established only when we prove, not only that all pots have mud in them, but also that the mud always potentially contains all pots of all shapes and dimensions. To see the mud in every pot, one has only to train one's eyes to detect the mud as separate from the pot-shapes, but to see all pots in the mud, no doubt, the observer needs a special 'eye.' He needs a sufficient sense of detachment and a scholarly amount of imagination without which it is impossible for him to detect the world-of-pots in any sample of mud.

Similarly, as was described in the last chapter, to see the Self peeping through the windows of finite objects is relatively an easy task; but it is hard, indeed, for a mortal to cognise at once the entire Universe in one Reality, the Self. And yet, this is possible with the 'eye' of knowledge, which knows so well the art of discrimination, and which has developed in itself a sufficient sense of detachment, so that the observer can forget, for the moment, all his attachments, and view on, in a spirit of hushed expectancy and thrilled wonderment.

What exactly makes the things of the world exist separately from one another? [...] On a careful analysis, it will be quite clear to the thinker that it is the concept of space that divides the physical structures into independent islands. [...] Similarly, if Krishna could dry up "the concept of space" in the mind of Arjuna, the Prince would

be able to see the whole Universe as though on his own palm. However, here we find that Arjuna's mind was given enough freedom to move above within the space-limit of Krishna's divine structure. Naturally, he sees in the Krishna-form the entire Universe compressed and packed...."

Let me explain what I understood of Pujya Gurudev's explanation of the philosophy behind this Cosmic Vision. He gives us the Vedantic example of mud and the pot. He says- To see the mud in every pot, one must train one's eyes to detect the mud as separate from the pot-shapes, but to see all pots in the mud, the observer needs a special 'eye' - the eye of knowledge. Similarly to see the Lord in all is one thing, to see everything is nothing but the Lord needs a pure mind indicated as the 'eye of knowledge'.

It is this eye of knowledge which Bhagavan gave to Arjuna whereby he not only sees the One in the Many but also the Many resting in the One. Pujya Gurudev explains very beautifully that it is the Concept of Space that gives us the illusion of plurality.

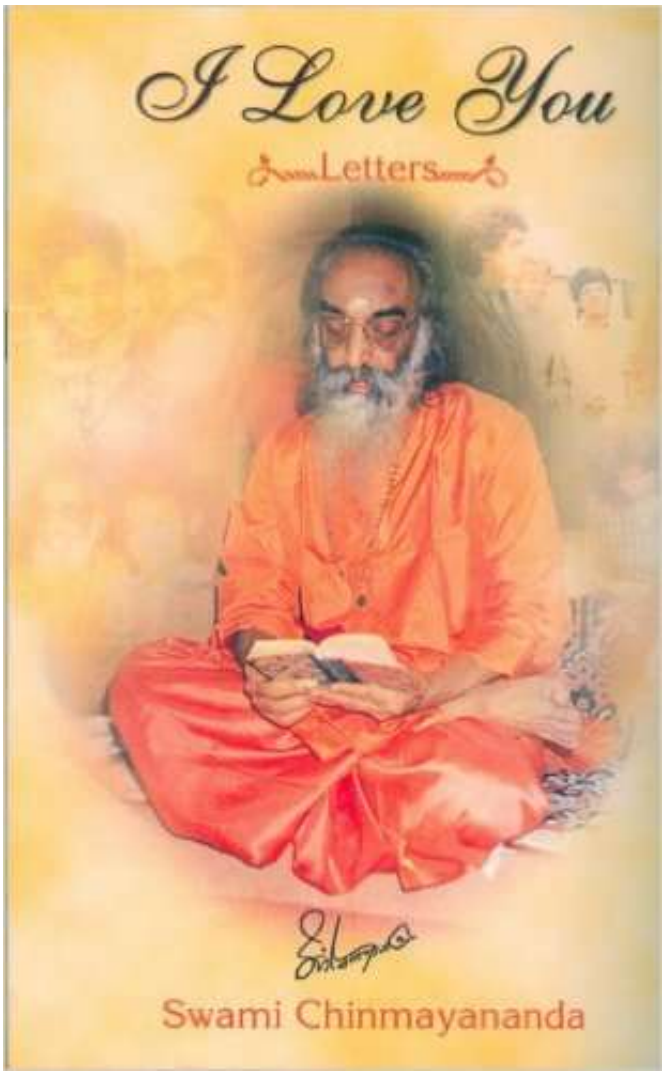
When this is blotted out, one sees only one congenial, homogenous whole. This is the concept of the Cosmic-Man, the vision of the world when viewed by a mind in which the concept of time and space has been dried up. To realize this Unity in the Diversity is the way to end the sorrows of plurality. And that can happen only with Knowledge, the 'jnana chaksu' which the Lord gave to Arjuna, albeit temporarily.

No where else, in any other Commentary of the Bhagavad Gita do we find such a beautiful exposition of the Philosophy behind this Vision of the Cosmic Man, as narrated by Pujya Gurudev. As we read the description of the Cosmic Form with Gurudev's commentary much more secrets of this philosophical knowledge opens up.



Now that brought a second question to my mind. This is the Philosophy of Vedanta from its higher standpoint. But how does one bring that to our lives? This Pujya Gurudev has explained in many of his texts, but I found one very moving that is his text -'I Love You' which were letters written to BalaVihar students. Simple as they are, they expound such profound Truths about life at a practical level.

This is what I understood from this text : True love or devotion is not merely devotion to an altar of God in the temple, but to Serve and Love All for that is the Cosmic Vision or expression of the Lord -- for it is He who has manifested as these worlds of names and forms.



The concept of Love is discussed widely in the movies, debates, by psychologists and in volumes of books. Yet this is the one which is grossly misunderstood. Love is usually taken as dependence in a relationship between friends, or between a husband and wife, or a mother to her child. It is understood as a relationship of 'give and take' where each gives and equally demands love in return to complete the other. Such love is also much glorified. But all these are only what Gurudev calls "sneha bhakti' and not ' prema bhakti '.

True love of ''premabhakti ' is selfless love. Selfless love can be by one person for another, but if it stops there, we cannot say it is truly 'selfless'. Hence Gurudev defines Devotion or ' prema bhakti ' as love that is directed towards a higher ideal like the nation, or to God. The greater we identify with, purer is the love, and when individuality is dropped then one can realize the true purport of the Cosmic Vision which the Lord shows in the 11th Chapter of the Gita.

Pujya Gurudev says that we have mistaken love as 'demanding love'. Hence the term

▫ 'falling in love'. But those who demand love are only beggars, one must be a giver of love and not a taker. This 'fusion in love' which is active, dynamic must be directed to the world around us. If we demand love and mistake love to be that, then it is a baser love which Sri Krishna calls 'attachment'. True loving is not a passive 'taking' but dynamic giving. We generally think to 'give' means losing something, but the Scriptures say that the Giver actually is blessed.

Further Gurudev says - Love, when it is true and full, is unconditional and joyful. The reward is 'love is a fulfillment in itself', for all are but Narayana in manifestation. This alone is the way to end fear, loneliness, anxiety and sorrow which the world is experiencing so much today. Love is fully blossomed only when we discover our total identity with God- who is the essence of all beings and things. This is the culmination of love, fulfillment of love indicated by the Cosmic Person.

It is truly blessed how when we go through Gurudev's texts not only the philosophical concepts, but their practical roadmaps have been given with such clarity. We pray to Gurudev to give the strength to follow his teachings and also experience what the Scriptures talk about.

Hari Om

187. CLIMATE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

10-11-2015

Sent by L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

We have seen in the B M I chart of Pujya Sri Gurudev that ‘Om’ the Reality reflected in the pool of vasanas, is the individual ego and the world of names and forms.
To regain our Godhood that has been intercepted by these vasanas [which are basically of three temperaments (gunas) the peaceful (satwa) the agitated (Rajas) the dull (tamas)] is to eliminate them.
The process of their elimination is to remove Rajas and Tamas from Satwa in which Reality is clearly perceptible.

How this is done is explained by Pujya Sri Gurudev in Chapter 14 of Geeta and 117 of Vivekachudamani.
The beauty here is the subtle metaphor that Gurudev uses and without much repetition, the purport of that metaphor is brought out in brilliant manner. Gurudev is verily talking about inner environment management, which he has referred to as ‘climatic condition’.

Gurudev’s words. Introduction to Geetha chapter 14

“… the the One Eternal Principle expresses Itself in the various matter equipments as different individuals, even though the elements that constitute Matter are one and the same everywhere --- due to the "gunas born of prakriti." The term guna, used in the dialectics of the Geeta, indicates not the 'properties' of a material but the 'attitude' with which the mind functions. The psychological being in everyone of us comes under the influence of three different "climatic conditions" prevalent in our bosom.

These three are called the gunas: Unactivity (sattwa), Activity (rajas) and Inactivity (tamas).

These three, in different proportions, influence the mental and the intellectual caliber of every individual and these influences provide the distinct flavour in each personality. All three are always present in every bosom, but from man to man their proportion slightly differs; hence the distinct aroma in the character, conduct and behaviour of each individual.

Vivekachudamani 117

Satwa is ever pure like water. Like water can get mixed up with many things but not as a compound of its own nature. Water as water is ever pure. When we say

dirty water we mean that a sample of pure water has something in it.
If the stink and the dirt are removed the water again becomes pure.
Similarly Satwa is always present even in a tamasic man. When pure Satwa in an individual is in conjunction with Rajas and Tamas it becomes the cause for transmigration.
If he is pure satwa i.e. If he has eliminated Rajas and tamas then for him there can be no transmigration. There is no veiling and there are no agitations. The mind then becomes steady in utter meditation. It is face to face with divinity, with Reality.

How to do this? Again we resort to Sri Gurudev’s explanation in BG 14:26

The GitaAcharya expects his devotees to bring religion from the Pooja-rooms and temples to the fields of their every-day-life of activities and in all their contacts with others around.

Such a practice of constant God-awareness and dedicated service removes the agitations of the mind and tunes up the inner instrument for a more efficient flight through meditation. Tamas and Rajas get more and more reduced, and thereby the proportion of Sattwa in the seeker's subtle constitution increases. And such a seeker "IS FIT TO BECOME Brahman."

188. THE AMBASSADOR OF THE LORD

11-11-2015

About precise examples and metaphors

One of the hallmarks of Gurudev's teaching has been his ability to extract contemporary examples. He may have been blamed for teaching in English, but when we look closely, we see that in that Englishness lay the English-like difficulties that come to a seeker trapped in the Englishness of the English world.

In talking about karma yoga, Gurudev says: 'KARMA can be transformed into KARMA-YOGA, by the technique of renouncing one's sense of agency in one's actions.' Until then he has been talking about how to choose or know your area of work, how to give your best in it, how to work at it with the right attitude so that we are not enjoying the fruit and constructing more vasanas. To sum it up he draws our attention back to Karma Yoga in a simply constructed sentence that cannot but convey what he meant, and he says, "KARMA can be transformed into KARMA-YOGA, by the technique of renouncing one's sense of agency in one's actions."

This agency business is not easily understood but when Gurudev gives an example, it is perfect.He gives at first, the example of a surgeon:

"Another surgeon is called in to operate upon a doctor's own wife or child; his attachment to his own wife makes him incapacitated to perform the operation on her, although the same doctor, on the same day, may perform the same operation on another patient with whom he has no self-deluding attachment."

(Here, 'self-deluding' as the adjective for attachment, is startling. The attachment to spouse, child, parent, is a relationship of the nature that causes delusion of the self. Another patient is only a patient. There is no relationship, no attachment, hence no delusion! In other words, attachment is delusory. One word that conveys a chapter load!)

And then he goes on to give another example whose import is far too significant. Significant because it contains some elements that we mortals succumb to and abandon karma yoga. Significant because it talks about us. Talks about our weaknesses and our inner silent dishonesty. When we are afraid of performing our duty, we are unable to speak out why we fear; instead we look for excuses to place before us as reasons why we 'unfortunately' cannot perform. In the process we do not face up to our fears. So this example that comes immediately after the surgeon example is stunning. He says, "When an ambassador from one country to another, even if he is shy, retreating coward in the presence of mighty monarchs in foreign lands, reaches the court of another nation or country as a representative of his national government, he comes to outshine himself."

At one level he is reassuring us that if we take the bull by the horns, we will overcome the difficulty. But at another level Gurudev is telling us, like a father would, how he knows that we may be fearful, suffering from performance anxiety. Anxiety also belongs to the ego and is egocentric. To not want to attend a conference of monarchs, to not want to make that presentation out of a sense of inferiority, is also an egocentric desire! Thus Gurudev has given 2 examples, one representing fear of loss arising from attachment, and the other, a performance anxiety arising from a fear of being shamed – which is also an attachment to the ego.So Gurudev follows that with:

“If man were to act as a representative of the Infinite and the Eternal, he shall discover in himself mightier possibilities and greater effectiveness which are well wasted and squandered today by his misconception of a finite ego in himself.” (9.5 Guide)

What we can do is convert karma into karma yoga, as Gurudev says, “by the technique of renouncing one's sense of agency in one's actions.” Here Gurudev gives an example that we may tend to gloss over, read lightly. When an ambassador from one country to another, even if he is shy, retreating coward in the presence of mighty monarchs in foreign lands, reaches the court of another nation or country as a representativeof his national government, he comes to outshine himself.

The choice of example is itself grand. In it are opportunities to experience a variety of emotions. And how Gurudev plucked this out of the lives of ordinary people to present the precise analogy for a jiva to convert his allegiance to the ego to an allegiance to the Infinite and the Eternal is brilliant. From an inferiority among the seemingly mighty mortals, a man, by placing his country above himself, immediately gains the grandness of his nation into himself and is seen as his country. Likewise if a jiva were to act as the representative of the Lord, ….he will transcend his limited ego. This is the route to convert karma into yoga.

189. Kneading the Metaphor

12-11-2015

Post and Ghost

There are some stunning examples that Vedanta uses to teach. There are some stunning explanations that Gurudev uses to explain these very examples. It is how he writes about the explanation. It is the words he chooses to explain, that makes it so simple.

The post and ghost is one such that often dots the texts. Difficult to say where it was used for the first time, but wherever he uses it, Gurudev opens it out just that much as is necessary for that moment. But if we have been reading consistently then a critical mass of understanding takes place.

In the Vishnusahasranama, naam 136 Kritaakritah is a case in point. Kritam, explains Gurudev, is that which is done, that which is manifested or created. Naturally then Akritam is that which has not manifested or become.

So now we hear an excellent explanation of this, " Kritam indicates all the effects manifested out of the Creator's activities and Akritam is the "cause" from which no manifestation has yet emerged – it is still unmanifest," says Gurudev.



Image credit: styleandcentsability.wordpress.com

And now He uses the post and ghost example and writes:

“The Self, the Atman, is the Post,

“upon which the cause and the effect, the unmanifest and the manifest – like the ghost, apparently come to play. (Kritam = Vyaktam; A-Kritam = A-Vyaktam).”

And when we approach BG 9:4, the post and ghost reappear!

4. All this world is pervaded by Me in My Unmanifest form (aspect) ; all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them.

And in His explanation of this paradoxical statement Gurudev launches into one of the finest uses of the post and ghost metaphor and soon becomes so engagingly interesting. He first helps with understanding how the infinite pervades everything, being subtle. And how all things that have forms are perishable. And that explains that all the world (of names and forms) is thus pervaded by the Lord in an unmanifest manner – “as the mud pervades all forms and shapes in all mud-pots.”

When we see a pot, we see the name and form. We don’t ‘see’ the mud. When someone asks what is this? We say Pot. We don’t say ‘Mud’. But it is the mud that pervades the pot. It is the gold that pervades the ring, bangle, chain. That is how He explains All this world is pervaded by Me in My Unmanifest form (aspect);

Then He talks about (in His words), “the relationless-relationship between the real and the unreal” in order to explain, "All beings exist in Me but I dwell not in them." Hence the relation between the mud (real) and the pot (unreal) – and thus brings us to the theory of superimposition. For this, He gets back to the post and the ghost:

[The vehicle He has used to convey the learning is not simply English language, but His deftness in being able to knead the language (which in its essence can be very stiff and dogmatic) to make it ‘speak’ to us.]

Gurudev writes, “The ghost-vision can come only upon the post. And what exactly is the relationship between the ghost and the post from the standpoint of the post? The innocent post, in infinite love for the deluded fool, can only make a similar statement as the Lord has made here. "The ghost," the post would say, "is no doubt, in me, but I am not in the ghost; and therefore, I have never frightened any deluded traveller at any time." In the same fashion the Lord says here, "I, IN MY UNMANIFEST NATURE, AM THE SUBSTRATUM FOR ALL THE MANIFESTED" chaos of names and forms, but neither in their joys nor in their sorrows, neither in their births nor in their deaths, "AM I SHARING THEIR DESTINIES, BECAUSE I DO NOT DWELL IN THEM."

Then He shifts our mind to this part of the verse: "NOR DO THINGS EXIST IN ME," although "I DWELL NOT IN THEM." This is so impossible a paradox to even accept without thinking there is a grammatical error! But Gurudev writes, “Continuing our

example of the post and the ghost this is equivalent to the post declaring that, "in me, the electric post, never has a ghost existed." In Pure Awareness, in Its Infinite Nature of sheer Knowledge, there never was, never is and can never be any world of pluralistic embodiment, just as, for the waker, the pleasures of the dream world ARE NEVER AVAILABLE. In short, at the time of the direct subjective experience of the Self there is no cognition of the pluralistic world, which is born out of the forgetfulness of the Infinite.

Meaning, when the Self (Infinite, all pervading, mud) is experienced, the pluralistic world (pots) is not cognized. Mark the use of the word ‘cognition’ instead of ‘seen’. The latter is a physical function of the sense organ, whereas the former is not ‘cognition’; at best we may say it is a ‘waking up to’. (Perception, attention, memory, feeling, learning, understanding are all aspects of cognition and these take place in the brain.)

Vedanta explains using another analogy: If a light is lit in a very dark room and then covered with a thick cloth, so that the light is not seen, then when the cloth is removed, we are not illumining the light; it was already there.

As for the I DWELL NOT IN THEM, He says, in the Infinite, never has the finite ever risen! this is equivalent to the post declaring that, "in me, the electric post, never has a ghost existed."

The Self "BRINGS FORTH AND SUPPORTS ALL BEINGS" just as the ocean gives birth to, supports and nourishes all the waves in it. "AND YET," says Krishna "I, MYSELF NEVER DWELL IN THEM."

190. Gurudev- the best friend of children!

13-11-2015

Book: My Children

Sent by Shri Anil Sachdev

Everyone loved our spiritual teacher, Swami Chinmayananda.

However, children loved him the most.

He always sought out the young ones and talked to them in 'their' language.



Seeking them out and listening to them…

He asked them many questions and listened to them very attentively and no matter what they said, for him their words were meaningful. The children in turn felt more respected and special. And when they narrated their stories and feelings to him, he had wonder in his eyes and looking into them lovingly, he would ask, 'Is that so?' as if they were sharing some invaluable treasure with him! As if it made a difference to him....

I was only five years old when I met Gurudev and each time I met him, he made me feel special.

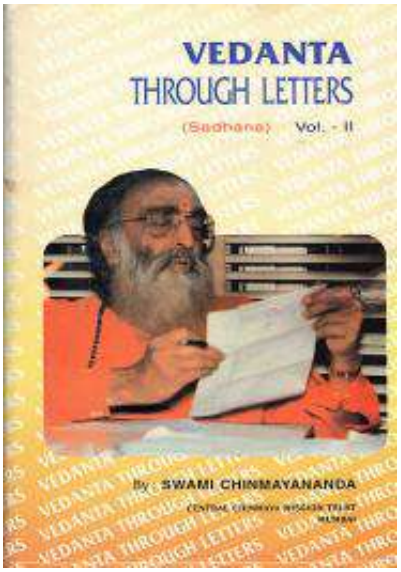
He never compared one child with another and always appreciated us for who we

were and discovered some talent in us that was special.He would encourage us for not just our achievements in academics, or sports or dance/ music but each time we displayed an act of kindness or service to others.

And even as he did this, he spoke to us measured words of putting trust in God. His encouraging us to pray, removed fears and worries and made us feel confident.

The turning point in my life that guided me on my life's purpose was when I was honored as a young boy by Gurudev in front of thousands of people for excellence in academics as well as extracurricular activities.

He presented me his book' Vedanta though letters' and wrote on the first page in his own hand writing: 'Never yield the first rank in any field as you are pure excellence.'



This combined with what he said in one of his talks- 'An altar in life will alter your life', made me reflect on my personal vision that led to defining my entire life's journey!

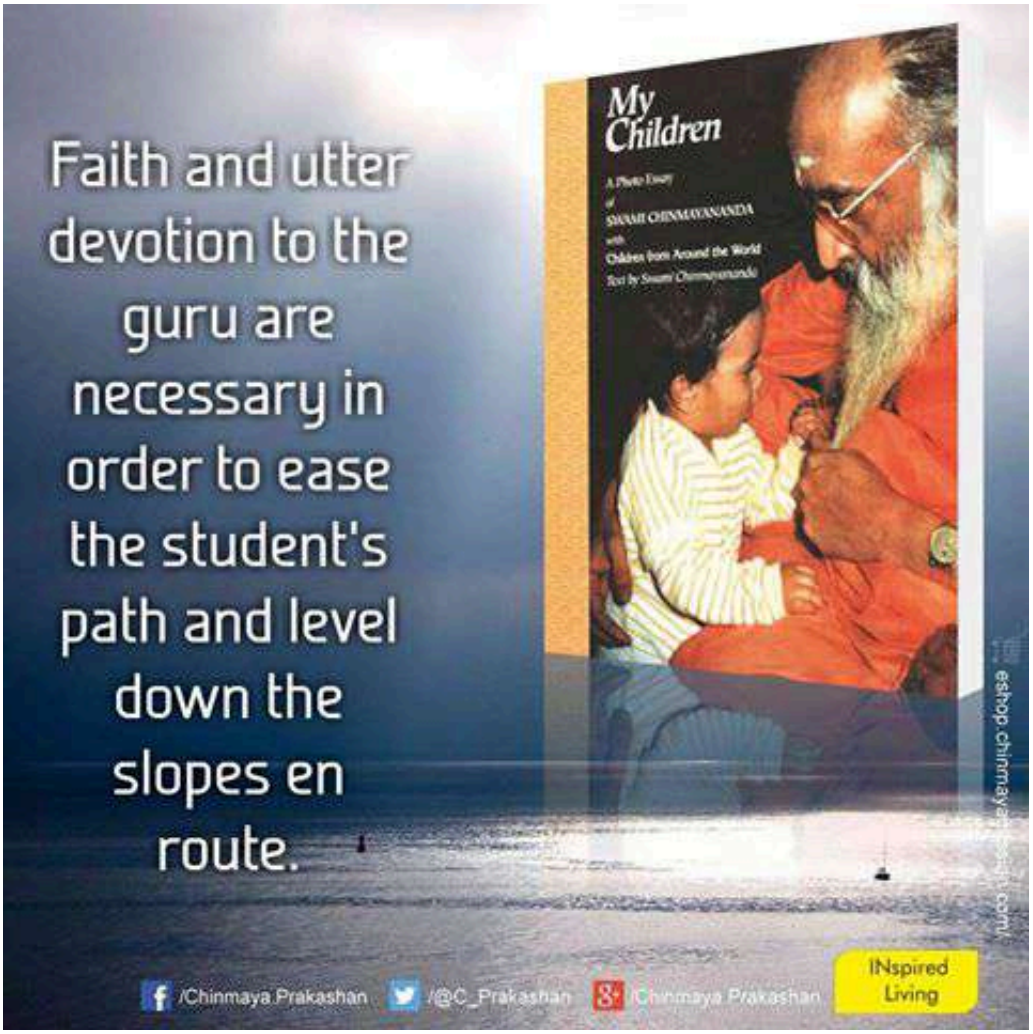
As I grew older and married and raised my own family, my wife and I were blessed to see his love for our children. Both my son, Sahil and daughter Mehek, looked forward to meeting him each time he came to Delhi.

We began to learn from how he treated children and brought the same approach in dealing with our children. Instead of reprimanding them when they did some mischief, we reasoned with them and tried to influence them with our love.

A remarkable incident happened in 1994, when my daughter, Mehek, was about 8 years old.

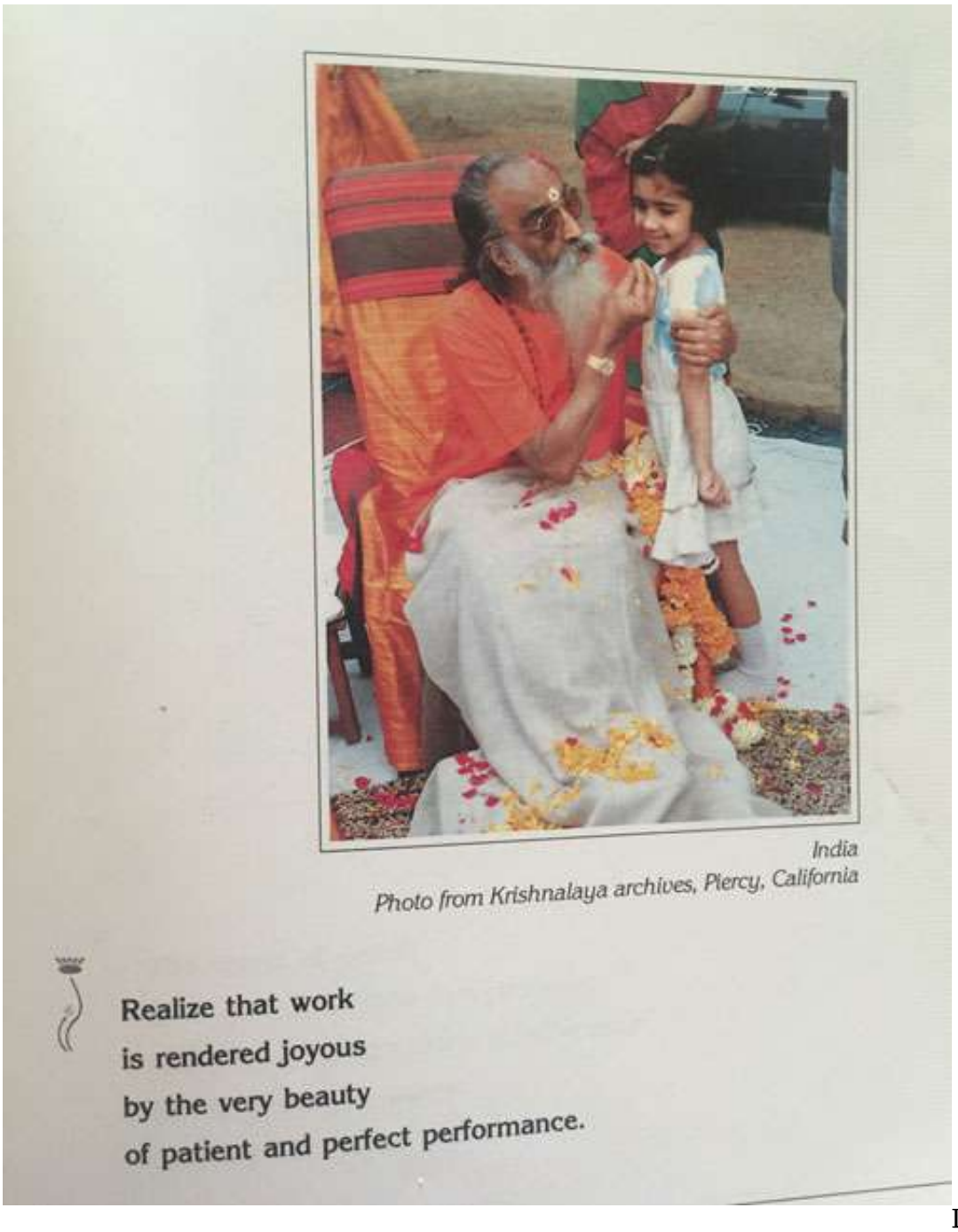
I had taken a group of friends including several Americans to the beautiful Chinmaya Ashram at Sidhbari, near Dharamshala.

After spending several joyful days there, when we were about to leave, Shri Pai, the devoted Administration head of the Ashram, who later became Swami Ramanand, told our group to visit the book shop and buy some new books that had arrived from the Chinmaya Mission Publications unit.



As soon as we entered the shop, my eyes were attracted to a book called My Children and I instantly bought it. This book was published by the Chinmaya Mission in the US and was all about Gurudev's love and special relationship with children.

I opened the book randomly, and the very first page that I saw had a beautiful picture of my daughter, Mehek with Gurudev!



Little Mehek with Gurudev (My Children)

I was very pleased that I had purchased the book and was eagerly looking forward to returning home to show the book and the picture to my daughter and other members of the family!

Next day, as soon as I reached home, my wife came running to me and said: 'Do you know what happened last evening? Mehek and I had gone to visit my parents. We were sitting in the living room and Mehek went to the kitchen and opened the

refrigerator to take some cold water. As soon as she touched it, a strong electric current passed through her body and she got stuck to the door of the machine and screamed. As we ran towards her to rescue her, she loudly invoked Swamiji's name and all of a sudden, her hand got unstuck and she fell down to the floor. We rushed her to the hospital and after a series of tests, the doctors said, she has had a miraculous escape!'.

When I asked my wife what time the incident happened, it was exactly the same time at which I had opened the book, My Children and had seen Mehek's photo with Gurudev!! I was numb with love and gratitude.

We all had tears of joy when I shared how I had purchased the book at the same time of Mehek's nearly fatal experience and showed them the lovely photo of Mehek with Gurudev!

Mehek was of course thrilled and full of joy for days to come!

Gurudev told us that children are always connected to God and know the true essence of love.

In the moment of crisis, therefore, the first name that came to Mehek's heart was Gurudev's and her deep love for the teacher worked like magic.

This is why Gurudev wrote: 'Children are not empty vessels to be filled but lamps to be lit' and said to us if you teach them the love of God, they will learn all that is meaningful and will develop the strength ofcharacter.

In his writings he emphasized that once children learn this aspect, they would realize that 'To love and be loved (by Him) is the greatest happiness' and went on to say, 'Love is the heart of all religions'.

As our children grew older, we observed that Gurudev was with them at every stage even though his physical presence was not with us.

They always kept his photo by their bedside, and in their books and in both difficult and happy times, they always invoked His blessings!

We are convinced that this has made them better human beings and of course happier!

191. Teaching the Teacher

14-11-2015

Book: BalRamayan

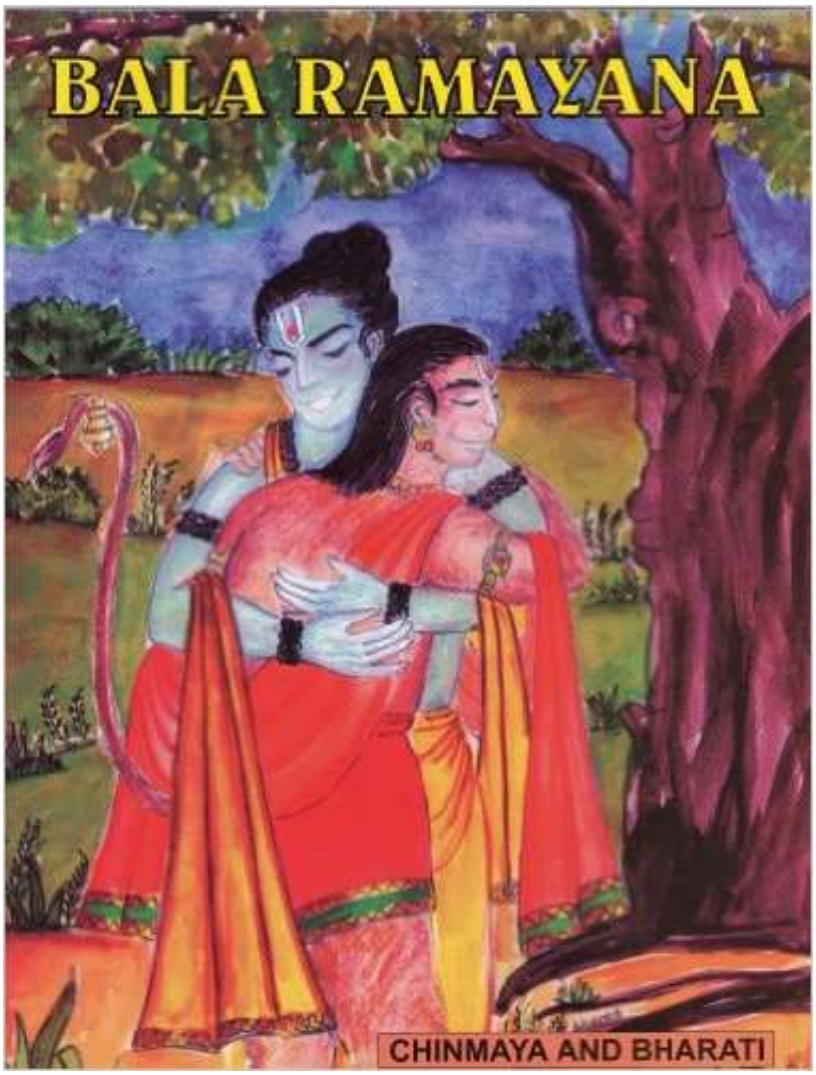


When we look at this Wikipedia description of what muscles do, we can simply imagine what the muscle of a culture does for a nation, a group of people. “Muscles function to produce force and motion. They are primarily responsible for maintaining and changing posture, locomotion, as well as movement of internal organs, such as the contraction of the heart and the movement of food through the digestive system via peristalsis.”

The internal organs of a culture are its governance, its teachers, its administrators and its business community. What the teachers teach, moves through to create sound administration, governance and business & services.

And this sentence mentioned above is found in His address to teachers – both at school and at home, in the form of parents.

It is in a ‘Preface’ to His book for children, the BalRamayan.



While authors or writers are prone to tell in their Preface how the story came to be or how they thought of writing that book, Gurudev titles it 'LISTEN". Amazing, because the preface or foreword are typically two parts of a book that people mostly ignore or by pass.

But Gurudev says "LISTEN". One is also quick to cast a glance at the foot of the LISTEN to see if it is Gurudev or some publisher with a misunderstanding of what a Preface should be called. Then one notices oh-no, it is Gurudev Himself! And now you are compelled to read the LISTEN, and then one finds an intriguing statement where He tells parents this: Read to the child, don't teach.

Don't teach the Ramayan?

But he writes on – 'the Ramayana is the best education that parents can give to their sons and daughters □ an education that can instil into them a reverence for life, and a sense of moral beauty and spiritual alertness in life. Every child must get

a chance to grow up in an atmosphere of inspiring ideals, helping it to form its own personal vision-in-life."

Just this one portion is enough to slap one into wakefulness. The words: reverence for life; moral beauty; spiritual alertness; personal vision in life. If we examine our own lives we will see a lack of all three. And what is remarkable is the sequence of the three grand values, beginning with moral values. It seems that moral values is what enables the constructing of a personal vision-of-life when the time comes.

That this is true, comes home to us only when it has been tried on one's child or grandchild. But to most reading the LISTEN, such a thought has not come yet. For most parents have told the story of Rama or Hanuman (more likely) to keep a child engaged enough while she is spooning food into his mouth. And when the food bowl is empty, the story stops right there, even if Rama has only walked towards but not strung the bow, let alone rend the skies a-shudder with its twang when it breaks.

This is why reading out, away from the dining table, is effective.

Gurudev says:

"These stories of Bala Ramayana are to be read out and explained by the parents themselves to their children. (Note: He places those 2 words in italics.) This must be done in an atmosphere of religious inspiration. Even if we don't arrange a complete altar, at least let us keep a picture of Sri Rama on a table nearby and let us light up a joss-stick (agarbatti) in humble reverence and devoted respect.

"Sit down and let the father or mother read from this book, each day only one section. Let it be translated in simple homely words in the vernacular. Tell the story to the children, never try to teach them.



Tell the story...don't teach...

(Mark the instructions. Translate into the vernacular in simply homely terms. It could be so that the story of Rama is felt in the everyday language of the mind, so that it feels like a part of the little boy or little girl's life. Tell the story -- never try to teach them.

Here is the thing: when we try to teach, we color it with our vasanas. Like the attraction for the golden deer is often explained as a frivolity; or the crossing of the Lakshmanrekha explained as the beginning of punishment or ill tidings than as a discipline breached.)

"At the end of the reading the parent must prostrate to Sri Rama's picture ... please, never tell your children to do so. Leave it for them to decide for themselves. Even those who were not doing it in the beginning, will start prostrating sincerely after a few days. Ten times, repeat SRI RAMA JAI RAMA JAI JAI RAMA before the reading-session and also after the close of the section. Let the children sing in chorus, or chant together with you.



See that every following day even the smallest baby in the group of listeners can repeat the story described the previous day, and the days before. Then only proceed ahead." (That last sentence can be a lesson in patience.)

The 'first-reading must be done along with the elders and parents. They they can leave the volume of Bala Ramayana for the children to read for themselves.

The day the reading is concluding, see that children get some unexpected presents

and some milk-pudding (kheer) as prasaadam.

Just as there is aanubandhachatushtaya before the main texts of the prasthanatrayi determining qualifications, these set of instructions to parents is also a commitment to follow these rules, a qualification to be a right teacher. And coming as it does from the Guru, the Teacher, it is but a teaching, a tenet of the yagna of bringing up children.

Book Information:

Bala Ramayana by Swami Chinmayananda and BharatiSukhtankar

- Paperback: 152 pages
- Publisher: Chinmaya Prakashan; 12th reprint. edition (1 October 2006)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 8175971029
- ISBN-13: 978-8175971028

192. The Yagna Spirit

15-11-2015

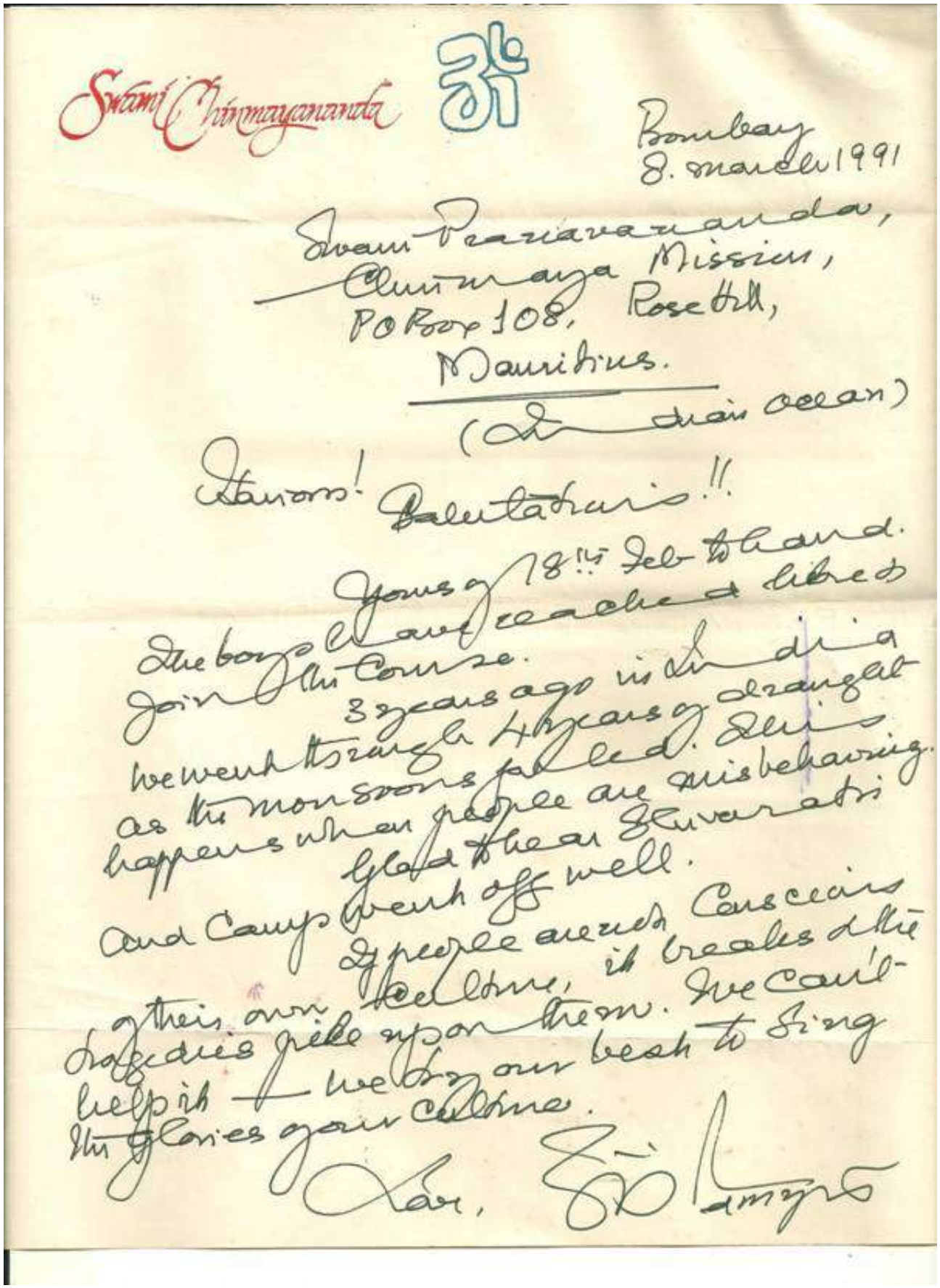
Letter to Sw. Pranavananda, CM Mauritius

Rains are an outcome of an environment well protected. The protection of an environment depends on the way we treat both flora and fauna. Effluent emissions disturb the environment in more ways than we can imagine. A long term effect is delayed monsoons, less monsoons or in extreme, floods.

Protecting an environment also includes protecting the culture. Like respecting rivers and oceans is Hindu Culture; dumping waste into them is contrary to our culture. Protecting the culture is the job of the collective. That is a yagna, when everyone responsible for the yagna does his or her bit for the yagna.

Drawing our attention to the yagna spirit in this letter to Swami Pranavananda, head of Chinmaya Mission Mauritius – Gurudev writes:





Swami Chinmayananda

Bombay
8. march 1991

Swami Prajnanananda,
Chinmaya Mission,
P.O. Box 108, Rose Hill,
Mauritius.

(Indian ocean)

Namaste! Salutations!!

Yours of 18th Feb to hand.
Glad you reached & liked
the boys' Course.
3 years ago in India
we went through 4 years of drought
as the monsoons failed. This
happens when people are misbehaving.
Glad to hear Shivaratri
and Camp went off well.
If people accept Corrections
& their own shortcomings, it breaks the
hatreds rife upon them. We can't
help it — we do our best to sing
the glories of our Lord.

Love, Swami

Swami Pranavananda elaborates for us:

In a letter dated 18th February 1991, I wrote to Gurudev to share with him the success of the MahaShivaratree festival and a spiritual camp in Mauritius. In his reply dated 8th March 1991, he highlighted two universal lessons for mankind and one conclusive directive on the way forward.

Gurudev wrote that “three years ago, in India, we went through four years of drought as the monsoons failed. This happens when people are misbehaving.” Gurudev was implicitly referring to the loss of the ‘Yagna’ spirit which would disappear and dry up. He further added that “if people are not conscious of their own culture, it breaks and tragedies pile upon them.”

Gurudev concluded his letter by saying “we can’t help it - we try our best to sing the glories of our culture.” This concluding sentence gives a clear direction to overcome difficult situations by going back to our culture.

193. The Path As Vehicle

16-11-2015

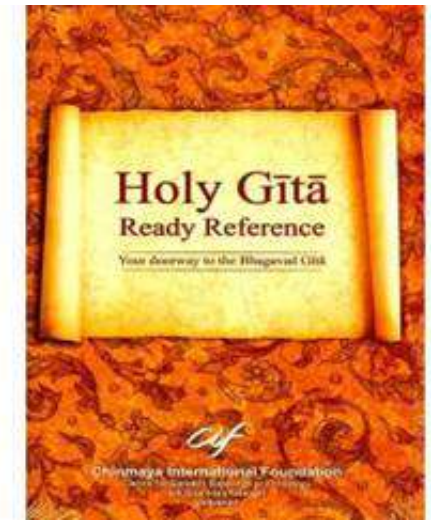
There has always been questions from devotees as to which path is the best, is any one path (marga) better than the other, is jnana the only road to liberation, can not bhakti yield faster and better results... the combination of questions have been varied and interesting.

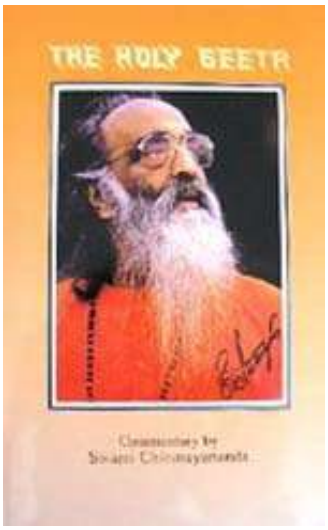
The Gita itself becomes the means to confusion for many as Krishna tosses His words in myriad ways to questions from Arjuna. So in Chapter 3, where the doubts of Arjuna begin, he says, : If it be thought by you that 'knowledge' is superior to 'action, ' O Janardana, why then, do you, O Keshava, engage me in this terrible action?

Following that with verse 2: With this apparently perplexing speech you confuse, as it were, my understanding; therefore, tell me that "one" way by which, I, for certain, may attain the Highest.

And Bhagawan says:: 3. In this world there is a two-fold path, as I said before, O sinless one; the 'Path-of-Knowledge' of the SANKHYANS and the 'Path-of-Action' of the YOGINS.

While we hold n to this, in Chapter 5, right at the outset, an unconvinced Arjuna asks: 1. Renunciation-of-actions, O Krishna, You praise and again YOGA --- performance-of-actions. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two.




THE HOLY GEETA



And Bhagawan says: Children, not the wise, speak of SANKHYA (Knowledge) and YOGA (YOGA -of-action) as distinct; he who is truly established even in one, obtains the fruits of both.

But Gurudev's words are so clarifying in their precision, as if He hears the confusions of our own hearts, for He writes, "To Arjuna, Karma meant Vedic ritualism such as Yajnas,Yagas and Homas, etc., and Samnyasa meant renunciation of everything and total retirement to a quiet Himalayan jungle, living there in constant inactivity, a strange life of self-denial and, perhaps, conscious self-persecution. When this was the type of misunderstanding in the mind of an educated, intelligent

member of royalty of those times, we can easily imagine how much more pathetic must have been the general condition of desperate ignorance into which the Hindus of that age had sunk!"

This is so true, for many many people get knotted in similar manner.

But confusion is confusion and we have all been down that road. Arjuna himself in Chapter 12, raises the same doubt yet again, albeit in yet another roundabout way, when he asks,

एवंसततयुक्तायेभक्तास्त्वांपर्युपासते

येचाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तंतेषांकेयोगवित्तमाः ||12.1||

1. Those devotees who, eversteadfast, thus worship you, and also those who worship the imperishable, the unmanifested --- which of them are better versed in YOGA?

And the Lord answers it yet again for Arjuna's benefit, with:

The Blessed Lord said: 2. Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, these, in my opinion, are the best in YOGA

But Gurudev simplifies it even more. His commentary at this point uses a simple but sharp metaphor and sets to rest all doubt about paths and which one is better or not.

The word 'Path' has had varied meanings for various people. But in one simple sentence Gurudev explains 'Path'. His words in the introduction to this verse are succinct and precise.

Here is the extract of Gurudev's commentary:

The Blessed Lord said: 2. Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, these, in my opinion, are the best in YOGA.

"In this very opening stanza, Krishna points out three conditions that are absolutely necessary in order that devotion unto the Lord may yield its promised dividend. Generally, there is a feeling that the 'Path-of-Devotion' is very easy. It is equally true to say that no chosen 'Path' is difficult for the seeker who has chosen it. 'Paths' are different only because of the vehicles employed; in a boat we can never travel through the grand-trunk road, nor can we sail over the waves in a plane, nor on a cycle dash at 60-miles an hour! There are limitations to each vehicle.

"But progress is assured to the intelligent and the careful even with any such vehicle. Similarly, for self-development, each type of seeker, according to the vehicle available, chooses either the 'Path-of-Devotion' or the 'Path-of-Action' or the 'Path-of-Knowledge.' To each one of them, his 'Path' is the easiest."

Simply, whatever the vehicle, let the intention be fixed upon the Lord!

Holy Gita, commentary by Swami Chinmayananda

194. SPIRITUALITY FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

17-11-2015

From an article in Advice to Householders, by Swami Chinmayananda

Published by: Chinmaya Mission Trust Mumbai

Householder-devotees have often written many letters to Gurudev asking for guidance, or seeking clarification or expressing doubts and anxieties. Gurudev in turn replied to them in the context of their situation, advising, counselling. In a stunning little book called ADVICE TO HOUSEHOLDERS, CCMT has collated into an article all these advices which makes for a good guide to living spiritually.

Some of his advice on householder duties are extracted below.

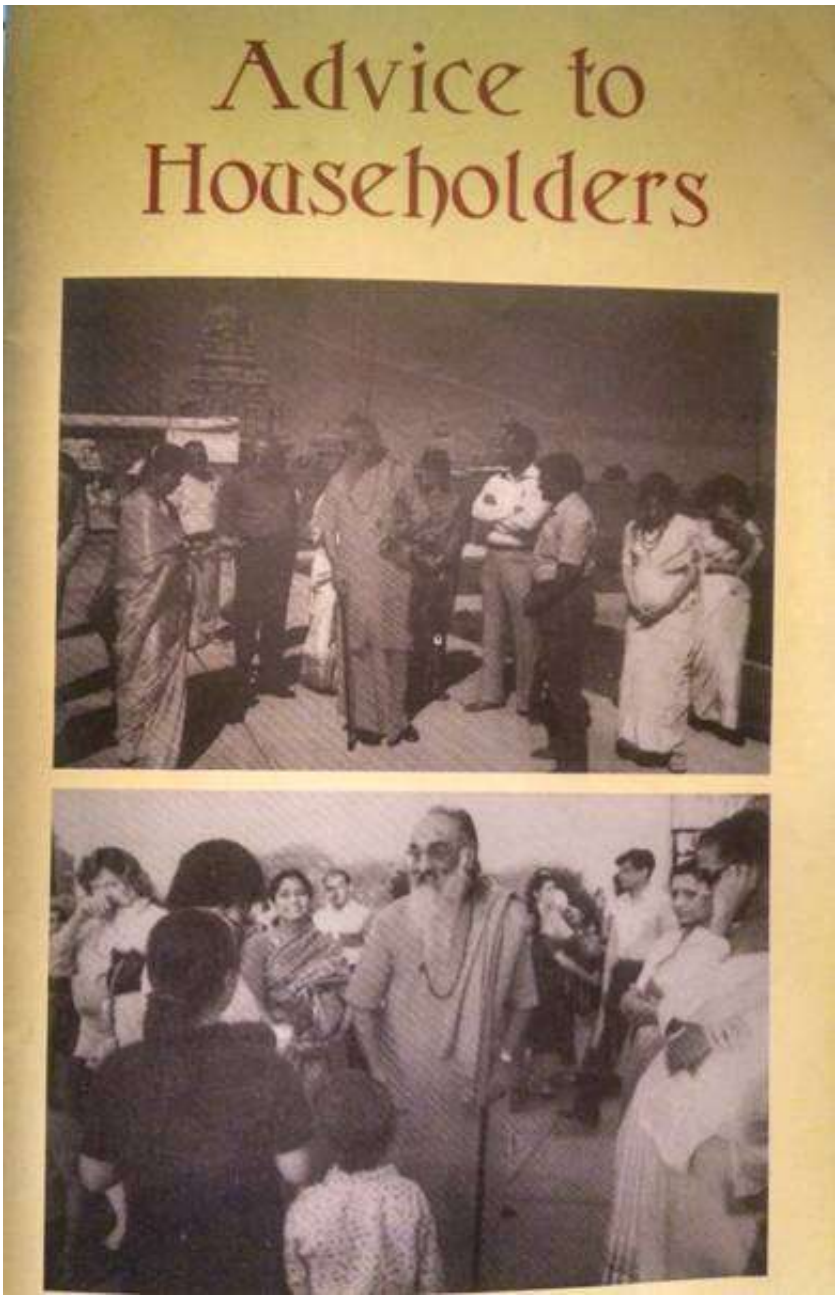
*As an individual you have duties towards yourself, as a domestic being, duties towards your elders and to those younger than you. (He defines the complete hierarchy...)

DUTIES TO SELF

* and lastly as a living member in a competitive world you have duties towards your chosen profession (breath-taking, considering that many think that spirituality means giving up pursuit of a career, revenue earning work and retiring. Gurudev has proudly told householders here to pay attention to their professional/career needs!)

* If one still has a powerful ego, and therefore is prone to selfishness, one will only cheat the family, loot the community and betray the nation. To belong to a group is to submerge your individuality in the group personality.When we sublimate the ego and discover our identity with the holy Presence that permeates the universe ... then service to others will be escalated to a benediction.

* As long as our attention is with the flesh, we discover a hundred excuses to run out into the world of objects, seeking gratification...



DUTIES TO ELDERS

* Our present joy is someone's past sacrifice. The elder generation carved out for us our present, ill or well. We serve them in their old age, when they – tired and fatigued, sit back to rest and revive. In our blind hunt for personal happiness in society we ignore and refuse this duty. .(The grihastha has a serious commitment to the vanaprasthi...)

DUTIES TO CHILDREN (MOST SPECTACULAR AND OFTEN NOT KNOWN)

*Start teaching them about spirituality and noble values before the age of three. Do not understand that children of that age are merely passive observers.... How then are they able to learn a language? The rate of absorption of knowledge and experiences in those years is stupendous. Therefore an atmosphere of religion and spiritual values is very important in molding and enhancing their mental life.

MORALITY – THE BACKBONE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE:

Gurudev prescribes a certain morality to be practiced and developed that he says is the backbone of spiritual life. This is now very easy to understand. But if suggested by itself, we may not be receptive. What Gurudev suggests here are practices, not just statements of values.

*To perform your duties and to discover a joy in this very performance

*to live moral values and to eliminate 'likes and dislikes' in life for things and beings.

* to increase your excellence in the performance of your chosen profession may those in careers note; if we opt for a career, we have a duty to strive to excel in it. No middle course.]

--------- allthese need basic devotion to the Lord who has provided you with the BMI equipment and who is the sole enlivener for all their activities.

For those struggling with a sense of being ineffective or inconsequential at work or home, where you feel your work does not stand out, the solution comes from Gurudev ... read below:

"You cannot perform your duties well, nor live a moral life of self-restraint and self –denial, nor step up the beauty of your professional performance if your ego and selfish desire are not curbed and conquered fully. It is this unholy wedlock of 'I' and 'I want' that breed the many monster-children who destroy your inner spiritual peace and joy. Prayer and surrender of 'I' and 'I want' ideas at His feet in devotion are the only means. Where these two are not there, the individual comes to shine in his brilliant efficiency, in the outer world, and in his moral glow, in his inner life.

Moral Values have a positive dynamism all of their own. They are not a mere negative 'don't do' set of rules. They are a dynamic set of positive ideas accepted in your understanding and lived with Rama-like heroism, Krishna-like inner grit. Without the ability to give up, total sacrifice of all that you have understood to be base, low and vicious, moral values cannot be fruitfully lived. We have our mightiest power in life in our intellectual faculty. This power falls under two categories: the 'conserving power' and the 'directing power'. if they have not discovered and diligently cultivated their 'directing power, they will not be able to enjoy what they have gathered with their conserving power. They earned their wealth, power, fame and respect in society, but in themselves they are rendered incapable of enjoying what they have, if they have not the 'directing power'. This 'directing power' of the intellect can be cultivated when one insists on living the moral values.

A morally well-established person entertains himself with life as Rama lived, while one who has no moral values to respect, like Ravana, may have everything in life, yet suffer and meet an inglorious end. Thus Ramayana, in a vivid story form, clearly demonstrates not only the brilliant charm of living in the enduring moral values but also how one's life can become a dark and dreary tragedy if in spite of one's prosperous wealth and glory, might and power, one has not cultivated moral values to live and enjoy one's life."

195. THINK ! WITH GURUDEV!

18-11-2015

Sitaram Kowtha - lives in Clarksville Maryland. He was born in Andhra, grew up in America and stayed on to make a profession as a telecommunications scientist. While he never met Gurudev, he was introduced to Gurudev through his children ... in his words: “We brought our children to Chinmaya Mission for BalaVihar, stayed for Gita classes, were inspired by devotees of Sri Gurudev to become devoted to Sri Gurudev.”

The mahima of Gurudev's naam is such that through Nancy Patchen's book 'Journey of a Master', the various Mananam Series books that celebrated Gurudev’s grassroot activities in the Chinmaya Mission, through Gurudev's own books, his talks and DVDs, enabled by Pujya Guruji and Swami Dheerananda ji, and then the movie 'On a Quest'.....he 'met' Gurudev!

Over the years, I had a chance to listen to Sri Gurudev speak on a number of topics – some audio and some video, and I thoroughly enjoyed them. Actually, the more I heard him speak, the more I was attracted to his discourses.

One characteristic of Sri Gurudev was that he was very purposeful. Everything he did, everything he said had a purpose. Nothing was left to chance, and no time was to be wasted.

In Gurudev’s discourses (and also in many of his writings), I noticed that he would give an example to explain a point, he would make a joke and then say Think! Sometimes he would repeat, Think! Think!



As I came to understand him more, I realized, he meant what he said – he was asking his audience to think. So that got me thinking - what is he saying? Different topics, different explanations, different jokes, different words of wisdom, and then one word Think ...



So this is what I came up with –

- Think = Have Common Sense. Don't do things blindly. Understand, think and act. He chides us, just as we as parents often chide our children; coaches chide athletes and spouses often chide their spouses. 'Use some common sense! Think!'



- Think = Wake Up – look at yourself, look at the world around you. What you think is real, is that really real? What you think is an illusion, is that really an illusion? Understand everything around you for what it is. Think!



- Think = Don't merely accept; question everything. Even the teacher may be a great Swami from the Himalayas, don't merely accept what he says, but question everything and improve your understanding. Think!



- Think = Don't be skeptical and cynical. Knowledge is not possible without willingness to learn and being open minded. Have faith. For someone doubting everything, there is no learning. Think!



- Think = Be Alert and Vigilant. Our desires, our ego, our past and our future dissipate our energy and we don't do what is in front of us very well. Be alert and vigilant to retain focus on what needs to be done now.
- Think! Think = Be Purposeful. Have a goal. Set the goal as high as possible, so that you will never reach it. But try hard to reach it.



You will improve. Without a goal, without a purpose, precious moments are wasted. Think!

- Think = see oneness. See the superficiality, see the depth, see the nature of things and see how the One is in many shapes and forms, wearing different names. Don't get caught up in the differences. Think!



Think means listen; be alert and vigilant; be awake; question and then understand; have a purpose and work for it; have faith; lift yourself up (spiritually); see the Lord in everything.

With one word, Sri Gurudev conveyed to the student of Vedanta how the student should be. That is the glory of Sri Gurudev. He was addressing people who were mechanically doing rituals or those who were mildly interested in spirituality or those who were very skeptical and agnostic. One by one he transformed them into thinking individuals. The many devotees of Swami Chinmayananda around the world are his legacy, and his legacy is only growing – because his purpose was to make his students think.

Our Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji also says 'Think' when he is teaching, if you noticed. When I mentioned to Swamiji about the topic of my talk, he offered the Acronym THINK:

T – Is it True?

H – Is it Helpful?

I – Is it Interesting?

N – Is it Necessary?

K – Is it Kind?

We can look at our thoughts, words and actions alertly and vigilantly and use the acronym THINK to keep ourselves purposeful and work towards a higher goal. And, that is Chinmaya Mahima. Think!


think

196. TO KNOW, TO SEE, TO ENTER

19-11-2015

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu

The problems of human beings is owing to spiritual ignorance of his true identity, that ‘I am the Eternal Blissful Consciousness’.

Antidote to ignorance is knowledge especially in the case where knowing itself is achieving, like the necklace around the neck.

This knowledge has three dimensions. Do not know, do not understand free from doubt, do not experience. These three are transcended through Sravana Manana Nidhidyasana.

How Gurudev explains this most simply, is found in His commentary to BG 11:54

54. But, by single-minded devotion, can I, of this Form, be 'known' and 'seen' in reality, and also 'entered' into, O Parantapa (O scorcher of your foes)!

The three stages in which realisation of Truth comes to man are indicated here when the Lord says, "TO KNOW, TO SEE, AND TO ENTER." A definite intellectual knowledge of the goal and the path is the beginning of a seeker's pilgrimage --- TO KNOW.

Next comes the seeker's attempt to masticate the ideas intellectually understood through his own personal reflections upon the information which he has already gathered --- TO SEE. Having thus 'known' and 'seen' the goal, thereafter, the seeker, through a process of detachment from the false and attachment to the Real, comes to experience the Truth as no object other than himself --- TO ENTER. By the term 'entering,' it is also indicated that the fulfilled seeker becomes the very essence of the sought. The dreamer, suffering from the sorrows of the dream, ends it all, when he no more sees, but "enters" the waking-state, himself to become the waker.

197. PROSTRATION& THE ART OF SURRENDER

20-11-2015

Gurudev talks about the spirit of surrender in the practise of Japa. He says, “The effectiveness of japa, to a large extent, depends upon the spirit of surrender with which the seeker is practising it.”

He says once we understand this surrender we shall discover the bridge that connects bhakti and jnana.

This is how Gurudev explains the attitude of surrender implied in a mantra used for japa.

“Let us for example take a typical mantra abd try to discover the attitude of surrender implied in it – Om NamoNarayanaya – My prostrations unto Narayana.

Prostration is not merely a physical act of bowing but it is a conscious act of discovering the greater in us and seeking our identity with it. To tune ourselves with the better or the nobler, and thereby gathering unto ourselves the very qualities and greatness of the Higher, is true prostration.

In order to prostrate there must be, at least, two factors: the lesser that prostrates and the Higher at whose feet the prostration is offered. Within each one of us, there is the matter conditioned ego and the unconditioned eternal Self. The japist in himself is trying to end his false ego at the altar of himself – the supremely divine Self, Sri Narayana. Thus during the japa the individual practising it will be sincerely striving to surrender totally his personality to Narayana who is his concept of the reality.”

TUNE IN THE MIND, Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT 2004

198. A Letter from Gurudev!

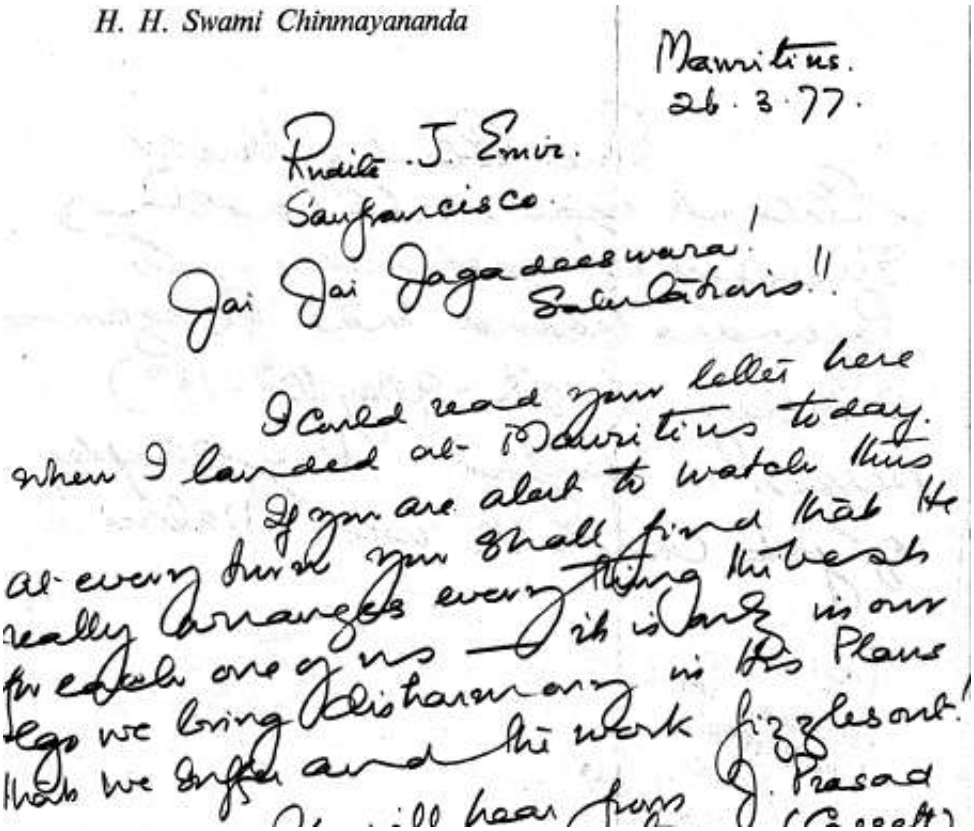
21-11-2015

Sent by Rudite Emir

A letter from Gurudev– it invariably made the heart dance in joy. Love poured forth even from the envelope: the care taken to write out the name of the devotee, the beautiful curvesin each hand-written word, the added touches drawn in with a different-colored pen.



Many letters arrived in which Gurudev dealt in great detail with various aspects of the Chinmaya Mission organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, be it organizing a yajna, planning the next issue of Mananam, or dealing with the organizational responsibilities of the Chinmaya Mission West Board of Directors. But interspersed among the organizational details were countless reminders about Who was ultimately in charge:



H. H. Swami Chinmayananda

Mauritius.
26.3.77.

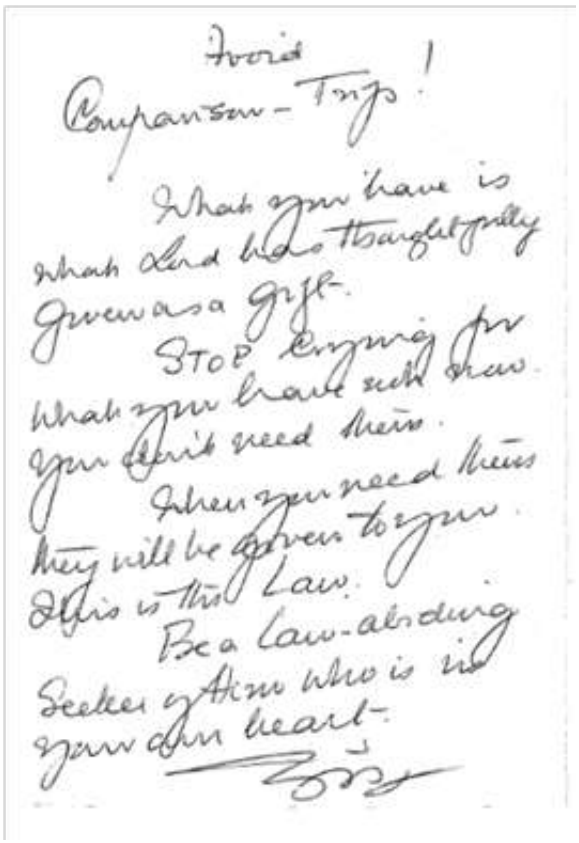
Prabhu J. Emir.
San Francisco.

Jai Jai Jagadeeswara!
Salutations!!

I could read your letter here when I landed at Mauritius today. If you are alert to watch this at every turn you shall find that He really arranges everything. It is He who is our friends and foes — it is He who is our ego we bring Krishnarpanam and His Plans that we drafted and the work fizzles out! Prasad

I will hear from

One time I received a printed card that Gurudev must have sent to many devotees, but on the back he had hand-written another reminder about how best to work in the world, Who was ultimately in charge, and how His Laws defined the course of our lives:


Avoid
Comparison - Trips!

What you have is
what God has thoughtfully
given as a gift.
STOP envying for
what you have not than
your spirit need them.
When you need them
they will be given to you.
This is the Law.
Be a Law-abiding
Seeker of Him who is in
your own heart.

Since there were two small children who were being raised during those early years with Gurudev, he remembered that they, too, would need guidance from their mother about the Laws of Life:

Swami Chinmayananda

29 Ring Road, Lajpat Nagar IV
New Delhi-110024

24th September, 1977.

Rudite J. Emir
Editorial Services
2452 FUNSTON AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO. CA 94116.USA

Blessed Self,

Jai Jai Jagadeeswara. Salutations.

Your kind letter of 8th September. I am glad that you are able to help Laila much. You can make her understand that the Lord is in the berry also, but when she eats the berry the Lord-in-the-berry meets and merges with the Lord-in-~~the~~ Laila's-heart. When a balloon bursts, the air in the baloon mixes with the air every where, while the broken pieces of the baloon will be in Laila's hands. Similarly the berry is eaten and it drops down in the pot in the morning, while the Lord-in-the-berry merges with the Lord-in-her-heart. This will give her a deep understanding. The atmosphere you talk to her must be chosen - when she is in that mood and not when she is thinking of something else or occupied with some other thoughts.

The mother learned as much from this exquisite explanation as the child she was anticipating to teach...

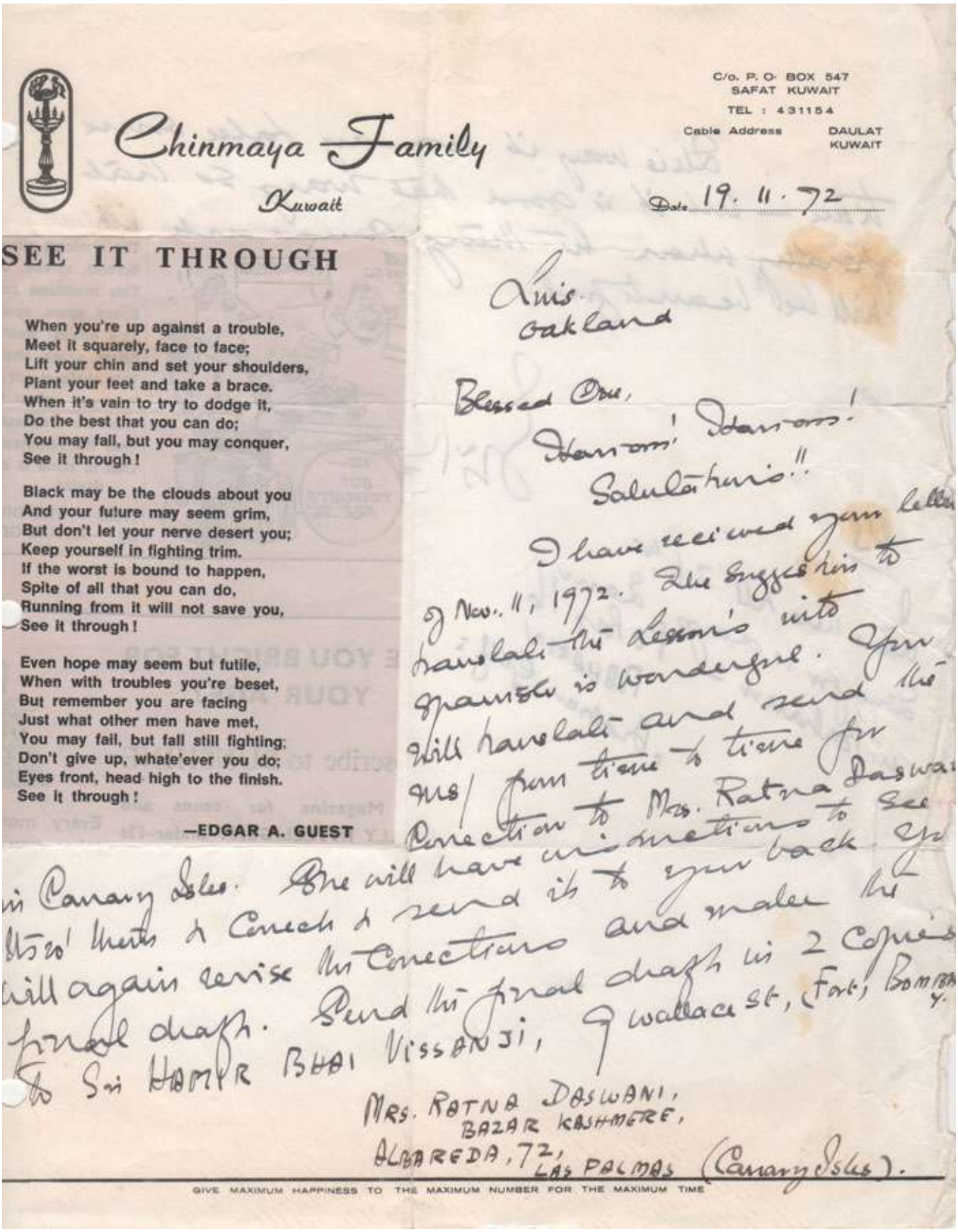
199. A SPANISH-SPEAKING DEVOTEE

22-11-2015

In 1971, a young man originally from México sat through a 10-day yagna in San Francisco. His name Jorge Luis Jauregui. The texts: Third Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita and the Kaivalya Upanishad. Says Jorge-Luis, “Gurudev's words made me see the meaning of "You Are That, That Is You"! (Tat Tvam Eva - Tvam Eva Tat).”

As the days progressed, Jorge came back for more and was already asking questions and inquiring. He was to learn about a Vedanta Study Group and the Chinmaya Lesson Course. He joined the first and subscribed for the latter.

In Jorge-Luis’ words, “Then, seeing the spiritual value contained in it that would serve to improve the quality of life of anyone who studied it, I asked Swamiji during one of his visits if he would allow me to translate it into Spanish. I saw it would be of great life benefit to all Spanish-speaking people in the world. Gurudev graciously approved my request. It was after that that he wrote to me this letter with a poem titled "Follow Through". The Chinmaya Lesson Course was studied in group format by people of various cities in México where I held Gita Jñana Yagnas as a starting point of Vedanta studies to follow my talks.



Chinmaya Family
Kuwait

C/o. P. O. BOX 547
SAFAT KUWAIT
TEL : 431154
Cable Address DAULAT
KUWAIT

Date 19. 11. 72

SEE IT THROUGH

When you're up against a trouble,
Meet it squarely, face to face;
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,
Plant your feet and take a brace.
When it's vain to try to dodge it,
Do the best that you can do;
You may fall, but you may conquer,
See it through!

Black may be the clouds about you
And your future may seem grim,
But don't let your nerve desert you;
Keep yourself in fighting trim.
If the worst is bound to happen,
Spite of all that you can do,
Running from it will not save you,
See it through!

Even hope may seem but futile,
When with troubles you're beset,
But remember you are facing
Just what other men have met,
You may fail, but fall still fighting;
Don't give up, whate'ever you do;
Eyes front, head high to the finish.
See it through!

—EDGAR A. GUEST

Luis
Oakland

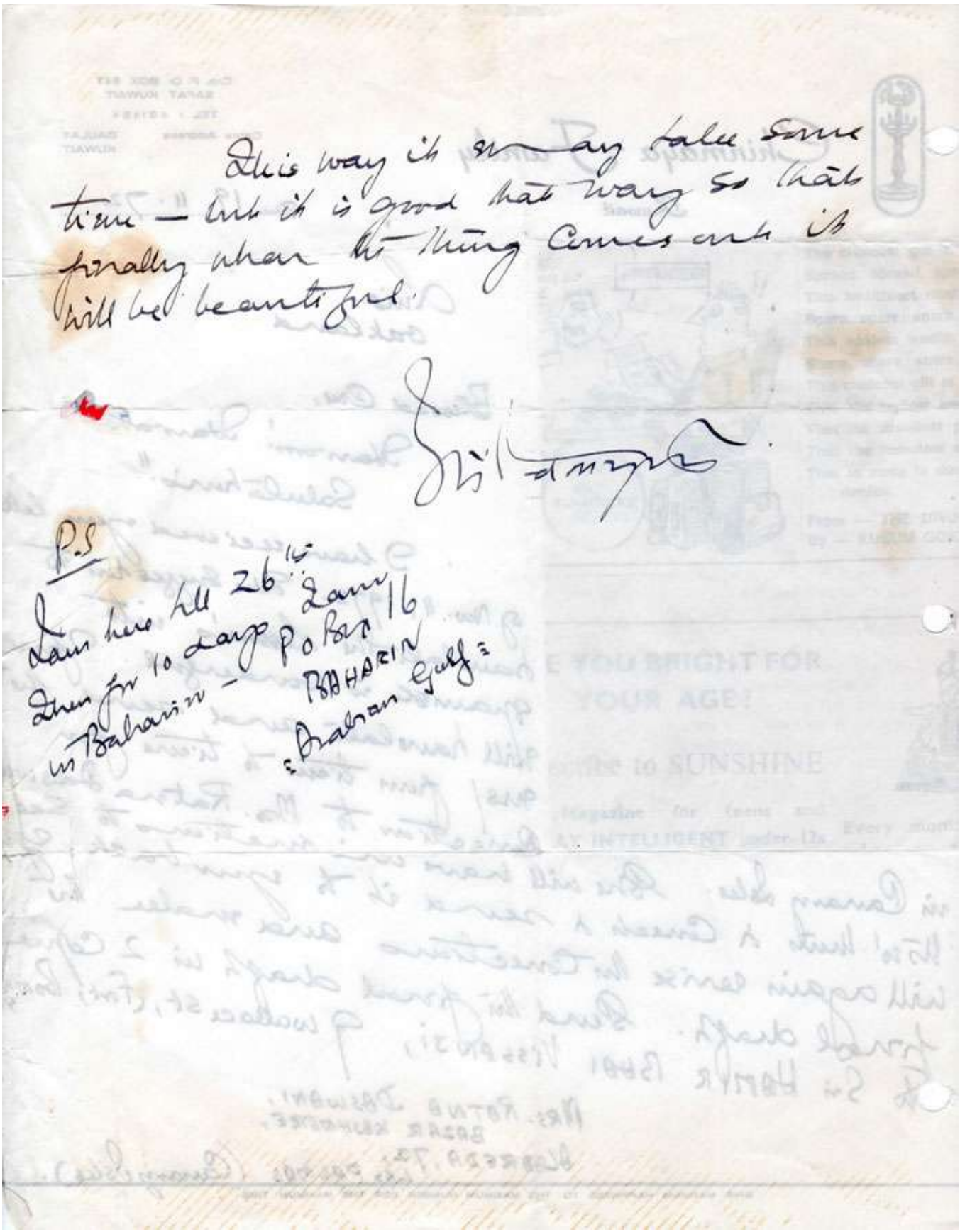
Blessed One,

Hari Om! Hari Om!
Salutations!!

I have received your letter
dated Nov. 11, 1972. She suggests to
translate the lessons into
Spanish is wonderful. You
will translate and send the
ms/ from time to time for
Correction to Mrs. Ratna Daswani to see
in Canary Isles. She will have corrections to send it to you back. You
will again revise the corrections and make the
final draft. Send the final draft in 2 copies
To Sri HOMI R BHAI VISSANJI, 9 Wallace St, Fort, Bombay.

MRS. RATNA DASWANI,
BAZAR KASHMERE,
ALBAREDA, 72,
LAS PALMAS (Canary Isles).

GIVE MAXIMUM HAPPINESS TO THE MAXIMUM NUMBER FOR THE MAXIMUM TIME

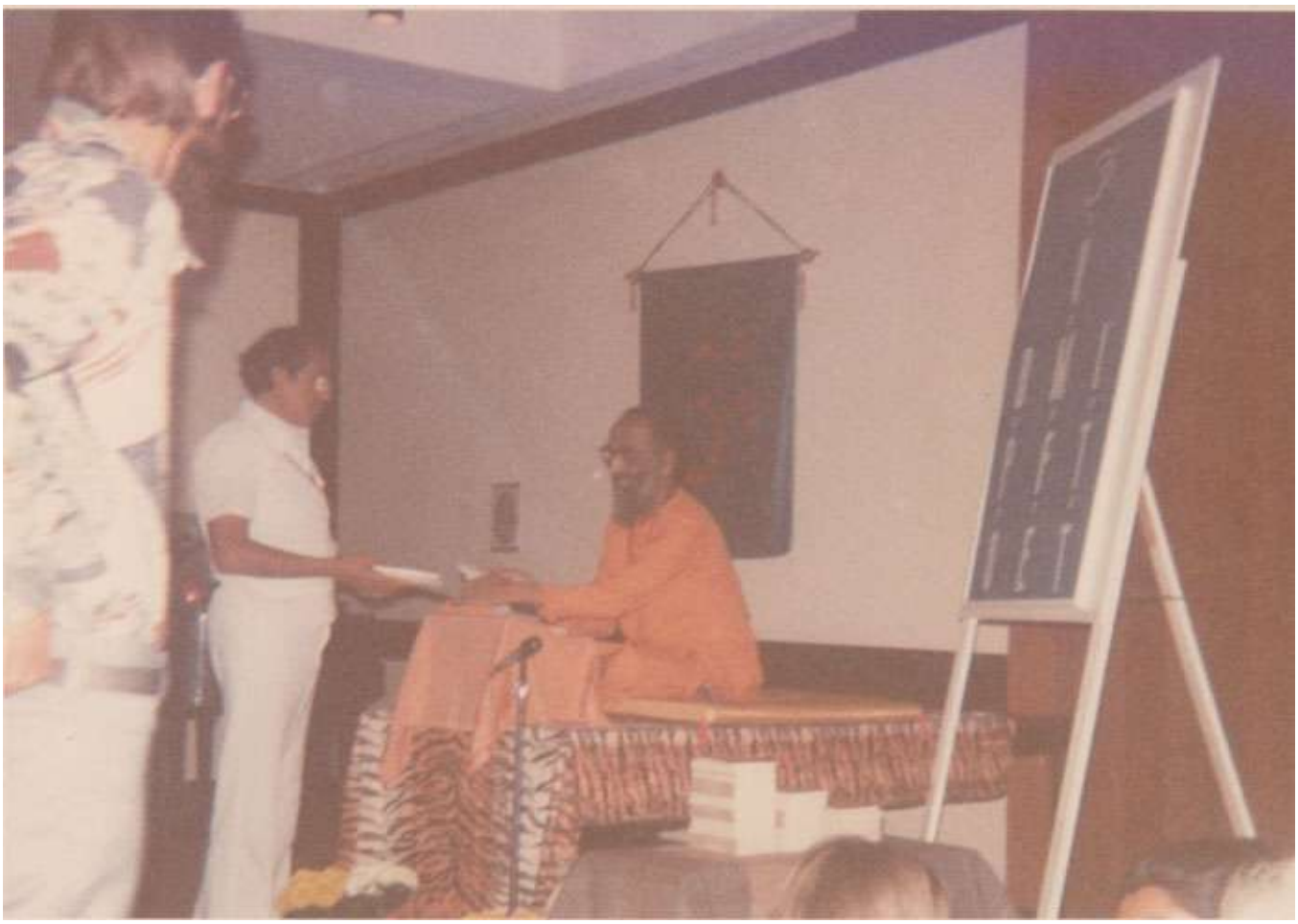

This way it may take some time — but it is good that way so that finally when the thing comes out it will be beautiful.

P.S
I am here till 26th
then for 10 days
in Bahrain —

Dawn
P.O. Box 16
BAHRAIN
Arabian Gulf

Letter of 19.11.1972 when Gurudev first expresses joy over the Spanish translations.

It is amazing that Gurudev is writing from Kuwait where he would not have had access to his favorite books and poets. Forget Google, there was not even computers or the internet. How did he find the precise poem to encourage Jorge-Luis and even paste it there?



Gurudev awards Chinmaya Lesson Course diploma to Jorge Luis 1973

Jorge-Luis was a grihastha, householder running businesses. In parallel grew this desire for Vedanta. Jorge Luis continued to work with Gurudev's Vedanta Lessons alongside all else that he was doing in the various cities of the greater Bay Area. He says, "Gurudev had assigned me to help in the proper understanding of the students participating in the various groups that had been organized after his yagnas here. He had also asked the manager of Sandeepany in Powai to inquire from me references of the local students who had applied for the Resident's Course (Brahmachari Course) there, and I provided those references since I knew each applicant. Various students who were in the local groups went to India to study the two and a half year course at the Ashram. Among them, two were of Mexican

background! One of them got the basis of Vedanta from the translated Chinmaya Lesson Course in Spanish, after attending my lectures in México."



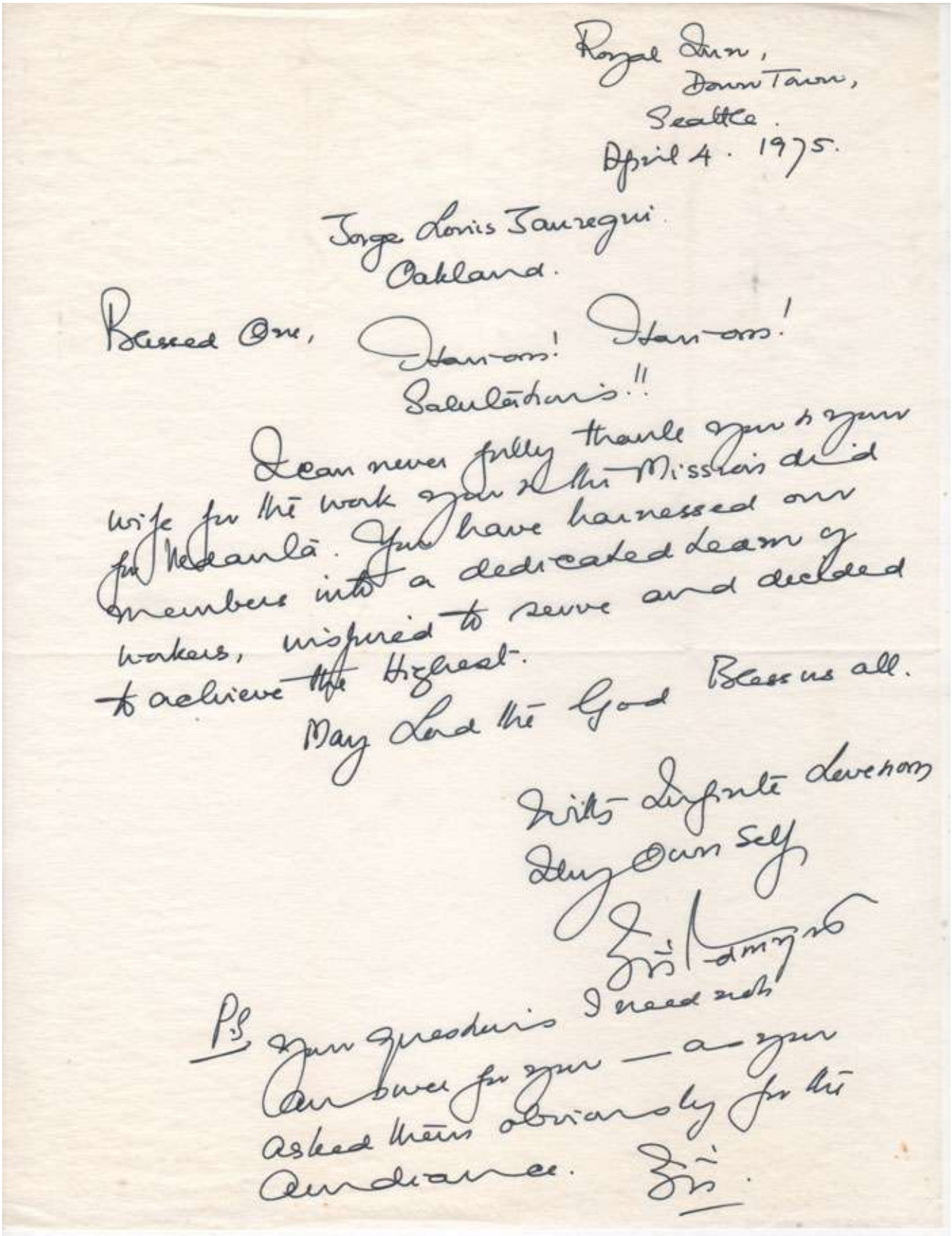
Devotees with Gurudev. Jorge Luis on Gurudev's left, jacket on his right arm

Jorge-Luis says very simply about how they ensured Gurudev came back every year, "Some of the work that was done here was to gather funds to have Gurudev return every year. My job then was to run to many places around the various cities collecting used items to sell in what we call here "garage sales" to raise funds for him to come.

"We used to create work-parties of students to assemble books at Family Press, where the Mission's books were printed. I helped organize such work-parties."

How much we take for granted the Mission's reach today. And to hear about the time when devotees took the hat around, held garage sales to raise funds for Gurudev's visit!

Here is a letter Gurudev wrote to Jorge-Luis —



Royal Inn,
Down Town,
Seattle.
April 4. 1975.

Jorge Louis Jauregui
Oakland.

Blessed One, Haraas! Haraas!
Salutations!!

I can never fully thank you & your wife for the work you & the Missions did for Nadanta. You have harnessed our members into a dedicated team of workers, inspired to serve and decided to achieve the Highest.
May Lord the God Bless us all.

With Divine Love
Thy Own Self
Jis

P.S. Your questions I need not answer for you — as your asked them obviously for the audience. Jis.

April 4th 1975: Gurudev writes from the Royal Inn in Seattle. Early days...

Explaining the post script where Gurudev says, 'I don't need to answer your questions...' Jorge-Luis explains, " This is because during the regular study group sessions some students had certain questions. I presented them to Swamiji as if they were mine, but he knew I knew the answers already but I asked them for the benefit of the attendees to the Satsang he was conducting. That is all."

Through these letters we see the vibrant atmosphere that was the early days of Chinmaya Mission West. How the study groups formed alongside the home study course that Gurudev created himself (Read Unto Research, a Mananam Publication about the Chinmaya International Foundation where this is discussed in greater detail.)

Hari Om.

200. Japa and The Art Of Tuning the Mind

23-11-2015

The importance that Gurudev places on japa can be seen in numerous articlesand books where he leaves emphatic sentences for us to find.

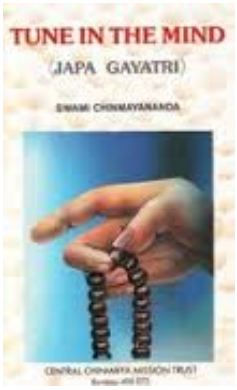
Otherwise “it is natural for seekers in their blind enthusiasm to come to question the importance of japa for a vedantik seeker,” as he says. This doubt according to Gurudev “comes out of a confusion in understanding of japa yoga.”

Gurudev says japa is the seasoning of the mind. He says,

“A mind seasoned with japa is like tinned food which gets ready for consumption after a few seconds’ warming up on the fire.” This metaphor is simply fabulous in explaining the value of japa in tuning the mind, formatting the mind and preparing it for meditation. For he adds, “ A short period of meditation can take a japa prepared mind to unimaginable heights in an impossibly short time.”

In other words, japa is the prerequisite to preparing a mind for meditation.

This book, Tune in the Mind by Gurudev, one can see, has been written by him deliberately,



purposefully. The choice of words, the places he emphasises, his entreaties ... all are deliberate and all-knowing. The intention being specifically urging us to make japa a very serious part of our sadhana. And as if he fears we may cluck and disregard any advise on japa, he starts the book with this sentence, “You may wonder why a student of Vedanta listening to and reflecting upon discourses ….. should care to take up any method of sadhana other than pure meditation.”

Some sentences of Gurudev are extremely poignant and reaffirming and logical and reiterate some other experiences we may have, such as –

“It is always the repetition of thinking that brings about the fastness in all attachments. The more (less) one thinks of a thing, the more (less) one gets attached to it (adapted).”

“Thus japa in a prayer room performed in all intensity and training oneself to repeat mentally His names constantly during the wakeful hours, are the sure ways of developing devotion (bhakti).”

And then this : “ The supreme Reality is experienced through meditation alone. But the boat to reach the goal, viz, meditation, is rigged with the practice of devotion through japa. “

And to those who dither and delay wondering “How must I start?” Gurudev says –

“To do japa is the way to perform japa yoga. (And now a goodmetaphor→) what happened to that holiday-maker who waited on the sea-shore for the waves to subside so that he may take his bath comfortably? Don’t waste your time in vain on the shores of life; get into the ocean of this bliss and be refreshed.”

And as he details the preparation for japa, every word is audible, as if he is saying it to you □□

“Sitting on the asana in any comfortable pose […]gaze at the Lord’s beaming face, body, legs, feet. Now slowly raise the gaze up from feet […] to the face of the Lord. Close the eyes now; feel His presence within you and try to visualise the Lord exactly as in the picture.

[How can we forget, he says all this from his very own personal experience that we have heard him narrate to us from his playful childhood days when he sat in his family altar room, faced by innumerable gods framed and glassed on the wall… and Lord Siva who was likely at the level of his little boy height, stared more at him! And compelled to sit there by his parents, he played a little game: he would stare back at Lord Siva and then shut his eyes tight and try and recap His image as if connecting dots…isn’t this exactly what he is telling us to do? It worked for him…. He is now giving us that very same method!]”

“This visualisation of the Lord should be done within you in your love-heart (and did we know this →?) which is exactly on the right side of the physical heart. This is the spiritual heart-center where, if you meditate, your success is doubly assured. Feel …. Feel His presence.”

It feels as if he is crafting a hide ‘n seek game where he has already planted himself in our love-hearts and is whispering this secret to us … come! Find me!

As for mantra to be used in japa, Gurudev says,

“There is nothing secret about these mantras. All of them are in the scriptures, but

when the mantra is given to the student by an illumined teacher, it becomes a living seed. The teacher by his spiritual power, gives life to the word , and at the same time awakes the spiritual powers latent in the disciple ...”

And this metaphor is spectacular □□ to explain where japa fits in, how it enables.... Gurudev likens it to how we learn to write; how we use the writing instrument at first, the images we scrawl and how that same hand is able to write the tiniest font. Here:



“ [...] like a man who when he begins to learn writing, first draws big scrawl,

before he can successfully try a smaller hand. So too a person must acquire the power of concentrating his thoughts by fixing his mind first upon divine forms, and then after a fair success therein, by fixing it upon the formless-divine."

Gurudev's words after this are so urging, so entreating – how can we not obey! He says,

" Start today, right now! There is no moment so sacred or so auspicious as here and now for spiritual practise ... Japa is an easy method for men like us, kicked about and bullied by the worlds without and within."

Gurudev coins his own words when the conventional grammar falls short. (What grammarian would have expected a Saint to teach Vedanta in English?!) So one who practises japa is japist in Gurudev's lexicon. To japists he has some caveats and prepares us for this. One example :

"An irresistible attack of sleep while doing japa and a shamelessly evident tendency to express bad temper soon after japa-sadhana."

And how does he explain this? With another of his most apt analogies:

" ... a new housewife gets tired of looking after her very firstborn. Later on, the very same woman easily manages her half a dozen, along with her late cousin's four little kids .... And yet, discovers for herself plenty of spare time and mental ease for her afternoon chats with the neighbours."

There is much more joy in this book Tune in the Mind (JapaGayatri), By Swami Chinmayananda, a CCMT Publication

201. LEADERSHIP AND STUDY GROUPS

24-11-2015

Sent by Jorge Luis Jauregui

Bay Area, San Francisco – 13th Sept. 1973

Gurudev had assigned me as a study group leader, and as such I served various study groups in the Bay Area, but at the same time, I continued to attend Rudite Emir's weekly study group sessions.

Both of us experienced that some students were sluggish in their study group participation and a few dropped out. I think she and I must have discussed this, and she decided to ask Gurudev, how one should deal with this. Swamiji sent her his answer and she then shared with me what Swamiji said to her.

That is the historical context of such important advice sent by our beloved Guru.

Rudite was a loving and dedicated Sevika for many of us. Besides that, she and her husband Rustem and her daughters have been very dear to all in my family all these years.

(Who would have thought that this advice will clarify the same question in many minds, 40 years later!)

Chinmaya Study Group

2462 FUNSTON AVENUE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94558, U.S.A.

Swamiji sent this note in reply to a question as to how far group leaders should go in motivating group members in their studies:

"How much should we heckle and hackle, prod and bolster our group members . . . this problem has not thumb-rule. The law is we keep on helping others--the dull ones all the more lovingly. Never say "I can't." Some of the dull ones open up finally as the best. Let them drop off: you must with unabated enthusiasm encourage them. The fact that they come to the group shows there is something in them wanting to express."

Thought this might answer some questions in your mind, too -- Rudite

9/13/73



Rudite Emir seen here with Gurudev

202. ISWARA DARSHANA OR ATMA DARSHANA

25-11-2015

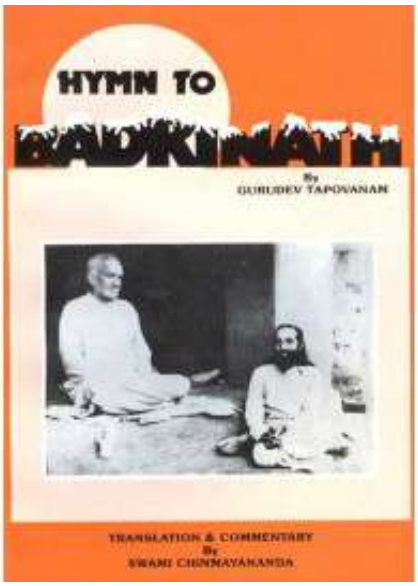
Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu

Gurudev has said in many places that Self realisation has two aspects:

1.To Experience the Self in one's own self -Atmanubhav.

2.Tosee the same self in the entire world of names and forms- Sarvatmabhava.

The logic and technique of gaining these two states is given by Sri Gurudev in Hymn to Badrinath 1-2 and BG 9:15. The specific words he uses, the examples, are too perfect and unfold the very intention of the two aspects of Self Realisation. (Those who have the time I request to read these two corresponding commentaries fully since they cover all details we need. I have only taken a few paragraphs.)



Hymn to BadrinathChapter 1, Verse 2

The original stanza reads: O! Lord of Badri! My adorations unto Thee. I salute the very dust of Thy Divine Lotus Feet. In the stream of my love for Thee, may my mind swim constantly as the fishes do in the rivers.

Explaining this salutation to the Lord of Badri (Bhagawan Vishnu), Gurudev explains

this namaskar as " A devoted self-offering, thereby ending all our false attachments with things, feelings and thoughts created by our false identifications.
The individuality sustained by one's identifications with the body, mind and intellect can be sacrificed, in a wave of irresistible adoration, by a heart of intense love, and thereby the Truth can be realised. This voluntary out-pouring, the ready sacrifice of the ego, the heroic Bali of the individuality, at the altars of the Truth, represented by the lotus feet of the Lord, is true devotion."

This explains the aatmanubhava aspect distinctly.

2. Then we see Chapter 9 of the Gita, where we see the sarvatmabhava glorified and the Lord Himself says in 9:15, " ..... Me, who in all forms, faces everywhere." Sarvaatmabhava at its purest.

BG 9:15 last paragraph

No doubt,through meditation,when the mind is stilled,the Pure Self,the one without a second, is realised.

BG 9:15 – para 8

The Man-of -Realisation not only experiences the Pure Self, uncontaminated by the pluralistic equipments,but also recognises the Same Self as playing through the endless variety of conditionings available in the universe.Having known the one Sun in the sky, even if we see a thousand reflections of the same in different equipments, in all of them, we see and recognise only the Sun.

BG 9-15, para 5
In the sparkle of the eyes, in the smile of a friend, in the grim of an enemy, in the harsh words of jealousy and in the soft tones of love, in heat and in cold, in success and failure--among men,among animals,amidst the trees and in the company of the inert,everywhere,he successfully gains the auspicious vision of the Supreme,either as EXISTENCE PURE or as KNOWLEDGE ABSOLUTE or as BLISS INFINITE. This is the meaning of IswaraDarshana or AtmaDarshana which is sung so gloriously in all scriptures of the world.

BG 9-15, Para 2

Chocolates made by different firms irrespective of their shape and colours,flavours and prices, are all chocolates and therefore,their essential nature of sweetness is common to all of them; and the child who is seeking the sweetness of the chocolates will enjoy them, whatever be their shape, size, or packing.

Explanation is an art which combines the love of the teacher and His wisdom with His perfection of language and communication. That is our Gurudev!

203. On Wings and Wheels

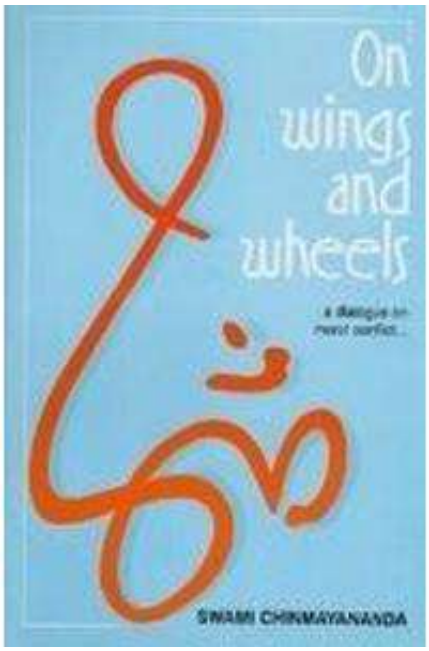
26-11-2015

A dialogue on moral conflict

By Swami Chinmayananda, a CCMT Publication

How we think, how we live and how we need to think and live have been at conflict when we have not imbibed the teachings.

This book can be a great refresher after much Upanishads have been studied and assimilated, for finally the world we live and experience is the one we have to face and deal with rationally. And this is where On Wings and Wheels does the 'setting', as it were.



This book is a dialogue between Gurudev and Anjali Singh and 'a list of questions' from two other devotees – Meera Bharany and JyotiChuahan. It is, as the books says, a dialogue on moral conflict.

The conflict is exactly where we experience it: between how we think and how we need to think.

Here is one example where free will, self effort and finally what we come to

experience – prarabda – is explained the way it has to be seen and understood. Often we think of prarabda as a predetermined destiny, that will come to play no matter our effort.

Gurudev replies across a series of related questions. Any italics are mine to showcase what appealed:

*When man of his own accordrefuses the blessings of the power of discrimination that his intellect is capable of, he is deliberately flouting his privilege as a human being.

*When one has thus of his own free will chosen to be only an animal, certainly nature will bless him only with the sorrows and limitations of the animal.

*It depends on how we cultivate and train the mind and intellect.

*If we tune them to the lower impermanent values of negativity, we become insensitive animals.

*Life is a series of challenges. (Gurudev has said this so many times in exactly the same words….it would be sad if we missed this part of the manual, and continue to search for the bed of roses.)

*No choice is the same as any other. (because the pattern keeps on changing…)

*The wise […] gently judge the various challenges […] and determine never to swerve from the path of good.

* The ignorant […] live like mules following the crowd, choosing the path of least resistance motivated by animal urges to satisfy the senses.

*Self development is through self effort.

* Man has been given the freedom to be good or to be vicious [… in his contact with the world]

*Man does not have complete and unlimited freedom over external circumstances.

*These circumstances […] in which he finds himself are the result of his earlier choices.

* Man has been preparing bit by bit a blueprint of his life by his choice of action.

* The edifice of external environment (experience?) and inner impulses (vasanas?) in which he finds himself is of his own making.

*AND HIS PRESRNT CHOICE IS WITHIN THE LIMITATION OF THAT EDIFICE

*People misunderstand the real meaning of prarabda when they take the word to mean all the failure, impotence, and weakness in them.

*IF WE ARE GUIDED BY THIS MEANING THERE WOULD BE NO ROOM FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SELF EFFORT.

* What we meet in life is prarabdha □ how we meet it, is purushartha. [This] past modified in the present [throughself effort] alone is the future. There is no slavery nor is there full freedom. There is limited freedom which if intelligently used can redeem us from all enslavement.

The way Gurudev has chosen his words, yet effortlessly, repeat, effortlessly, to capture the law of karma so beautifully and simply, so that ignorant ones can understand how life works.... Is stunning. This relationship of what we sow and what we reap playing out in the future to become our past... or played out in the past to become our future... could never have been put better by anyone.

He chose us to give this knowledge to us.

204. GURUDEV ON EGO

27-11-2015

At the very commencement of Vedanta studies one is told that what separates man from God is his ego. The more one defined the ego, the more fearsome it seemed. For one had learnt about the ego in English, in sentence structures, but not as an encumbrance, an obstacle and soon, a nuisance. But Gurudev has defined the Ego for us in so many commentaries that he wrote to various texts. Here is a collection:

The ego is Atman playing the fool amidst the unreal. To awaken itself to the Real is to rediscover its Divine omnipresent nature and in this self-discovery is the state of fearlessness. Taiteriya ll- Vll-3

The ego within the physical structure is called "I"
Extension of l projected into the world of objects is called 'my'.
This my is nothing but objectified "l" - Vivekachudamani 268

The individuality arising out of our relationships with the world of matter is ego. The individuality undergoing experiences of birth and death is called the jiva or the embodied self- ego. (Source not noted.)

Ego being the Awareness conditioned by our mind and intellect. To transcend the mind is to surrender the ego. Mundaka ll-2-5

The I-ness and my-ness are the very warp and woof of the ego which is but Infinite identified with its own self-created world of phenomenon. Hymn to Badrinath 1-9

The Lord, in self forgetfulness, comes to identify Himself as nothing other than His own glory playing upon and through the body and mind. This manifestation of life through the matter conditionings is called the ego-centre (Jiva). Hymn to Badrinath 1-15

True knowledge makes a man realise that he is "The Soul with a body," but now in his ignorance, he thinks that he is a "body with a soul."BG ll-29

205. On Vegetarianism

28-11-2015

by

Swami Chinmayananda

Source: ChinmayamissionDelhi.org

A man is what he eats they say. Vedanta suggests satvik food habits, but there are many who seek logic behind why vegetarian is satvik. Or, why meat is tamasic. Simply stated, tamasic is toxic. Here is Gurudev's article on why vegetarianism.

Q. Why is vegetarian food considered better in India?

A. Eat we must. What we like to eat depends upon one's taste. There are only four things available – stones, plants, animals and humans. Unfortunately we cannot eat stones because our system is not geared to digest and assimilate them directly. And even though we sometimes destroy human beings with our cruelty, our progressive society does not allow eating them. That leaves us the vegetable and animal kingdom to choose from. No doubt, since prehistoric times, animals have been eaten, but we find that the very first progenitor of humanity, Adam himself, was eating only vegetables. It is only his second son who started this easy method of obtaining food because agriculture seemed to be too difficult for him, as it required a continuous process of putting forward effort to produce. Whereas sitting behind a stone, waiting for innocent animals to come along, and destroying and eating them seemed to be the easier way!

Q. How did the idea of vegetarianism develop in India?

A. We learned that vegetables can stay fresh up to forty-eight hours, but meat deteriorates and becomes harmful very quickly. Furthermore, within the human body, during the process of digestion, food remains in the digestive system for forty-eight hours. Fruit and vegetables digest much faster than meat. Whatever stays longer in the intestines starts to decay with the heat of the body system, which creates a lot of toxins.
Let me explain this idea of toxicity a little more. You must have noticed that generally man eats only those animals that don't eat other animals. It is very difficult for man to digest and assimilate carnivorous animals. This suggests that they must be highly toxic to his system. It also suggests that a certain amount of

toxicity is present in the first round of eaten animals, because twice removed the meat of carnivorous animals becomes impossible to eat.

Q. So it means that what one eats is between the doctor and the person who wants to remain healthy. But in what way does vegetarian food help a person's mind? Did people discover that it affects the mental temperament?

A. The food that we take in and the thoughts and actions that spring forth from us have a distinct relationship. In the computer world, there is a well-known saying – garbage in, garbage out. This seems to be true of our bodies as well. If you put toxic food – garbage – into your system, in the long run the texture of your thoughts and actions have a tendency to become more un-reconciling, extremely selfish, less concerned for others, and lusty and therefore potentially dangerous to the social order.

Thus, we can see that toxins in the system bring about a lot of mental disturbances. The same principle applies to drinking alcohol. Since our culture is essentially geared for the life of meditation, the mind that is constantly agitated and wandering finds it difficult to plunge into meditation. To such an individual, the toxin is an obstacle in reaching his goal. Probably this must have been the reason why the rishis in the jungles ate only fruits, roots, leaves and water. Those who take non-vegetarian food may be very uncontrolled because of the toxins in their food. Watch a vegetarian and a nonvegetarian animal. All the herbaceous animals are available for eating; whereas the non-vegetarian or carnivorous animals are never eaten, even by hard core non-vegetarians. Why is this? Because carnivorous animals have got so much toxicity in them that it means almost death to eat them.

206. Gurudev on Meditation

29-11-2015

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

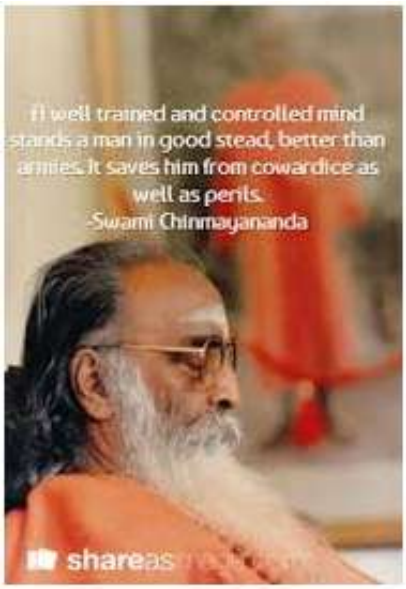
Without going into the Why of Meditation, if we simply consider that seekers are torn apart by a mind that is fragmented, not just divided, then we can straightaway take courage from these words of Gurudev:

“ …the various propensities in man are straining at the leash and he is, more often than not, an unhappy house divided against itself. He is rent by conflicting desires and ultimately, he is bound to fall as an epitome of desire and failure. The only advice that can be given to such a man is that he should resolve the conflict that tears him into bits, make up his mind as to the direction he should follow and make a concerted drive. Then with nothing to pull him back, he is sure to reach the chosen destination. Unless he does that, he would simply be frittering away his energy, achieving nothing.” Why Meditate, an article By Swami Chinmayananda.



Talking about integrating the multiple personalities in us, Gurudev says, “None of you may have failed to observe the result of concentration all around you in the world. Sun’s rays converged on a point through a focusing lens would burn the thing on which they are concentrated. All successful men in business or learned professions owe their successes to single-pointed efforts. Thoughts of problems yield to undivided attention. Application of a divided mind brings about indifferent results. Our scriptures have rightly emphasized that every man is a potential genius. Most of us are able to use only an insignificant part of our infinite potentialities. Therefore disappointments are our inevitable lot. We have unlimited powers which unfortunately we have not learnt to tap and make use of. It is a question of rediscovering ourselves. Beneath all our superficialities there lurk in us, a constant unconscious search for the common denominator. Along its single rail at one and the

same time move all the different aspects of our personalities smoothly, swiftly, and in perfect balance to reach the experience of this Reality." Why Meditate, an article By Swami *Chinmayananda*



And now, the various scriptures where Gurudev has left more gentle instructions... repeating the same message again and again and again from different angles. Sometimes he is showing the way, sometimes, encouraging, sometimes reminding, sometimes adding a new perspective...

Atmabodh
The process of negating our identifications with the false matter envelopments and asserting our Divine spiritual nature consists the art of meditation.

Hasten Slowly introduction.
Let us remember that the mental attitude of meditation is not invoked by a mechanical adjustment gained in haste during an evening half an hour. The meditative mood is to be zealously worked for and earned by each seeker during his entire day's activities. Unless we discriminate and intelligently live almost all the twenty-three -and -a half hours of the day ,we cannot expect to have even half an hour's meditative mood.

Hasten Slowly 6
When the thoughts have been nourished by study (Swadhyaya) and rendered quiet and peaceful by Japa, to rest the hushed mind at the altars of the Self in a thrilled mood of choiceless contemplation is meditation.

The noblest motives alone can bring the mind into a state of alert attention to catch the passing tunes of the Eternal Rhythm all around and within.

Hasten Slowly-3
The nature of the mind is that it's thoughts will readily flow towards any object of

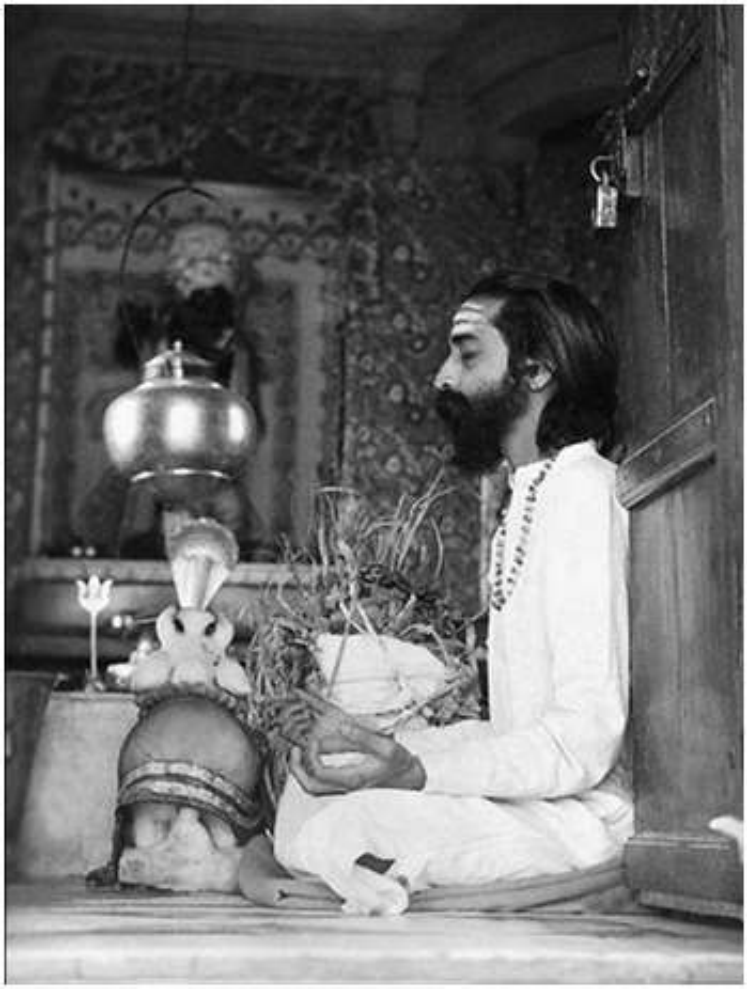
its love. Where ourPrema is there our mind reaches and lingers lovingly. This being natural and instinctive mode of behaviour we can supply it with an alternative field of joyous love; it is sure to turn towards it and in so doing will turn away from the world of objects where it is now getting totally dissipated of all its rich potentialities.

Geeta V-7
All obstacles in meditation are nothing other than the mile stones of sensuous appetites emotional aspirations and desire problems.

Geeta2:61
To expose the mind to the quiet atmosphere of meditation upon the all perfect Being is to heal its ulcers.

GeetaXII-10
Meditation is only an attempt on our part to create the necessary conditions most favourable for an early blossoming of the greater man in us.

Atma Bodh 59
Butter permeates milk although it is not easy for us to see it directly in the milk. Brahman likewise permeates all objects. Butter is extracted from milk by churning. So also the Atman can be separated from the world of names and forms by intense meditation.
When the spirit is experienced the world of plurality is no more perceived just as in butter there is no more any milk.



Geeta2: 29
Man awakened to the Self's glory is God; God forgetful of His own glory is deluded man.

Geeta 6:35
Mind stilled is Self gained.

Geeta 9:35
A still mind is an open window through which man peeps out to see himself reflected in the mirror of truth.

Vivekachudamani
Mindless seeing is perception of Truth.
Mindful perception of Truth is world.

Karika- 12
Sleep-less world of reality is Samadhi.
Object less world of Reality is deep sleep.

BG 5:12

Peace is an unbroken sense of Joy and it is the fragrance of an integrated personality.

207. FROM GURUDEV'S TREASURY – PRECIOUS PEARLS

30-11-2015

Some classic pearls that Gurudev left lying around for us to find….Not just the content, but enveloped in most elegant English, pithy at time, precise and potent. But precious, nonetheless.



Love and Work

Love is the heart of religions, the theme of all classical works of art and literature and the song of all devotees. Scientists know only what love does... not what love is. Love can indeed empty our asylums, perhaps all our prisons, may be all our hospitals. People suffer in life due to lack of love. Love is to human hearts what sun is to flowers! Love grows with knowledge of the beloved. To love, therefore, is to know... yet, to know is not necessarily to love.

We may often give without love, but we can never love without giving. Love is at once noun and verb... Love is something to be sustained and fulfilled, by loving. By loving alone can love be made to grow and thrive. And our work is love made visible! When love is made to manifest, work is done. When we work only to produce profit or wages, work becomes crushing, sweating, joyless labor.

With love in our heart, let us put forth effort and flood the world with our work!



Find Love, Not Fault

It takes two to make a quarrel. Also, it takes two to make up (patching up) after quarrel. Without invoking love, this can never be accomplished.

Flood your mind with love, look into the eyes of the other and embrace the person with whom you had quarreled. Words are not necessary. Both will have eyes flooded and joytears will wash away all quarrels for the time being. Try this. You will find this true every time. This is the power of love. This is the strength of love!

Faults become thick when love is thin. When love rises to swirl around us, and when we review in this clear light of love, the very faults get transformed into the essential beauty in them. This is the magic touch of love, the miracle played by love.

When our hearts are full of love, life is a smiling valley of beauty and joy, romantic and divine!



Open Up and Receive

Very often we hear some people complaining that "nobody loves me." The world is full of love. But generally our hearts are not open for the love to gush in to us. And the door of your heart ever remains closed. Nobody other than you can ever throw it open, for the door of your heart cannot be locked from outside and it can be open

only from within. You alone are in your heart.



You unconsciously got locked in and you cry out to others to open up and release you. Nobody can. Stop crying. Find the handle and turn - Lo! It has opened, and you get immediately a blast of the life-giving reviving breeze of fragrant cool love from all around. Open up and receive all love.



Balance Head and Heart

In life to handle yourself, use your head but to handle others, use your heart. Be

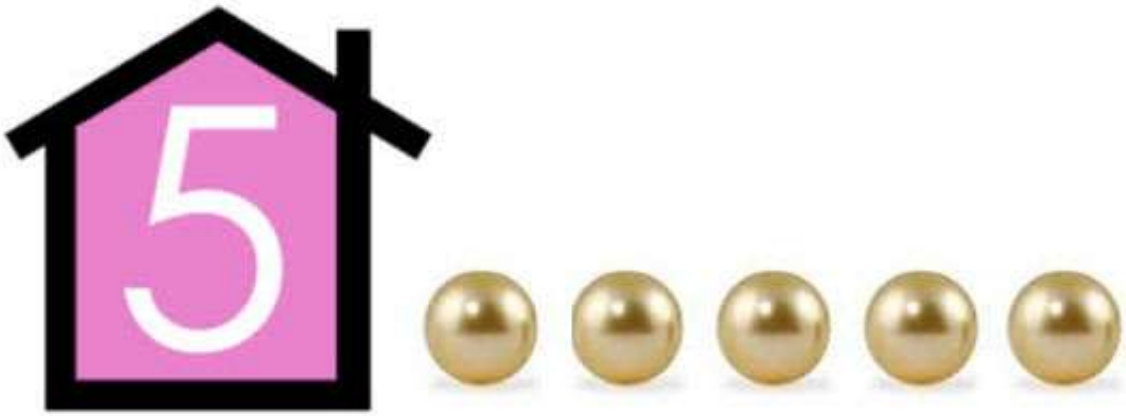
strict and intelligently critical about yourself and your own weaknesses and follies. But to manage others, be critical, but cushion your words and attitudes with love. Love is the greatest persuasive power we know in life.

This love that we have, needs constant giving - and as we give away, it gets replenished from His infinite Source. But if you refuse to give love, the stagnant love in your own heart putrefies and the crawling worms start eating up your own heart!



Cease to give love, we cease to have love - this is the strict law of love.

Give, Give, Give, and Give again love to all.



Enjoy the Chase

Strive on! With tireless enthusiasm, strive on to reach your goal. Without the goal, the best in you can never come out to expression. As we stride out to accomplish any chosen goal, no doubt, Lord tests us by heaping many apparently impossible hurdles in our direct path to our goal.

But, with enthusiasm, fearless of the obstacles, smiling in full self-confidence when we dash towards the goal, all the seemingly terrible obstacles move away as

shadows!! This is Lord's grace.



If you have ears to hear your can then listen to the peals of His roaring laughter applauding your faith and courage!!

In life, the glory lies not in the quarry, but in the chase... The success is not in the trophy won but in the race run...



Do it in spite of Odds

Recently, I met an old couple who had lived 53 years of married life! They had their tiffs, quarrels, mutual screamings at each other. Yet, they lived joyously and saw their children get educated, becoming independent and now they are living happily with their own growing families.

The old couple have grandchildren, great grandchildren and two great-greatgrandchildren. As I was talking to them, we went back in time and I asked what made him marry her. After a moment's pause, the toothless lips parted in a mischievous smile, and his bony hand moved quietly to hold the wrinkled and knotted fingers of the lady and said, "I married her and we remained in marriage so long because we have so many faults in common." The old lady admiringly smiled in

to his face



I asked her if she has an explanation for their long married life; she shyly looked in his eyes and slowly reminded me, "Swamiji, we like someone 'because', but we love someone 'in spite of'". I was silenced. I came away wiser carrying with me the picture of the old grandsire shaking his head in admiration for the old lady!!



Savor the Fragrance of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the secret beauty in anylseeker's life. Not to forgive is to maintain the passions bottled up in us and then we are never empty enough to lift ourselves in our soaring meditations.

Forgive liberally your enemies.... In fact, nothing can annoy them so much! They expect you to kick back and so have planned to break your ribs with return kicks. All these planned onslaughts become empty and hollow when you just forgive them! Many enemies become true friends when lavishly and lovingly forgiven!



Forgiveness is the fragrance which crushed tulasi leaves on the fingers that crush them in a thoughtless act!

Sandalwood perfumes even the axe that hews it down! The more we rub sandalwood against a stone the more its fragrance spreads. Burn it, and it wafts its glory in the entire neighborhood.

So is the enchanting beauty of forgiveness in life!



Nurture Friendship

Cultivate friends! To have a friend is to make life easier and richer. A friend is a present that you give yourself. But you cannot pick up a friend, nor purchase a friend. We have to discover a friend.

Friends are made by many acts: and friends are lost often by single thoughtless act. You must grow up to deserve a friend... to have friends you must have friendliness in you: selfless and loving, with deep concern for others.



Perhaps dogs are lovable and become friends because they wag their tails... rarely their tongues. Learn to speak softly, always words of love and affection, then friends multiply. In short, the ability to love and express it in action are the requirements in gathering more and more friends. In fact, "love in action" is the heart of all religions.

Who is a friend? He who comes to you with love and cheer, when all others have left you is a true friend! Such a true friend is discovered not by searching outside for the right person to be friend, but by your growing to be the right person, to deserve a friend!

208. A PRAYER UNPARALLELED

01-12-2015

The joy of having found a mission and the Mission and hence a path and hence a way and hence an assurance that now we have the Good Shepherd herding us towards the glorious goal, (or as Vedanta prompts, “
prapannapaarijaataayatotravetraikapaaNaye .
GYaanamudraayakRishhNaayagiitaamRitaduhenamaH ||

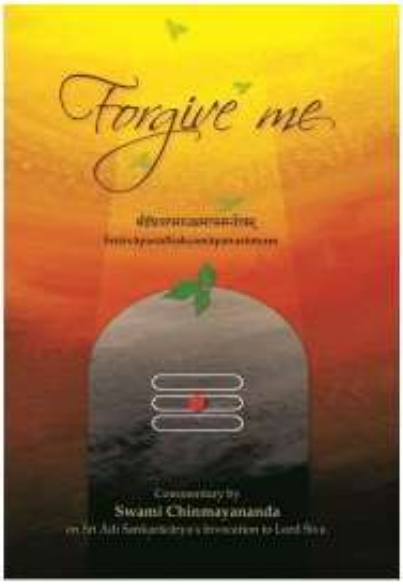
---- the holder of the whip in one hand, the wielder of the symbol of knowledge, and the Milker of the nectar of the Bhagavadgita – which description holds for Lord Krishna and Gurudev alike)often leads to forgetting the Lord Himself. The Lord is the Means and the End, but like a weary traveller in the desert, an oasis can lead to spiritual illusion.

The result is a revelling in the means and forgetting the Means. Thinking that the End has been attained anyway.

Sri AdiSankara wrote a heart wrenching prayer that he called “ Sri-Siva-Aparadha-Kshamapana- Stotram” or, An Appeal for Forgiveness addressing Lord Siva, the Lord Jagadeeswara.

But Sanskrit and Sri Sankara are totally lost on many of us who look to Gurudev to predigest the opulence of the prayer and give it to us as baby-food.

And when Gurudev gives it to us in the magnificence of his words, his choice of words, with his softness and love, like when a little child asks his father, ‘What did you tell God?’, this is what we get – a spectacular prayer. Here is one extract from Gurudev’s commentary form Forgive Me, a CCMT Publication.



The crux is the huge barrel of vasanas filling one's being and knowing that it is this that blocks my union with the Lord. And Sri Sankara is implying that it is with devotion that the "rubbish heap of our gross sensuous vasanas (explained lucidly by Gurudev as, 'our hang-ups which determine the colours of our present personality') be trucked out and burned down."

To be able to unabashedly admit to such flawed mind is Sri Sankara's glory; to be able to find the right expression and means to explain that flawed state is our Gurudev's love for us. No less. To be able to see into our hearts and mind and diagnose our spiritual dis-ease is his tireless mother-like devotion to his children. Thence comes his teachings, with a desire to heal us..... The italicised sentences bear out this unabashed choice of words, shining in their honesty.

Gurudev writes explaining stanza 10:

नग्नोनःसंगशुद्धस्त्रगिणवरिहतोध्वस्तमोहांधकारो

नासाग्रेन्यस्तदृष्टर्विदितभवगुणोनेवदृष्टःकदाचित्।
उन्मन्या□|□वस्थयात्वांवगितकलमिलंशंकरंनस्मरामि
क्षंतव्योमे□|□पराधःशविशविशविभोशरीमहादेवशंभो॥१०॥

"Never have I tried to become 'naked' and free of all attachments, purified of all vasanas. At this moment the Self is wrapped up in the matter vestures because of a delusory sense of total identification. To 'undress' from the physical, the mental and intellectual sheaths is, for the seeker, to arrive at the the naked Truth. Thus, 'becoming naked' has a great significance and can be achieved when attachment to the sheaths ceases to be.

'Pure (suddha) heart' is a term used in all the religions of the world, to indicate a state of the mind and intellect equipment; a state of hushed silence, bristling with alertness and vigilance. A quiet and alert mind is a pure mind, but so long as vasanas are impatient to express through the seeker's equipment, his intellect must necessarily gurgle with endless explosions of desire, which in turn, must unavoidably bring unending agitations to the mind.

Pure inner equipment is gained only when the vasanas have been exhausted through dedicated, selfless actions. O Lord! I have not achieved this yet!

Only when the seeker has cultivated a pure mind can he come out of the confusions created by his misapprehensions of the world, O Lord! I am still groping in the dark, dreary delusions of my own mind!

In my present condition, I cannot, with single pointed attention, meditate devotedly upon Your form and Your glorious qualities. Never have I had such an experience. Through meditation alone can one reach the state of 'no mind' (unmanyaavasthaa). Then alone can we end all our perceptions of plurality and walk away from their endless enchantments. In short, I have never meditated continuously upon You, O Sankara! Save me!



O Visvesvara! May I never repeat such a tragic existence in the hereafter!

Beloved Lord! Dear Jagadeeshvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O all-merciful One!

Forgive me! Forgive me! May I not continue living my present life which is without faith and devotions!

In my present state of utter helplessness, I can only surrender to You, demanding that, by Your blessings alone my mind may become pure and turn towards You, ever engaged in the pursuit of my Liberation."

Credits: Source for Lord Siva glowing image:

https://www.allmydomain.com/multimedia/listen/sacred-chantings/rudram/

209. Asset Management : Keeping a Spiritual Diary

02-12-2015



by Swami Chinmayananda

Seekers move heaven and earth to establish that quietness of mind and ever so often just when they think their effort has been good, they have a rapid downward slide. They then feel utterly dejected, despair-filled. Effort of many days, seem as if washed away. The frustration of 'never making it' overwhelms. These are extremely lonely moments that tear the heart. Gurudev explains like a good doctor, how the virus enters the system, hence how and why we need to stay alert.

This is how Gurudev continues to stay in our midst, present with our sadhana. He gives us here, a way to appoint soldiers around us so that we stay fortified and our sadhana gains momentum. Then at the end of every day, we take stock...

The Spiritual Diary is a blessing. Here is Gurudev's note and instructions:

Even after following all the prescribed spiritual practices faithfully, you may run into obstructions in your efforts at meditation. In almost all cases where a seeker complains of lack of progress, it is because his subtle body has grown grosser. Do not be misled into thinking that your lack of progress is because of "destiny" or "a bad day" or the withdrawal of God's or your guru's grace! During an unconscious moment of relaxation, the sensuous world has invaded your inner world through the

sense organs and brought forth from your subconscious mind the lower tendencies. The only way out is to gather up your strength and fight out the battle with your baser tendencies. In order to protect the growing spiritual wealth in you and not suffer the sorrow of setbacks, it may help to post twenty “soldiers” around you, in the form of twenty questions to put to yourself at the end of each day’s activities. Keep track of the questions and answers in the form of a spiritual diary that you keep strictly and continuously for three months, but never for more than six months at a stretch. You must not let yourself become habituated to diary-writing. At any time that you feel a setback in your spiritual growth, take up the diary again for a week. It is the experience of many masters and thousands of seekers that this diary keeping is the sovereign remedy for spiritual fervor turned into sour skepticism.



The Twenty Questions

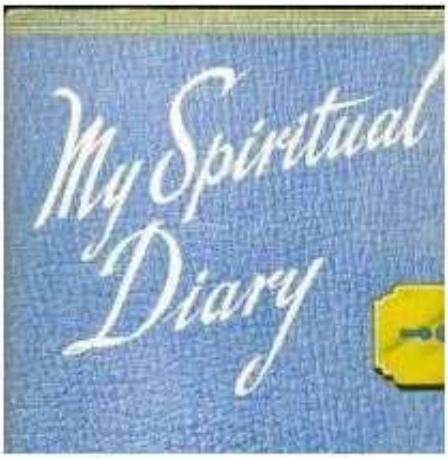
The following are the twenty items that constitute your diary. The list is compiled to suit all temperaments. Select fifteen items out of the twenty and pursue them diligently. Enter the items as heads for fifteen columns, and indicate each day your report on yourself under each category. At the end of the month, study the chart you have made to determine the schedule of your progress or decline for that month.



1. How many hours did I sleep? Normally six hours of sleep are sufficient for a quiet-living spiritual seeker.

2. When did I get up from bed? You should be out of bed between 4:30 and 6:00 a.m. The early morning's quiet will assist you in your spiritual evolution. The great masters have found, from their own personal experience, that this part of the day is most beneficial for spiritual practice. In the early stages, you may need an alarm clock to awaken you. If you find yourself being too sleepy after getting up, let a brisk shower freshen you up.

3. How long did l practice concentration? Begin with small doses, and increase the period of concentration slowly and steadily.



4. What religious books am I now reading? Reading the lives of the great masters and their declarations of Truth in a spirit of inquiry will greatly help you in thinking intelligently. In reading such books, do not be content with their story content alone. All such stories have deep symbolic and philosophic significance, and your aim should be to unravel the deeper meanings.

5. For how long was I in companionship with the good (satsanga)? Satsanga here does not mean merely attending prayer meetings and religious discourses. Once you have developed the spirit of inquiry, you will automatically seek out friends interested in discussing religious topics with you. Where such friends are not available, good books will serve as good company; discover companionship with them.

6. For how long did I engage myself in selfless service (karma yoga)? Any act of

service, performed in a spirit of detachment, will further the growth of the noble qualities of love, tolerance, mercy, and so on. Learn to serve Him through the people you are helping.



7. How many mala (rosaries) of japa did I perform? One mala consists of 108 beads, with a mantra chanted at the turning of each bead. In order to do japa effectively, you must strive as far as possible to exclude all extraneous thoughts from the mind during the period of japa practice.

8. How many Upanishad mantras did I read? Read only a little each day, but digest what you have read and allow your mind to reflect over the great truths behind the words of the mantras.

9. How many mantras did I write? Mantra writing is the easiest way of fixing your concentration. Keep a separate notebook for this purpose, and regularly write about a page of your chosen mantra. While writing the mantra, do not speak or look around, nor move away from the work until the allotted amount is finished. This exercise will aid your concentration immensely, since you soak your mind with the ideal suggested by the mantra as you whisper and write: the hand is writing the mantra, the eyes are seeing the mantra, the mouth is softly chanting the mantra, and the ears are listening to the mantra. The mind thus becomes easily single-pointed.

10. How many hours did I observe silence? Keeping silence does not mean expressing all your thoughts in relation to the outside world by making signs. If you do so, your mind will be entertaining thoughts that relate to the objective world. The aim is to withdraw one’s attention to the inner world of the spirit.

11. How many days did I fast? Fasting here does not mean abstaining from food continuously for long periods of time, such as 21 or 41 days. Fast regularly—once a month, once a week, or once a fortnight.



12. What did I give away in charity? Giving here means giving in thought, cash, or kind.

13. How many lies did I tell and with what self-punishment? A lie is something uttered against your conscience with a view of obtaining some advantage for yourself. During the act of lying, you will all the time be conscious of uttering something against your natural inclinations in order to surmount a real or imagined difficulty. Such conflicts will haunt you after the lie has been told and will become a stone wall in your spiritual practice. Do not allow yourself to console yourself by saying that the lie was small and did not affect anyone detrimentally. In all events, lying disturbs your mental poise. If you tell a lie, give yourself severe punishment, such as fasting or increasing the period of daily silence.



14. How many times was I angry, and how long did each attack of anger last? Anger arises out of nonfulfillment of your desires. Array the forces of tolerance, mercy,

sympathy, and understanding of the weakness in yourself and in others in order to win a victory over anger.

15. How many hours did I spend in useless company? In all spiritual practices you should attempt to see yourself as a child who desires to come home after having stayed away for a time, charmed by some pleasant attraction elsewhere. In spiritual practice, this coming home is possible only if you scrupulously avoid useless company, thus creating a proper atmosphere for your inner work.

16. How many times did I fail in brahmacarya? Remember brahmacarya means self-control in all areas—eating, talking, sex, and any other indulgences. Self-control within bounds is the safest rule.

17. What virtues am I developing consciously? For a month at a time, take to the cultivation of a single noble quality, such as love, tolerance, or kindness.

18. What evil quality am I trying to eradicate? Become conscious of thoughts that hold you down and slow your spiritual progress. Negative qualities are like a millstone tied around your neck while you are trying to swim. You have to snap the cord, let the weight sink, rise to the surface of the water, and swim to the shore. You must diagnose your own malady and find its proper cure.

19. How many times did I fail in controlling an evil habit, and with what punishment? Punishment here may be dealt out similarly as in paragraph 13, above.

20. When did I go to bed? Simply enter the time of retiring.



210. That Universal Person

03-12-2015

PurushaSooktam

Notes from Swami Chinmayananda Price Rs 15 (25 cents)

When one reads the treasure of knowledge in this think yellow book, and in Gurudev's words, we also see that He has strived to make this knowledge ready for every seeker, everywhere, anywhere...

This book glorifies the PurushaSooktam that we mostly learn to chant. But when one reads the introduction to this book, we hear Gurudev more clearly.

To seek, strive and strain to understand 'what is the Reality behind this indescribably beautiful, yet incredibly wasteful, "surge of creation" all around us, lying stretched out as this Universe' – is how Gurudev describes the quest of the seeker.

How Gurudev explains the WORLD: According to Vedantins, this Universe of names and forms (as we now experience it, in our present plane of consciousness) has only a relative reality, writes Gurudev. "This world is 'real' as long as we are experiencing it through our present equipments of perception, feeling and thought. The 'world' is an interpretation of our equipments, since, on changing the nature, quality and power of perception in us, the fields of 'experiences' (worlds) can expand or shrink, change or transform and present a totally different picture.

"The contemplative Sages realised [.....] that on rising above these familiar equipments, one could 'realise' the Universal Reality, the Self within."

Once this transcendental experience was confirmed and attested by more Masters, the Rishis began to think about "how best this Supra-mental-state of the Absolute Reality could be explained and communicated to others, the uninitiated. All teaching can be done only at the intellectual level; and the intellect can comprehend only the world of plurality. This was felt as a sad snag in successfully explaining, defining [...] the theme of the Eternal and Absolute Reality.

"Yet, the Vedic hymns and Upanishads strove to accomplish this impossible feat [...]. The entire Vedic thoughts thus provide a flight of steps to raise the vision of the Seekers. From each loftier eminence achieved, new vistas unroll to the growing understanding in the student.

"It is in their pursuit of this subtle technique that the Rishis hitched upon the theme of the imperceptible oneness that governs the microcosm and the macrocosm: between the individual and the Universe. According to the vedic masters there is an

intimate identity between the part and the whole, and, the microcosm, the individual is a miniature of the macrocosm, the universe."

And Gurudev's explanation simplifies it all, when he says,

*"The infinite Reality when expressing through its own "Creativeness" becomes the God (Eswara)

* "and God when He comes to identify with this "Urge-to-create" becomes the Creator (Hiranyagarbha)

* and the Creator projects the world (Jagat)

(and now the crux....)

*When the Creator comes to identify with what He had projected in His Creation, He becomes, alas, the individualised entity (Jiva).

"These are most poetically visualised and sung in the Vedas. This sublime song is the PurushaSooktam...."

This is how Gurudev explains what the PurushaSooktam is and why it was composed and why we may sing it. Read: "To chant this hymn and to allow our mind to float along its pregnant suggestions is to uplift the inner vision to Dizzy heights of strange experiences in subjective unfoldment. [.....]"

There are so many little books Gurudev wrote for us, not sure how many we have read. Yagnas are one kind of experience. Written books always seem personal, especially the way Gurudev writes the introductions, the prefaces.... He puts great weight on them. So in the PurushaSooktam, when he says, "Please carefully follow the meanings suggested, the depths and the heights indicated, and the stretches exposed by the rich words of the Sacred Hymn ..... There is intense beauty of the Eternal Drama (which he has so magnificently explained above)in this highly artistic presentation of the theme."

In the final para he says, "To watch the revelation of this Drama, scene by scene, is to stretch one's mind into its fullest, [...] cleansing them of their dust and dirt held within its folds (chittashuddhi....?).

The ego dwindles.

Selfishness exhausts.

The vision clears.

And a poise melodious with the inner silence, comes to rule over the minds of the students.

Such a tranquil mind rockets into the inner space to discover, and to finally realise ... Brahman."

This then is the PurushaSooktam!

Swami Chinmayananda

28-02-69

(Text in italics are Gurudev's)

211. A Lesson in Management

04-12-2015

From the letters written to Mr. Jorge Luis Jauregui, Oakland, California

The Chinmaya Mission we see today came up climbing steps one by one and every step was crafted and designed by Pujya Gurudev.

If today the Mission has reach all around the world and even as far into the East as Latvia, it is because He trained his disciples gently, one baby step at a time, and urged them onward.

If today they are all teaching around the world or writing texts and carrying Vedanta into homes, it is because they too willed to learn, willed to be taught and trained, anchored in Gurudev.



H. H. SWAMI
CHINMAYANANDAJI

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDAJI'S
226th GEETHA GYANA YAGNA COMMITTEE
COORG
13th to 22nd November 1975

Camp: POLLIBETTA-571215
Coorg, Karnataka, India.

Date 19-11-75.

Sri Jorge Luis Jauregui
Oakland, California.

Pranam Ore, Hariom! Hariom! Hariom!
Salutations!

You should have written to me earlier. Your letter of 11th has just reached me here in Mysore State, on the Coffee-plantation acres of the Western Ghats.

Congratulations to you and our faithful dedicated organisers Vijaya Kapoor and Dinara Adwani. I am afraid you will not be able to explain the entire Geeta III KARMA YOGA fully in 7 days Post-you are only just giving a basic Talks — are you? Hereafter base your talks of a TEXT. Read only the translation — both base talks on a TEXT.

In Gurudev's reply we see the teacher in full glory as he does not reject the question but engages with the query, suggesting possibilities as well as a better approach for the next time. No superiority, only teaching. But not without first congratulating and appreciating the student's effort and his team's effort! Here is a great lesson in leadership.

How well Gurudev explains why he says what he does. And gently he brings up how a perosn conducting a yagna or class must treat the collection of dakshina. All too suddenly we see a shift as Gurudev changes hats from teacher to administrator, when he talks about accounting and matching incomes and outflows!

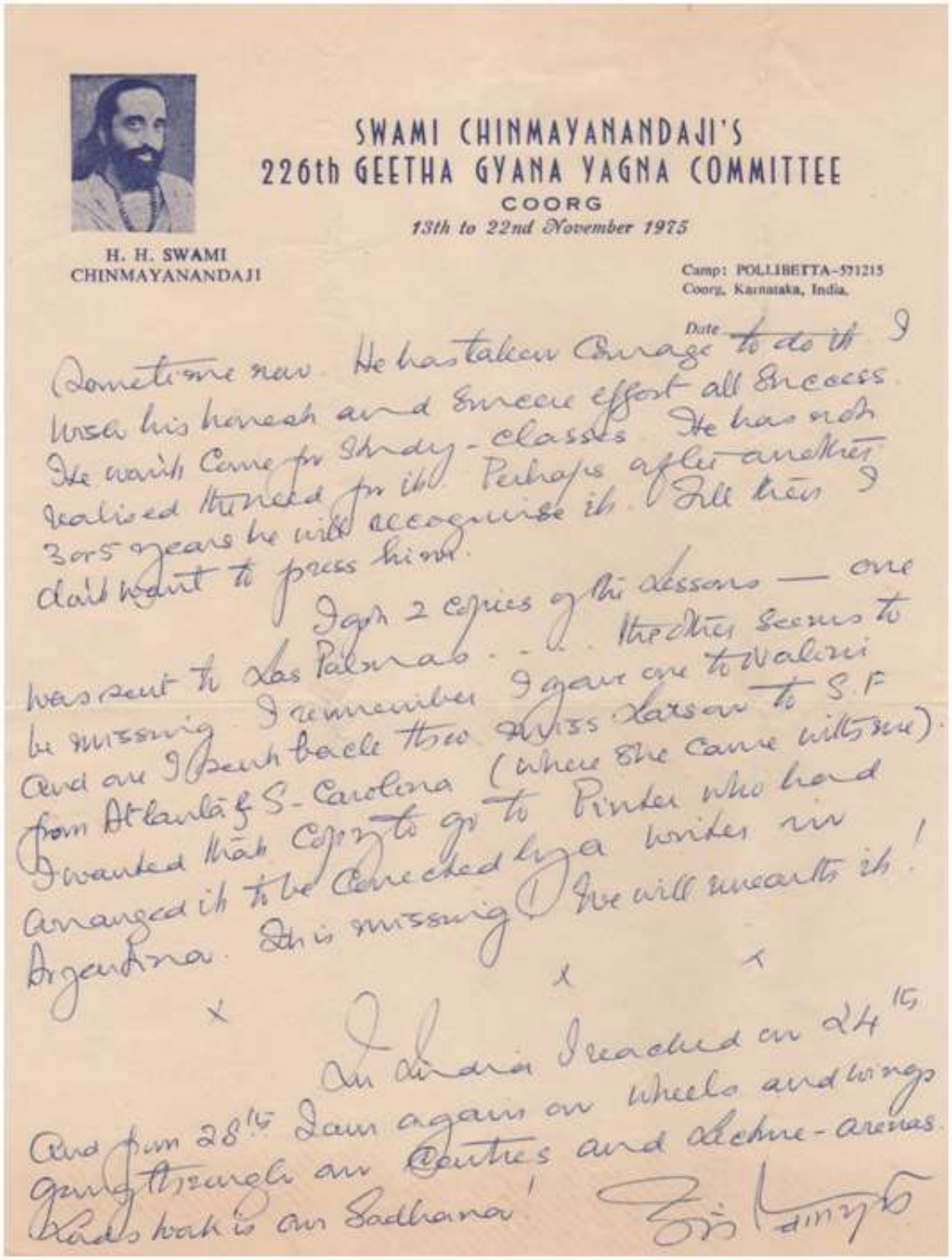
This will give listener-students a frame to hold the thoughts in memory.

Hold as many as you can
Get organised. Do each College Guru
Dakshina at the picture of Swamiji. The
Ramakrishna Board go to CM(W) for use in the
Mission Overhead expenses like printing,
posting, Hall, P.A System etc. Ramakrishna be Circul-
from Donations Collected in that area. Please
tell me know after each Yagna — the
income-expenditure - accounts of the same.
Some kind of book-mark, or booklet,
may be given in exchange to the
Cover of the Guru Dakshina.

Surrender yourself and wish to
serve the people ardently — wish will flow
into you. Scrape off the ego arises and
Selfish ideas spring up. These can clog
clog the entire flow. BEWARE!!

These 2 maybe people who had
applied for the Course. I had already replied
Babs that he can join not this, but next batch.
I know him as a sincere ardent seeker, and
give enough room. Achan may not have
known that Kentucky is not in S.F. area.
This year there is going to be some double for
foreign students to reach India due to
political situation. No one may come in the
end. I can't help it.

Man was planning to do this for



SWAMI CHINMAYANANDAJI'S
226th GEETHA GYANA YAGNA COMMITTEE
COORG
13th to 22nd November 1975

H. H. SWAMI
CHINMAYANANDAJI

Camp: POLLIBETTA-571215
Coorg, Karnataka, India.

Date

Sometime now. He has taken courage to do th[illegible] I
wish his honesh and sincere effort all success.
He wants Come for study-classes. He has not
realised the need for it. Perhaps after another
3 or 5 years he will recognise it. Till then I
don't want to press him.

I got 2 copies of the lessons — one
was sent to Las Palmas. The other seems to
be missing. I remember I gave one to Valmi
and one I took back from Atlanta & S. Carolina (where she came with me).
I wanted that copy to go to Pinder who had
arranged it to be checked by a writer sir
Argentina. This is missing. I've will search it!

x x x

In India I reached on 24th
and from 28th I am again on wheels and wings
going through our Centres and Ashram-arenas.
Back back to our Sadhana!

As we read on, the letter gives us insights to how the organisation ran seamlessly those days over letters. Letters that went by snail mail (Gurudev is writing from Mysore to people in the US...), but depended greatly on dedication and commitment of the sevaks. So whole lessons went for editing via mail and work got done, because sevaks gave it their all.

We have inherited a full-service organisation in the Chinmaya Mission, and the credit

for that is naturally Gurudev's and his magnificent devotees.

This letter is a lesson in management, leadership, guidance, teamwork and above all, institution building!

212. Vedantic significance in Ramayana

05-12-2015

written by Swami Chinmayananda,

Source: Mar/April 1999 issue of Vedanta Vani.

In Ayodhya, (yudhdha means conflict. ‘Ayodhya’ means where there is no conflict) to the king Dasharatha (= one who has conquered all the ten indriyaas) was born the Supreme Lord, Sri

Raama (= 'That One' who is revelling in every form - ' sarveramantiyasminitiRaamaah ') as a baby.

Raama grows up in Ayodhya (without any conflicts) and then goes out of Ayodhya with sage Vishwamitra to protect the yagnaas.....

Rama gets married to Sita. Janaka is her father. Janaka found her while ploughing the mother earth,....., most improbable place to come out from. Ultimately, she goes back to mother earth. So here is someone who came from no-cause and goes back to no-cause, and this is called, in vedaanta, as ' Maaya '.

Thus Raama, the Atman, the self, gets wedded to Maaya.....Once ' Self ' gets wedded to Maaya, the Ego, ' I ' cannot remain in Ayodhya. Conflict must necessarily start. Thus he goes to the jungle with Sita. Jungle means the forest of pluralities, conflicts, in which you and I live today.

There, as long as Sita was looking at Raama, living in Raama, for Raama, (Ego thinking of God only) she never knew the difference between Ayodhya and forest. But one little moment she turned her attention outwards and there stood the Golden deer - the delusory golden deer.....



The lord Rama portrayed as exile in the forest, accompanied by his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana

Credit: By Raja Ravi Press [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

And once we see that delusion, we do not want God, we want that delusory thing only. Sita got stung by the desire, rejected Ram, sent him away saying, " I want that Golden deer ". Rama goes. The deer is killed no doubt, but it starts crying out and Sita asks Lakshmana also to go. He hesitatingly goes.....

It is at this time that Ten-headed monster, Ravana, comes in the guise of a sanyasi Bhikshu. See the anti-thesis. Dasharatha, who has conquered the ten indriyaas, is in Ayodhya, and Dashamukha is in Lanka. We are like Ravana. Our attention is constantly turned outwards through the ten indriyaas. Materialism enters the bosom of a seeker in a deceitful form. Ravana, the extrovert man, with lusty living came to Sita in a deceitful form. He comes and takes her away and Sita becomes a prisoner in Lanka.

Her fall from Ayodhya to Lanka is the fall of man from greatness of divinity into the present condition of guilt, sorrow, agitation, worries and suffering. Thus you and I are Sita now in Lanka.

What did she do there ? We must also go through the same discipline. She refused to co-operate with materialism all around. When she says ' NO', materialism cannot touch her. She remained under Ashoka tree. ‘Shoka’ is sorrow and ‘A-shoka’ is sorrowless. Though there is sorrow in all our minds, we refuse to recognise it. There under the Ashoka tree she contemplated on Ram with a sense of total surrender, recognising and realising the terrible mistake that she made, and remained there. When we thus remain contemplating on Ram, every seeker will get intimation from the Divine, Sri Ram, that ' I am coming '. Hanuman reaches her and gives her the Symbol. Her hope increases and she is confident that Rama is coming. She awaits the arrival of Rama.

As Sita weeps for him, Rama also expresses sentimental emotions. Valmiki wants to communicate to us that when we cry for God, he responds. How will he go there ? He is in jungle. The only army he can have is monkeys. We find so much of criticism in Western literature that monkeys cannot make an army. But here it has to be monkeys. Human minds and thoughts are the only ally for the Lord, the Spiritual Self, for I and you to reach that state. Monkeys and human minds have the same qualities of 'chanchalatwa ' and 'asthiratwa ' (lack concentration and attention).

These monkeys can never be the ally of the Lord as long as they are ruled by Vali, the incorrigible lust. As long as our minds are ruled by lust we are not ready to do Ram's work. So Vali is to be destroyed and see who comes to the throne - Sugreeva. ‘Greeva’ means the reins of horses. Sugreeva - the total self-control! Under Sugreeva the monkeys are available to do Ram's work and together they build the bridge - the bridge of contemplation to reach the realm of Ravana - the realm of pure materialism, to destroy the extrovertedness, destroy Ravana and take Sita to Rama.

Sita, the ego, when comes face to face with Rama, the Self, the ego disappears. Just as ' the dreamer I ' disappears before ' the waker I '. Sita thus disappears. It is Kapila muni who tells Rama that he cannot go back to Ayodhya and bring about Rama Rajya [the rule or reign of Rama] without a queen. Hence Kapila muni makes a delusory Sita with whom Rama returns to Ayodhya and rules for a short time. All men of Realisation, having realised the Truth, always come back to the world for a short time to serve as Saints, Prophets. We cannot work in the world without an ego. But here, it is not a true ego, but an illusory ego. When he thus rules, Luva and Kusha are born. Similarly when a Jnani works in the world, a Bible or a Koran,

a Gita or an Upanishad will necessarily emerge out of Him.

Then he gives up the world . There is no compulsion on him to give up because it is already an illusory one. It is not a real one. He gives up the world and there ends the masterpiece.

Thus Ramayana, from Ayodhya to Lanka is the process of an individualised Ego, coming into the present state of misconception that I am a limited, individualised ego, and the return of Rama back to Ayodhya from Lanka is the man's piligrimage fulfilled in the Realised Self. There after they live in the world for a short time serving mankind and then the story ends.

Thus there is a spiritual background to the entire story of Ramayana. That is the reason why it is so popular. The average man is happy with the story. To the mediocre man, the idealism that Rama stands for is a great education. But even the man of Realisation enjoys Ramayana , because he sees in and through the story , the entire Vedantic Wisdom, echoing and re-echoing as a melody Divine.

213. Tapovan Mahima

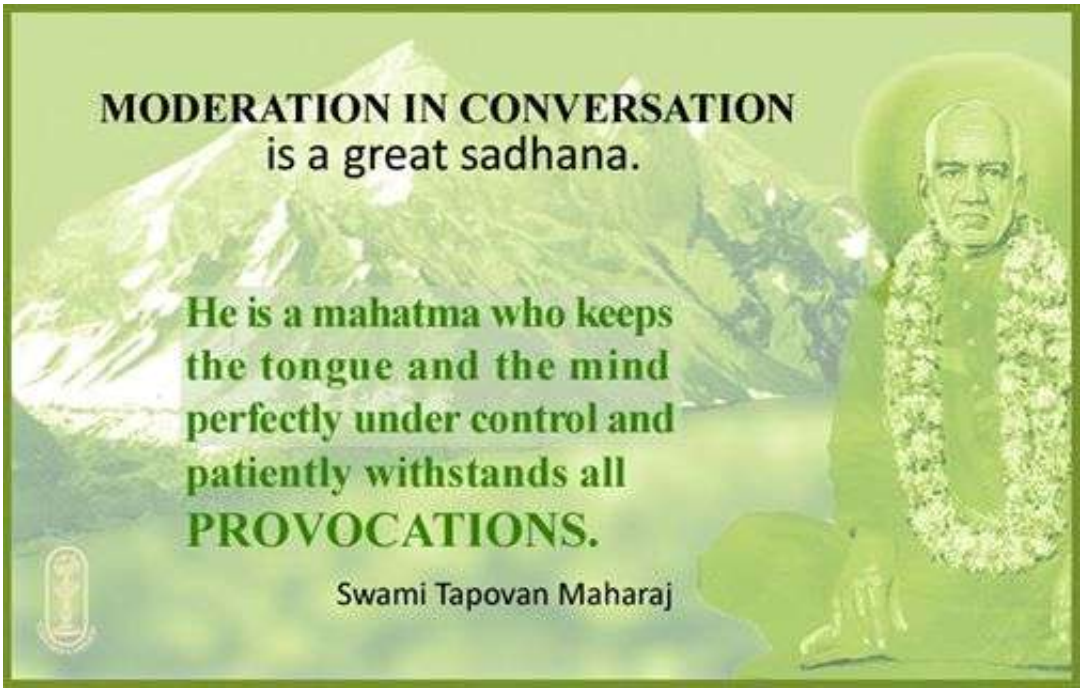
06-12-2015

- A Presence

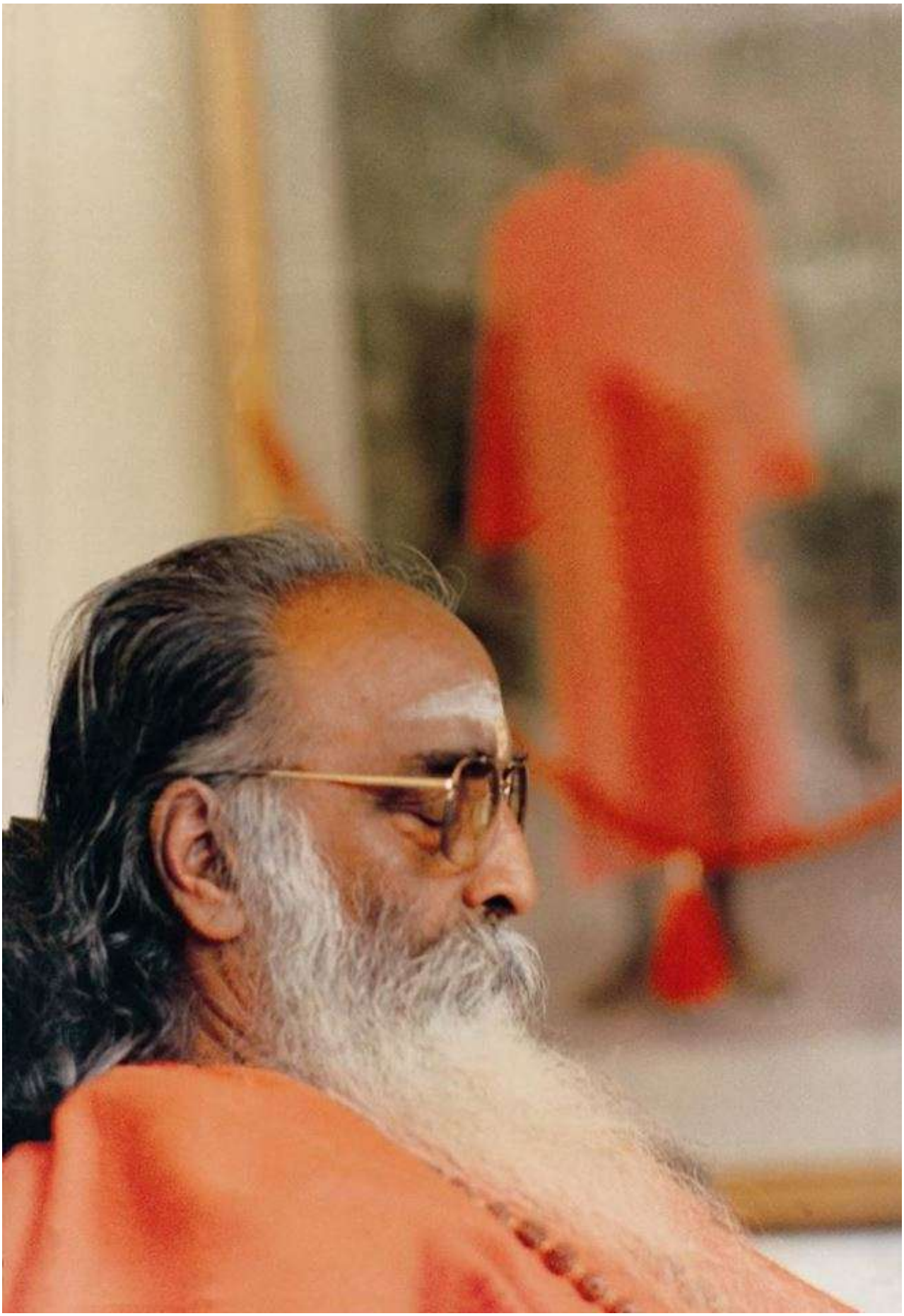
Excerpts from PUJYA GURUDEV'S speech at the unveiling ceremony of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj's Statue.

With a hint of a reason for why Gurudev made the Geeta & Upanishads his vehicle to teach us, reach us, after he came down from the hills.

Disciples are always fools, they will never be able to see and understand a master in action. They look at it from their stupid intellectual “brilliancy". Masters are deeper than that; they cannot be comprehended by the intellect.



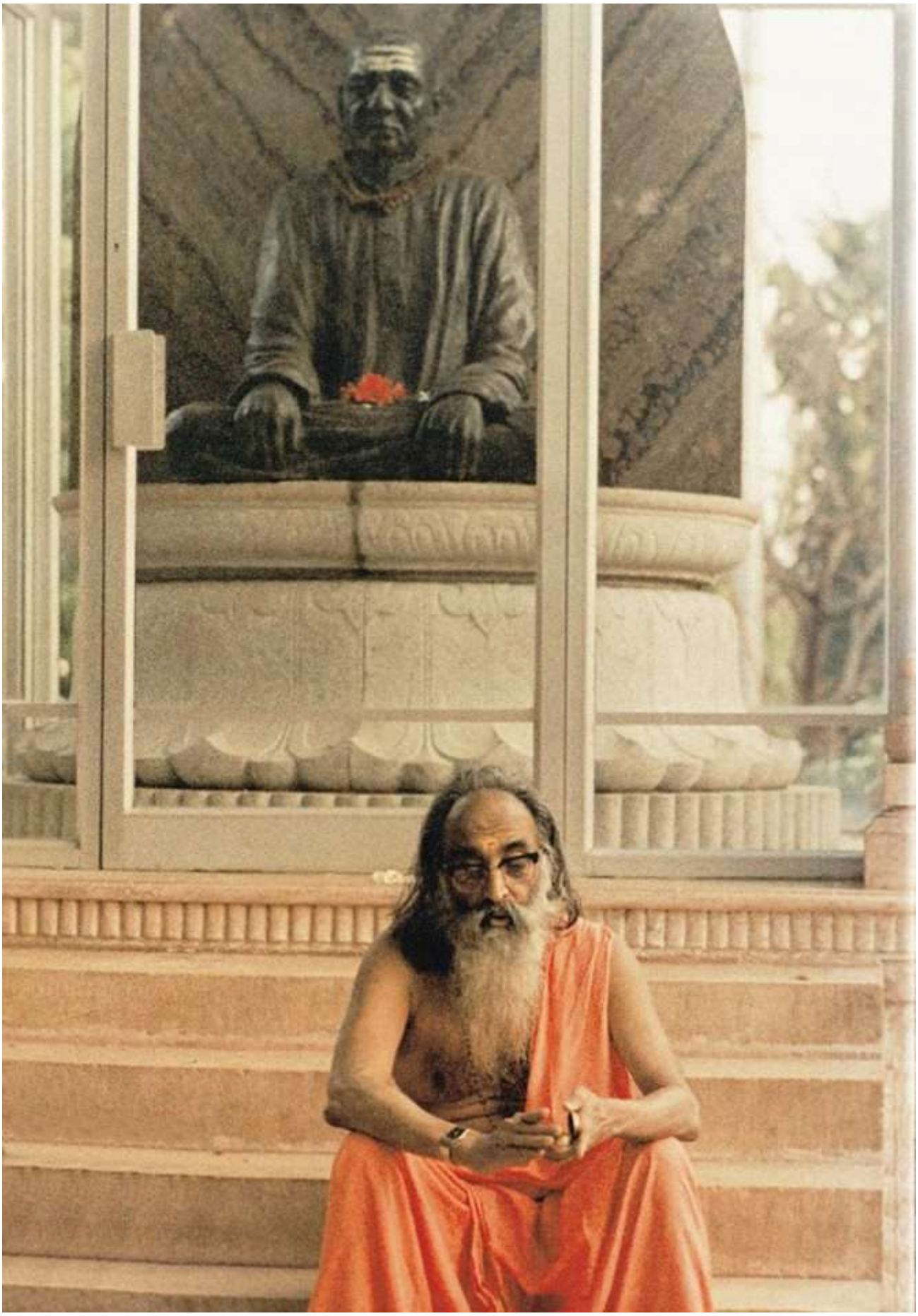
It was an utter vairagya that Swami Tapovanji Maharaj lived every moment and this I am talking of what grossly you are seeing. But that was not He. He was pure Brahman itself. At least to me he was...



A hint of the Presence ....

...To unveil Him and His glory, His vibhuti in the hearts of others—because he was always a recluse, he always shelled himself in and didn't want anybody to disturb him and therefore, when I reached therein, a rascal of the best type, the darkest, dreariest, stupid fellow that ever was, he in his own way, with his own light touches carved out of it what I am now. So I thought that I must come and bring it out to others. And how to tell them? Not that Swami Tapovan Maharaj was there - he was from Kerala - he was a Sanskrit scholar etc. That is not He, that is the outer wrapping. Now how to explain to you all that I saw him outside was what I saw in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Geeta. Therefore I thought that these two books must become permanently known by everyone and therefore the work started...

It was only to unveil Him to everyone at all levels that we tried to take the message. We did it all to unveil Shri Tapovan Mahima. Tapovanji Maharaj was not a person. He was not any historical entity, he is not a saint of the ordinary order, he was indeed a miraculous thing, or a great luck for the society that he lived in our times. But he lived the philosophy or the highest Reality in every movement of his. Even shifting the leg in his sitting posture from morning to evening. He sat on in that verandah in that corner... (You) Try! You may say that what an idler he must have been! He sat there for 40-45 years of his life. He sat down there and there alone, ever established in his own Self and expressing it in his smile, in his looks, in his graciousness and in his study or teaching. In all his words, whatever he did was only just a glorification and a reflection of the infinite Self in him he lived. It is that master who is your grandsire in this organization and we thought that there must at least be a symbol... and he is being now brought here to be present and be a witness of what we are doing. That is why he is turning into the ashram as he always remained turned into the sanctum sanctorum; never turned outwards.



Swami Tapovanam facing ‘within’ the Mission. Gurudev at his Holy feet.

Therefore he is not facing the door, watching who is coming or who is going but he is turned towards the ashram as a Silent Witness of what is going on here. So that when the baser thoughts come, the vulgar promptings come, remember there is a silent witness standing there watching over you.

This master thus is impossible to explain and describe. He was not a person. As a person when I describe him it becomes almost indecent, incompetent. It does not explain what it is exactly. He was a presence. And a presence or a fragrance how can you explain? A light, a joy is something to be experienced. This is my attitude and experience with him and therefore it is difficult to explain or describe him. Even in his own book the "Ishwar Darshan" in which he tries to give his data, he has given it as a satire; that on such and such day a boy was born and that boy was Subramaniam...etc. It is a story of that boy as if he has no connection with him.

That structure was only the container but the contents was Tapovanam. And he was a presence, a light, a glow. As such it is impossible to communicate it. And the only way to communicate is that you also, study the Geeta and learn to live the righteous life and to experience what Swami Tapovanam is. And hence this unveiling ceremony. It is not a mere statue. It is a presence. Therefore all the students in the morning invoke his grace, a very powerful one, in order to make you an adhikari for the study of the Upanishads and for the help in meditation. How ever disturbed you may be, or I can say I may be, little falling at his feet, a little turning up towards him is sufficient for me. I don't say for you also it will be the same. I can say that my experience is that he can put you back on the rails very quickly. Make use of him...if you can.

The glory of what the Mission is doing is all his glory. If others are being benefited, it is again from him only. I am incapable of, in any way, communicating. Maybe I am an instrument in communicating. But what is being communicated is his thoughts, his ideas. The majority of the examples, for which I am famous in the country, are all his examples. I have been looting from him and without giving his name, getting the glory to myself. But his examples were given in such a serious mood. He never came down from the great peaks of his inner quietude.

We are invoking him to be present here and bless our efforts, guide us on the right lines.

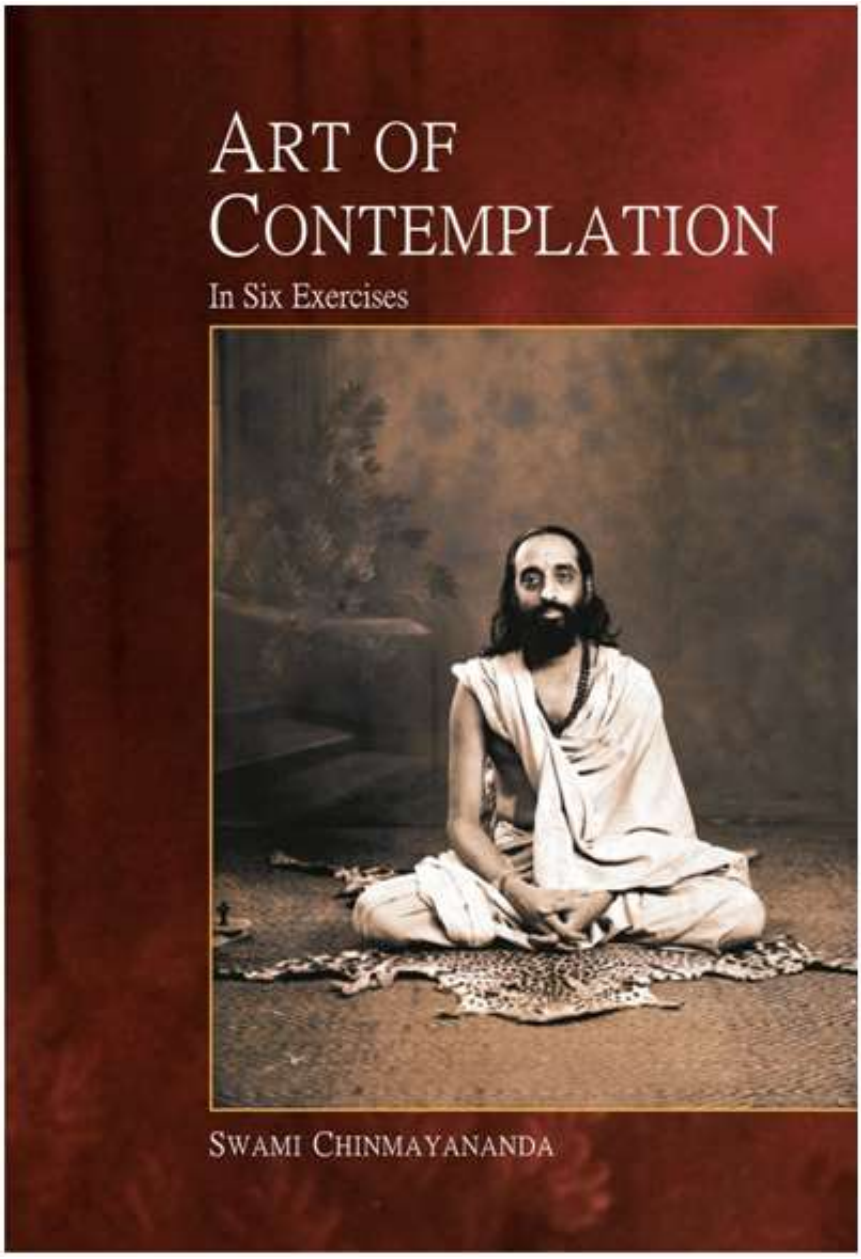
Credits found on the Source of this article: We are grateful to Br. Svarup Chaitanya for the loan of his cassette of the recorded speech. - Editor

214. Contemplation

07-12-2015

The word occurs several times in our study of Vedanta. Usually it points to focussing the mind on a thought and keeping it there.

But this very practise eludes us because the mind is not controllable. It is restless, chatters a lot, jumps between thoughts, jumps to another thought before we can hold to one thought, is doubting, indecisive... in short, it cannot be reined in.



Yet it is the Mind we need to saddle and ride on it to reach that Power, that Enlivener that enlivens the body and the Mind and realise that, That Enlivener is Me.

Gurudev says, " ...once you get established in It, life in the world outside shall become an enjoyable sport. Nothing that is happening in the world outside can bring pressure, tensions, stress or strains upon you." In other words we will come to live like the saints.

This requires 'turning within'. That is not possible as long as our mind is turned outwards.

So then what is Contemplation? Gurudev explains this succinctly: -

"To calm our mind,

To withdraw its entire attention from the enchanting world of objects, emotions and thoughts outside;

To center our entire attention first upon the mind itself,

And then to turn this entire attention to discover what lies behind our mind

(i.e.,) The Mighty Power of Life [...] and to seek our identity therein,

And to glide into that Supreme State of Consciousness."

In Gurudev's words again, "All our sense of limitations, lack of self-confidence, sense of fear, which are natural in our present state of consciousness, shall drop away the moment we wake into the Higher State."

Gurudev says we are "even now in It; only we have not tried to reach out and wake up into that state of Pure Consciousness."

Some more unforgettable words that Gurudev says so we know what it is to Contemplate:

*The waker is never far away from the dreamer. True the dreamer suffers, but even while suffering, the dreamer is none other than the waker. [...] The waking state is the goal and it is never far away. Even while you are dreaming, you are but the waker; it's a question of realising it.

Are we seekers or searchers? Are we seeking or searching?

Read what Gurudev writes, “Seeking is when I don’t know what it is or where it is.

“Searching is when I know and am certain that it is on my table or in my handbag ---- and I am searching for it. Searching is for a thing which I know is there, but is now covered by other things. We are ‘seeking’ the ‘Truth’ while studying the scriptures and, with the help of the teacher, trying to grasp what it is and what is its nature.

“In the seat of meditation, we are ‘searching’. […] we know there is this mysterious power […] in our bosom. We are searching to reach It.”

We are searching for a new dimension of Consciousness which we are told we can reach by plucking our mental clingings to the outer world and redirect our quest…. But it already sounds like an impossible feat. How are we to quieten the mind? The only time that happened was when we are in deep sleep!

Gurudev says, “The Vedic teachers, therefore, grab us by the neck and push us into a unique experience…. A state of tranquillity and quietude.

“The Rishis. Arguments are based ona very logical sequence of thought. In deep sleep […] our body never moves.” He explains that the moment the mind is disturbed even by a dream, even if the body is in sleep state it becomes restless, tossing about. The mind and body are inter-related he says, so that “the quieter the body, the quieter the mind.”

So Gurudev refers us to the Kaivalya Upanishad and says, “we consciously quieten our body, thereby bringing out, as though in resonance, a relative quietude in our mind.”

And how the physicality of places of worship bring that quietude to the mind… Gurudev says, “ The tall steeples of churches, the vast amphitheatres of the temples, the dome of the mosques are all to give the student an atmosphere wherein, even unconsciously, the mind of the devotee becomes quiet. The rituals : the ringing bells. The fragrance of flowers, the singing of hymns and chants are all again methods for bringing into our own bosom an awesome sense of reverence and devotion, calming our mind. […] an atmosphgere is created in which a devotee slowly learns to forget and rise above his own sorrows.”

The Message: “I want you today to only understand what the goal of the contemplative student is. What is he seeking …. Where is it to be sought? Not as something unknown, not as some mighty mysterious Power dwelling out there in heaven, in Vaikunth or Kailas, but right here in your own bosom, expressing as the very spring of all Life. This silent and mysterious Power, called Life, expresses through every one of us, and, because of Life, we are what we are. Minus this mysterious Power, you and I are mere zeros…. Mere bundles of manure. This great mighty Presence enlivens all living beings …. Life enables us to express what we are today, whether we are good, bad or different kind of personality, we are all manifestations of this Power. In Contemplation, we are trying to move towards It, by invoking and ultimately realising It. This we cannot do when the mind is disturbed with the outer world. Hence the first technique is to quieten the mind.”

And then Gurudev commands that we STOP reading .... And start thinking about what he said, and fix it in our understanding... “consider what we are seeking; search and discover where It is, and determine what we are searching for.”

And in this manner he leads us higher and higher and higher towards higher and higher grades of contemplation.

And lest we are confused or misunderstand, he adds, “ The search is contemplation, which is popularly called by hasty students as ‘meditation’. Carefully note: Meditation is a noun, not a verb. Meditation is a soecific state of the human mind. In order to bring our mind into this state of meditation, all the conscious efforts we make together are called as “Contemplation”.

From: Art of Contemplation

In six exercises

By Swami Chinmayananda

CCMT

215. Free-will and Self Effort

08-12-2015

Very simple, very clear

Spectacular collection of explanations collated by Shri L. Hemachandrudu

One of the most debated topic in Vedanta is prarabdha(destiny) and purushartha (self effort).

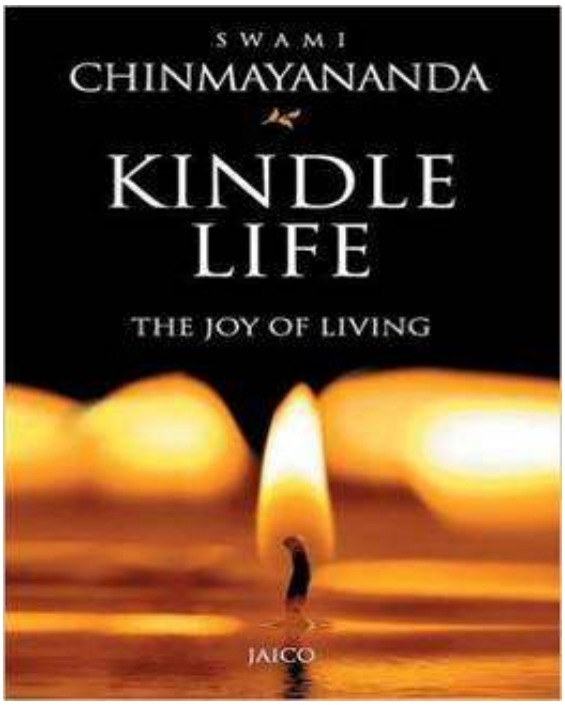
Not just non-believers, but even among believers there are those who do not believe in rebirth. Therefore, it is difficult to explain, why (given there was no past-life) some are born into affluence and some into miserable conditions.

Those who believe in destiny have to explain how, if everything is predestined,then how is it thatone person is a sinner and another a saint. And if all that life doles out is predestined, then how does one getaway from a helpless miserable life.

These and many other arguments on this topic of prarabdha and purushartha, abound. This typically happens when there is an an absence of clarity in explaining the two terms. But Sri Gurudev in his usual simple style and easy vocabulary gives a clear thesis, so that there never remains a doubt.

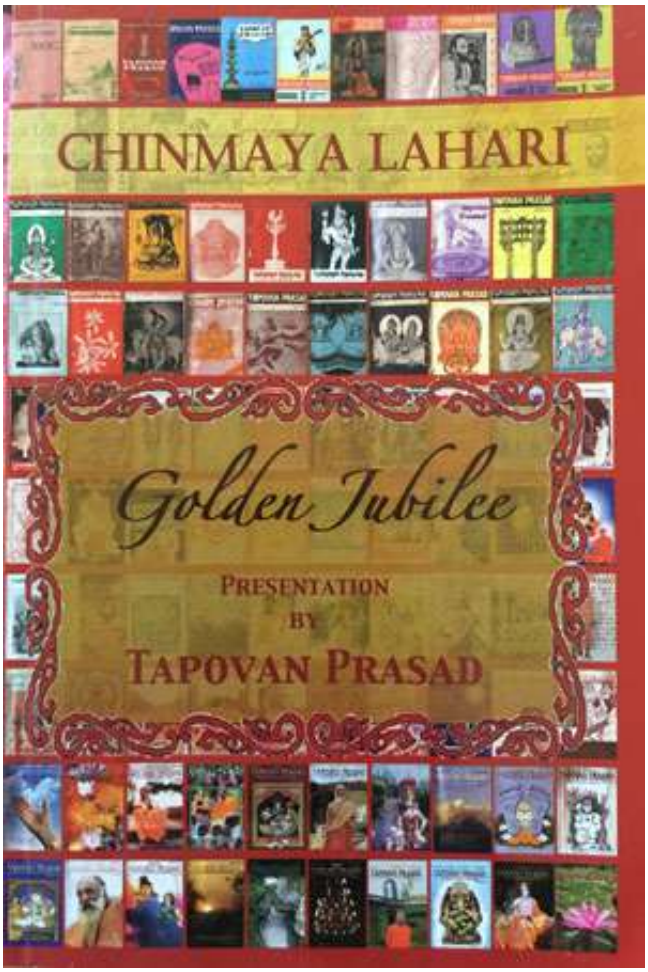
Here is the punch sentence on this topic before we see their details.
'What' one meets in life is destiny and 'how 'one meets it is self - effort.

*Kindle life article 11 Law of Karma.
“Man is what he is because of his past actions. If his experiences from the time of his birth to the present moment are pure and noble, he is today a man of chastity and dignity, if on the contrary they are vicious and immoral, he takes to those qualities. In fact, he is a product or an effect of his own past actions or karma. This is the principle of destiny. It may be concluded from this that man is a mere victim of his past actions over which he has no control. It then becomes an inert philosophy concerning the dead past which is incompatible with the modern scientific and progressive mind.



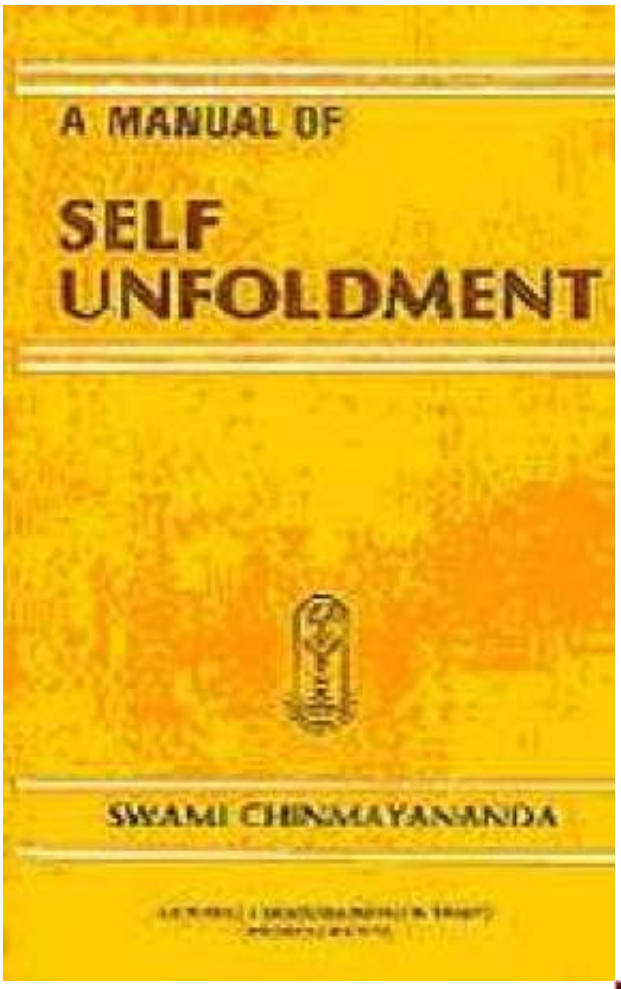
On the other hand, the law of karma is a vital force in Vedanta philosophy, which enables man to be spirited and dynamic and to reach the goal of human existence. Destiny or prarabdha is the product of the effect of the past and it forms one aspect of law of karma. Man is indeed,influenced by his destiny since his present status is caused by his past. However, at the same time, he is gifted with the capacity to choose his present action, which is called self-effort or purushartha. All along his life, he has been exercising this power gifted to him and an aggregate of all these past self- efforts has determined his present destiny. In other words, the sum total of all past purushartha will be equal to his present prarabdha. 'What' one meets in life is his destiny and ' how' one meets it, is self- effort.

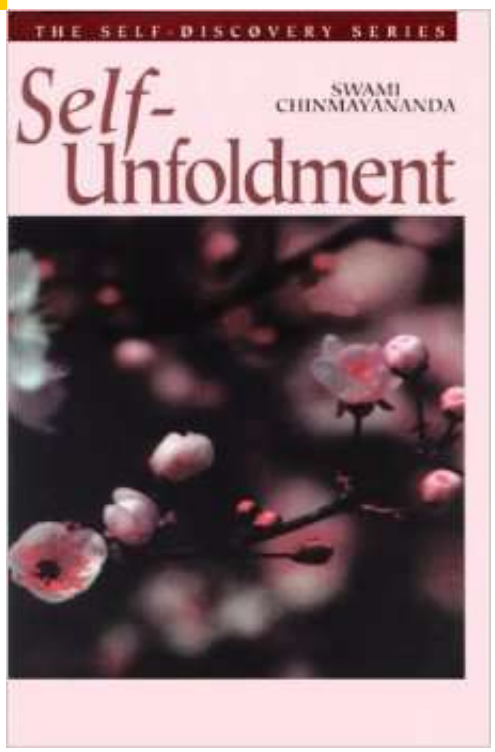
Here is another interesting presentation on destiny and self-effort by Sri Gurudev appearing in a book Chinmaya Lahari– Golden Jubilee Presentation by Tapovan Prasad -- pg 5:



“Life has two movements--forward and lateral like a car on the road. The petrol will push the car merely forward. The lateral movements are controlled by the driver. The forward dash is called destiny. The lateral is called self- effort.”

And one more, in Self Unfoldment, Page 207:

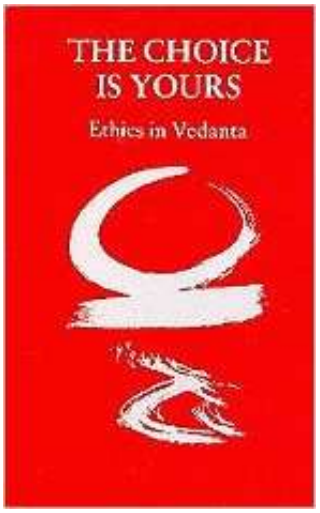

A MANUAL OF
SELF
UNFOLDMENT
SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA


THE SELF-DISCOVERY SERIES
Self-
Unfoldment
SWAMI
CHINMAYANANDA

“The law of Karma goes one step further than the law of destiny. The future lies in the hands of man himself since he has the capacity to change it by his own self-effort or action. Thus, man can make his future better than what it is at present by his self-efforts. In other words, through his self-efforts today. Though he has to suffer consequences of the past in the present, he can make his future better. The future is therefore a continuity of the past, modified in the present. The freedom to modify the past and to create a future […] is self effort.”

And once again from The Choice is Yours, pg 32:

“Yet another way of looking at the question of free will versus fate, is by reviewing life in the light of time-flow wherein the future, through the present, is ever becoming the past. Anything that is now in the future must in time arrive, to become the present – and before long pass on into the past. […] The past causes the present; the present will,therefore cause the future!.



Pg 34: To consider therefore, that the present is but a product of the past actions (prarabdha) is undignified; to recognize that the future is only a product of the present actions (purusartha) is equally unintelligent. There is no slavery, nor is there complete freedom. […] Thus, the law of karma when understood correctly […] makes us the architects of our own future.

216. SIN, IN VEDANTA

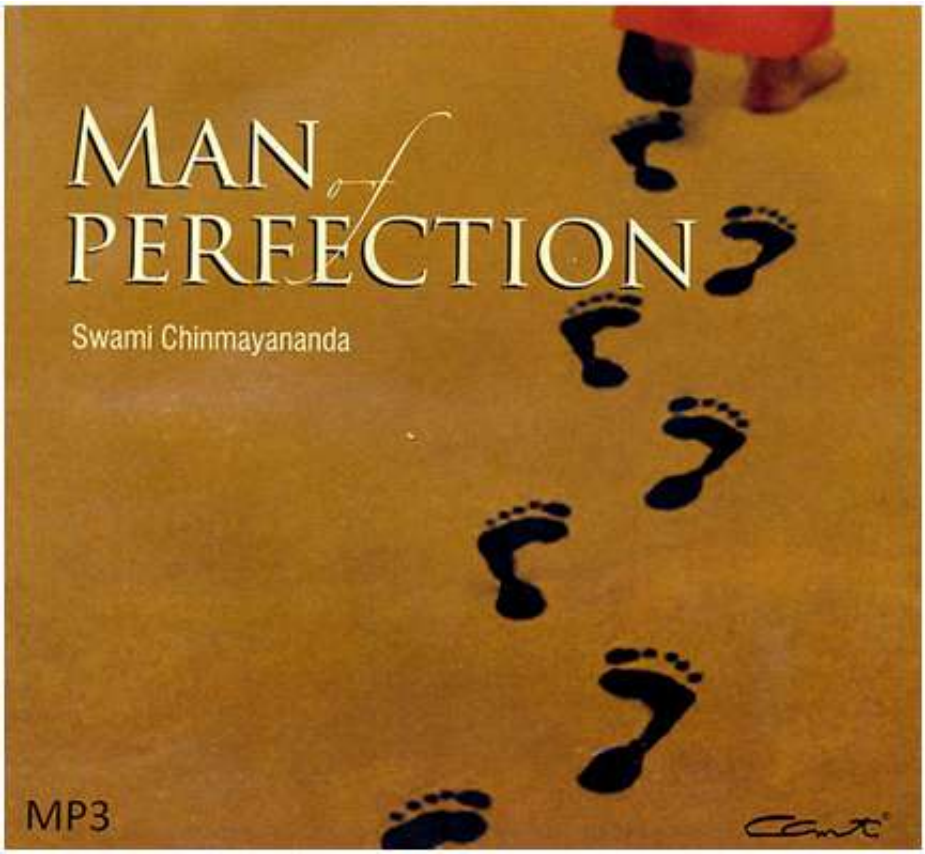
09-12-2015

By Shri L. Hemachandrudu

Vedanta does not use the word ‘Sin’ directly, in the way it is normally understood. Vedanta in fact considers man’s essential nature to be pure, and bliss-filled. But as an embodied soul, he comes with vasanas that impel behaviours and desires contrary to his essential nature. Vedanta considers these behaviours and tendencies as dulling the brilliance of the Self within.

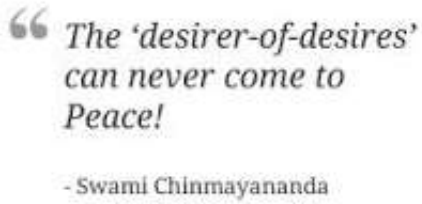
Therefore, any acts that do not attempt to restore the original or real brilliance of the Self, by a jiva, are sinful, because they keep him distanced from his original identity. We may say, Sin is a wrong choice that becomes a bad habit, a tendency.

But here are Gurudev’s most precise references from his own books:



Bhagvad gita 9:32

Sin, according to Vedanta is a wrong tendency in the mind created out of the past unhealthy thought and negative living. These wrong channels of thought (vasanas) irresistibly drive man to live false values and bring about confusion and chaos in his life as well as lives of others.

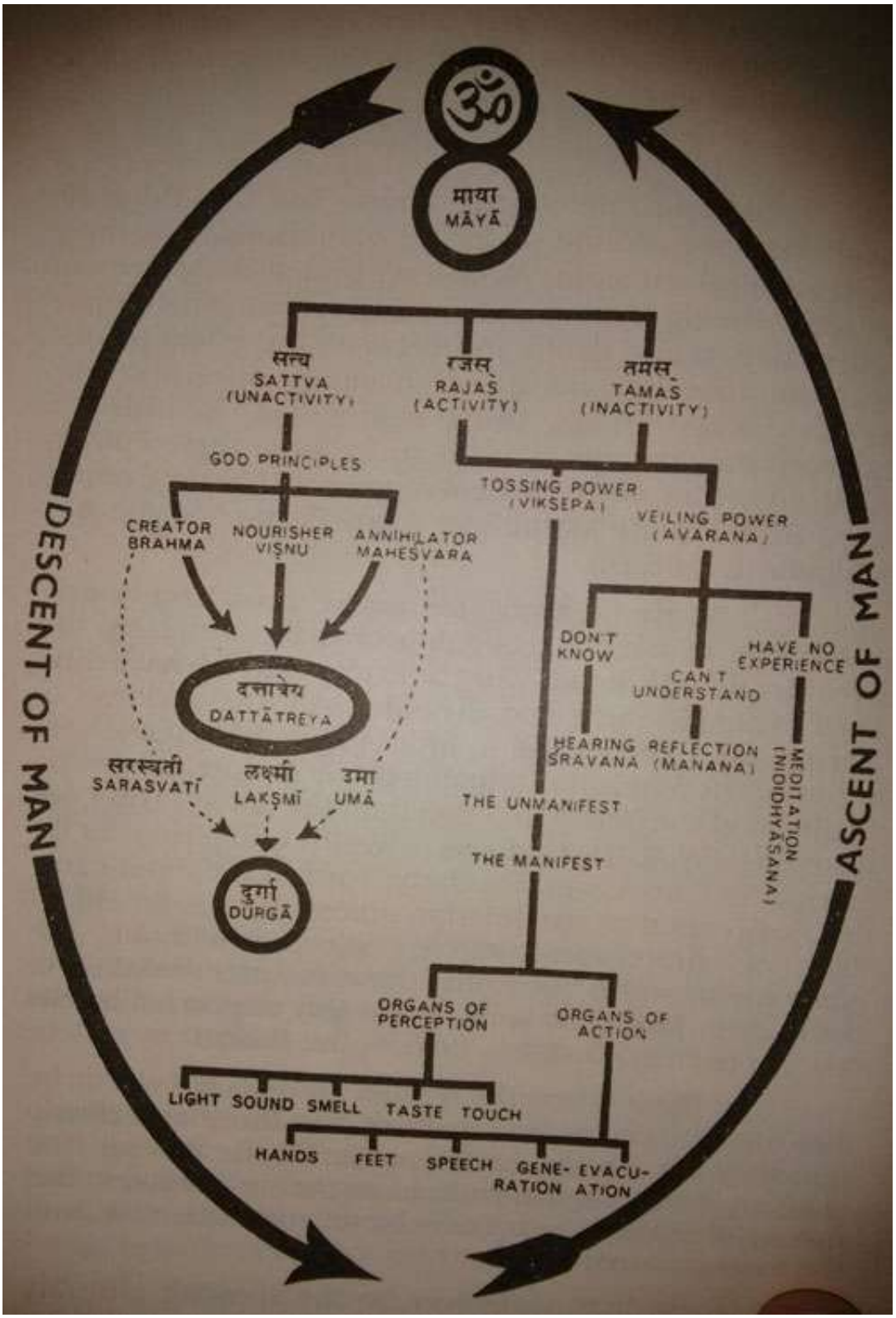


1:34

Sin in Hinduism is a "mistake of the mind in which it acts contrary to its essential nature as the Self". Any act of sensuousness which the mind pants for the world of objects, hoping to get thereby a joy and satisfaction creates necessarily within itself increasing agitations and this type of a mistake of the mind is called sin.

1:36

Sin is only a mistake by a misunderstood individual ego against its Divine Nature as the Eternal Soul. To act as the body, the mind or the intellect is not to act up to the responsibilities of a man but it becomes an attempt to behave under the impulses of an animal. All those acts performed and motives entertained which create grosser mental impressions and thereby build stronger walls between us and our cognition of the Real Divine Spark in ourselves are called sins.



This classic flowchart that Gurudev developed, shows us the rise of Man out of Sin and the Fall of Man into sin, as defined in Vedanta

BG 2:13

Sins of the past are the causes for the present pains and the present sins would be the cause for future sorrows. Thus all causes for the sorrows in social life would no doubt be removed, if the good and socially conscious members of a community were to feel satisfied in enjoying the moments of their cooperative work performed in the true yagna spirit.

2:39
Sin-impressions in the mind can be wiped away only with the waters of tears, acting upon the mind, in an atmosphere of sobs and sighs. Thus, everyone gets his quota of chances to weep, which, in many cases, comes to be discovered, later on, as not so sorrowful, after all.

Kathopanishad 1-2-1

Sin is an act which makes us miss our aim in life.

***

Hari Om

217. A Translator Par Excellence

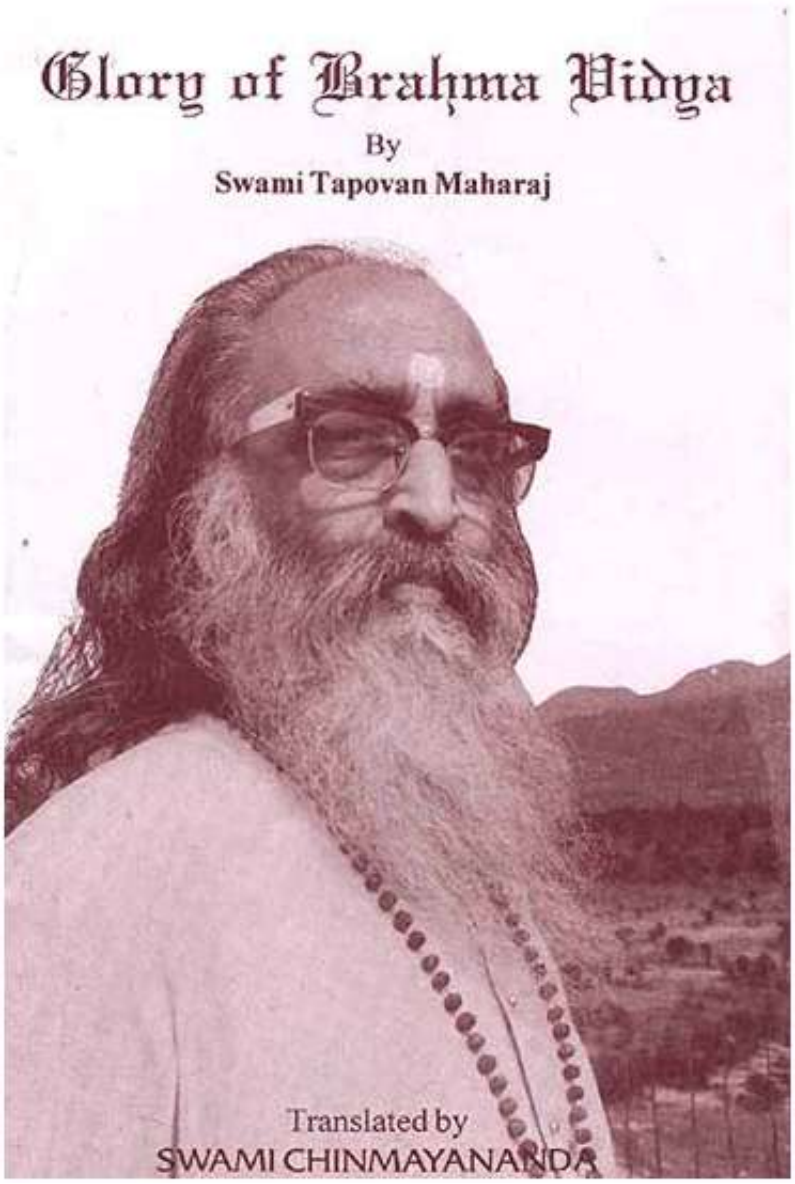
10-12-2015

"Glory of Brahma Vidya"

By Swami TapovanMaharaj, in Sanskrit. English Translation by Swami Chinmayananda

To know English is one thing. To know Sanskrit is another thing. But to have that power on both languages so that you can use a limited English language to yield to a powerful, unbending, precise, sharp Sanskrit language, is staggering.

Gurudev spent 12 years with Swami Tapovanam. During that time he has mastered Sanskrit and Vedanta. But what he has also done in that period, it appears, he has brought the English language under his control so that it is now able to provide words for the utterly stern, acute, non-negotiable subject of Vedanta. To be able to do this is an art, without any doubt. For, the English language depends on adjectives for expression when it cannot be precise. Whereas Sanskrit brooks no nonsense.



But lest we miss the point. Gurudev was the first to take Vedanta and the Upanishads in English across the world. To do that means, he also took it precisely, correctly and in its original form and essence without any compromise. This was why he gained a following so huge. For, what he spoke resonated with the hunger that the millions felt. But even more important here is the fact that he had initiated hundreds of thousands of people around the world into scriptural thought and contemplation, let alone study.

This would not have been possible if Gurudev had not the power on the English language the way he had. Therefore, innumerable texts were written, many even in the long hand and then page set. What makes us deeply blessed and grateful is the fact that he also translated texts for us from the original Sanskrit, thereby giving us access in English to some spectacular originals written by Sri AdiSankara and Swami

Tapovanam and which coming from Gurudev made them both understandable for us (being in English) and also in our 'mother tongue', ie, Gurudev's direct words. Hence we are doubly blessed.

One such text is the Glory of the Brahma Vidya written by Swami Tapovanam in Sanskrit. Already a very heavy and tedious subject, it is amazing to read the easy flow of the English language as it translates and expresses otherwise inexplicable terms. But more noteworthy is the precision of the prepositions and verbs as they can be so complex in Sanskrit (how can we forget Chapter One of the Gita where Gurudev draws our attention to the play of Sanskrit in verse 10:

अपर्याप्तंतदस्माकंबलंभीष्माभिरिक्षितम्

पर्याप्तंत्वदिमेतेषांबलंभीमाभिरिक्षितम् ||1.10||

Aparyaptamtadasmaakambalambhimaabhirakshitam

ParyaaptamtvidameteshaambalamBhimaabhirakshitam || 1.10||

10. This army of ours defended by Bhishma is insufficient, whereas that army of theirs defended by Bhima is sufficient. Or, This army of ours protected by Bhishma is unlimited, whereas that army of theirs protected by Bhima is limited.

How deftly Gurudev translated the conundrum with 'insufficient' and 'limited' and juxtaposed the dual use of the negative words with charming agility in his commentary. That is the agility we see in the Glory of Brahma Vidya. Nouns like Titeeksha and Uparathi can be translated into English with a little effort, but the real test is when they have to be explained in the context of a seeker's seeking without compromising the precision of Sanskrit.

Here is a sample extract:

Komohakasokaekatwam-anupasyantah(Isa)

Ki michankasyakamayasareera-manusam-jwareth(Brihadaranyaka)

Taratisokamtaratipaapmaanam(Mundakam)

Taratisokamaatmavit(Chaandogyam)

"(He who has realized his Onenesswith the entire panoramic world of plurality and sees his own Self as the Self in all, will no more be affected by sorrows and desires. For he has nothing to gain or aspire for from the world-of-objects. It is due to our ego centric desires that we suffer this Samsar. Once this ego is annihilated then where is the scope for sorrow and unhappiness? He overcomes Soka and Moha).

Similar declaration in the Upanishads openly declare that One, who has come to awake to this experience of the Self within, can no more have sorrow (Soka), nor

any clinging attachments in life. To him is no more the pain-ridden experiences of change and finitude, the Samsar. No more can such a Perfect Man of Realisation be tempted to embrace the charms of this world, or of any other plane of subtler experiences of sense-joys.

Knowledge of this Self, through the study of Vedanta, takes us away from not only the worldly sorrows and anxieities, but it also holds before us a hopeful picture of Perfect Bliss even in the hereafter.”

218. Some Brilliant Insights into the Geeta

11-12-2015

The BhagwadGeeta (A Bird's Eye View)

By Swami Chinmayananda

A CCMT Publication

Celebrating Gita Jayanti

We have approached the Geeta as a dialogue that took place between a depressed, hopeless Arjuna, prince made pauper by a set of devious cousins who unscrupulously took away the portion of the kingdom that rightfully belonged to him and his brothers. In short, many simply jumped into the BhishmaParva, took the Gita and left. But Gurudev takes us a little beyond, a little around, a little within, a little without.... And talks to us about some more things which we did not think about. As when he says that Vyaasa, the visionary, needed to tackle the decadence of his time, to do which he needed to reinterpret the ancient philosophy in the context of the new times. But had he declared the old ideals as his original ideas, he would have faced difficulty. So using the divine incarnation of Krishna, he made Krishna declare the new message of the Geeta which is nothing but a reinterpretation of the Upanishads (sarvopanishadogaavo, dogdaGopalanandana...).

Now when we read about these, a certain churning takes place and we begin to see how societies dealt with nearly the same things even then. This book must be read aloud in one go between 6 friends .... The joy is unimaginable.The messages,breathtaking.

Salutations to Gita Jayanti and Pujya Gurudev.

THE BHAGAWAD GEETA

(A Bird's Eye View)



SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST
Bombay-400 072

An extract:

Ved Vyasa, the author of Mahabharata, was the most daring religious revolutionary that ever appeared on the horizon of the Hindu cultural history. By his time, the glorious Vedic Law had fallen into much disuse, and perhaps into a lot of misuse. The orthodox divided each Veda into three sections: the Karma Kanda (the ritualistic section), the Upasana Kanda (the section dealing with methods of worship and concentration) and the Gnana Kanda (the section dealing with pure philosophy). These had come to be mere stony formal names carrying with them only the charm and novelty of museum exhibits rather than the joy and utility of any practical lessons to live life better.

Perhaps, in the early days of Vedic culture the population being thin, the necessity for a strict social scheme of living was not felt, and therefore, a mere call for personal development was more than sufficient to inspire a cultural living. But as time passed on, the population increased and in the crowded social living a thousand ethical and moral lapses had become manifest. In the bitter political tensions, men had come to live a new pattern of existence in which the good old tame philosophy could find no ready echo. The necessity for the restatement of the same Vedic Principles was urgently felt if the Hindu generations were to face their new progress in terms of their scriptural value.

Philosophy is action is Religion. From time to time an ancient philosophy needs an intelligent re-interpretation in the context of the new times, and the men of wisdom, prophets and seers must guide the common man as to how he can apply effectively his ancient laws to his present life. Whenever a great Master comes to re-establish the old truths and teach his generation to face efficiently their present with the values of the old ideals, that person is considered by the generation as a God-man or an Avatar.

Vyasa was one of those sages who had the vast vision of the past and the great imagination to see the future which he brought in tackling the problems of misise and decadence in his immediate present. It was the character of the Hindus that they would not readily accept a new idea or ideal unless it had the sanction of the antiquity and the authority of a rishi- declaration.

Almost for the first time, therefore, Vyasa depicted the story of the divine incarnation, Krishna, who is called as Vasudeva, the Paramatman. And Lord Krishna was made to declare the new message of the Geeta which is, we shall find, nothing but a re-interpretation of the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads with proper emphasis upon certain vital factors which seem to have been by then distorted and dried out of recognition in the parched mouth of the repeating Pundit



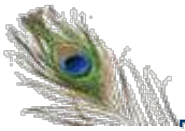
Great research scholars have now brought to light that long before the Mahabharata was written, there was in existence a triple deity worshipped by the Vrishni clan called Va(a)sudeva. This identification of Krishna as Va(a)sudeva meant more than that he was the son of Vasudev, inasmuch as it is a direct attempt at deification of Krishna into the status and dignity of an incarnation.

[…] Hasty students in their half digested understanding of the Geeta repeat this slogan [Message of Action] and when they try to translate it into their own actions, they come to feel themselves unable to live the Geeta in life. Thus we have today more people who talk on the Geeta than those who learn the Geeta; more who read the Geeta than those who understand the Divine Song; and indeed very few are trying to live the Geeta.....”

Extracted From Chapter IV: Meet The Geeta

219. The Great Commentary

12-12-2015



The Holy Geeta



On the occasion of Gita Jayanti, celebrated by Shri L. Hemachandrudu

We are a combination of matter and spirit. Spirit is the essence of matter, the origin, the material cause -the supporter -indestructible. Matter is expression of spirit out of its creative urge for its play -- transactional world necessarily changing.

Both are different in their nature. The study of the material world physical sciences is Bhautika Vidya, the science of the "becoming". The view of the world from the outside. The study of the Spirit in its essence Immortal, is the biggest of sciences. Ultimate Bliss being the aim of all other scientific pursuits, this study of the Spirit is the most glorious of sciences which translated into Sanskrit is called Brahma Vidya. The view of the world from within, is explained by the non-physical sciences. Brahmavidyā is Sarvavidyāpratishthā, as the Mundaka Upanishad puts it.

Thestudy of both, spirit and matter, bhautika vidya and Brahma Vidya have different source books. Our interest being Brahma Vidya, the source books are Upanishads. These are revelations received by the spiritual masters in their meditative heights-who were earlier guided by their gurus. They are terse, pithy statements, not easily comprehended by the average man involved in the transactional world, to which the majority belong. The compassionate intellect of Sri Veda Vyasa conceived and brought out in the form of the Bhagavad Geeta, the song of the Spirit, to the man involved in the transactional world -- Sri Arjuna, by the epitome of detachment, Sri Krishna Paramatma.



(from the collection of Jayashreeben, Kannur)

It is then no coincidence that, our compassionate master Sri Gurudev,who

*studied under the Giant Tapasvi, The Glory of the Himalayas, Swami Tapovan Maharaj,

*inspired by mother Ganga cascading from the icy heights to the plains below,

* though established in His own Self,

*brought down to help the average suffering man, crushed by the ever- changing mortal world of sorrows and sobs,

*the very essence that He had been blessed to experience at the feet of His master on the heights of the Himalayas.

Similarities not to miss:

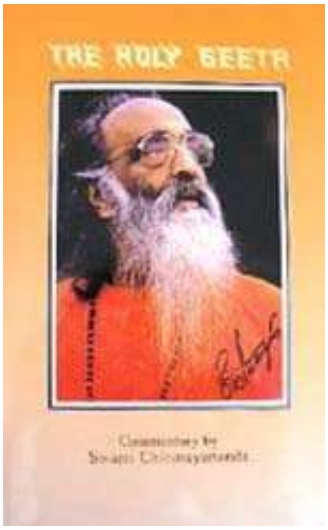
Sri Krishna --Arjuna-- war front

Gurudev --we --mundane world – our Kurukshetra.

The great monumental work manifesting to bless the average man needed the skill and intelligence of the Champion of Advaita, Bhagavatpada Sri Adi Sankara. But then this being in Sanskrit and in traditional style with purva paksha etc, which needs

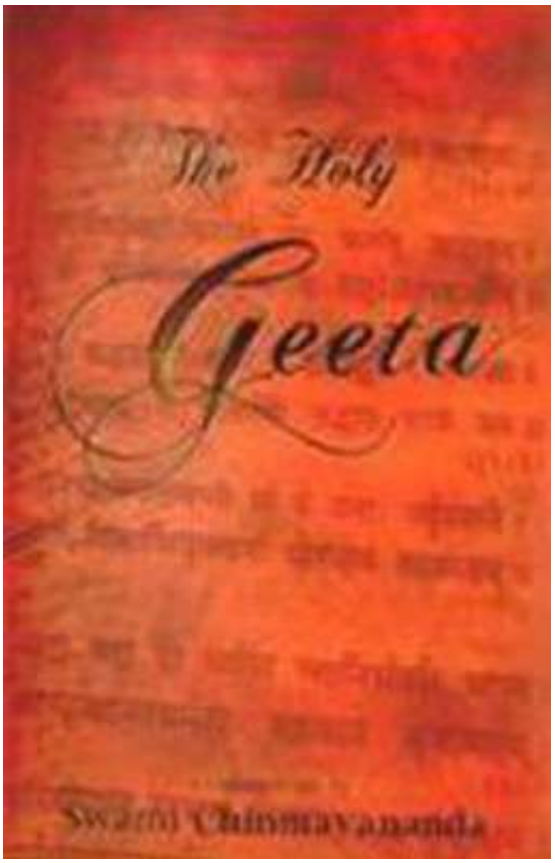
knowledge of other philosophical schools, it is difficult for the common man to comprehend. There are several masters who have written highly inspiring commentaries. Like in all inspired works methodology is not strictly followed. There are others who wrote in a simpler way, but that simplicity lost the detail.

It is our Gurudev who built for us a bridge of simplicity, clarity and precision; a bridge that led from the pithy logic of Sri Sankara to our modern context, in a language we all understood, and using the paradigms of our times.



Sri Gurudev's work confines itself to the logic and the order of Sri Sankara’s Bhashyahas, the inspirational touch and a style the average man can understand according to his need, and calibrate. A renowned novelist in Tamil Nadu, 50 years ago, says in his novel through the mouth of his hero that whenever he is disturbed or had a problem he would open any page of Swamiji's Geeta and he will find the answer.

Sri G.D.Birla has written in his autobiography that there was not a single day when he went to bed without reading Gurudev’s commentary on the Holy Geeta.



It not only gives the spiritual vision, but it makes one efficient in one's chosen vocation, brings to one a rare commitment to humanity, duty bound to his family and nation. All in One. The vision and experience of Vasudeva kutumbakam. Before Gurudev came on the scene, people were inhibited to say they are attending classes on spiritual/scriptural study. Now people say this with pride and satisfaction. In fact, earlier, to many people, the Geeta and Upanishads were merely "glory of the past", something far away and past; a matter of history, an event that once took place and is talked about as an anecdote. No books were available. Or books they could relate to. Today every house has them. We should also acknowledge the work of great masters like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ramathirtha, Swami Sivananda and lots of others who paved the way. With Gurudev's attention to the Geeta, be it gnyana yagnas or his commentary called the Holy Gita, the Geeta became a consistent message of His times that brought the Book home, and gave it a place on the shelves and soon in the hearts of people. For Gurudev made the Geeta about people like us, for people like us.

We shall now see some inspiring sentences and passages from Pujya Sri Gurudev's commentary:

Arjuna's disease 2-1To get ourselves over-ridden by life's circumstances is to ensure disastrous failures on all occasions. Only a weakling, who allows himself to be overpowered by circumstances, can be victimised by the outer happenings. Arjuna, in

his present neurotic condition, has become a slave to the outer challenges.



Credits: ISKCON

2:4- Without taking this total view-point of the situation, Arjuna made the mistake of arrogating to himself an individual ego and observed the problems through the glasses of his ego.

Solution

2:4The more we identify ourselves with the little 'I' in us, the more will be our problems and confusions in life. When we expand ourselves through our larger identifications --- with an army, a cause or a principle, or a nation or an age --- we shall find our moral confusions dwindling into almost nothingness. Perfect morality can be declared and lived only by him who has sought to live and discover his real identity with the Self which is ONE WITHOUT A SECOND, EVERYWHERE, IN ALL BEINGS AND FORMS. Later on, we shall find Krishna advising this TRUTH as a philosophical treatment for Arjuna's mental rehabilitation.



Source: ISKCON

Certain terms demystified or decodedas the case be, by Gurudev:

3:12The "productive potential" (Deva), when cherished through "self-dedicated work performed in a spirit of sacrifice" (Yajna), will provide the worker with the desired objects. This is the law-of-life.

3:15 "Self-dedicated activities" (Yajna), when performed in any given field of endeavour, will be creating therein "conditions necessary for the field to smile forth" (rain) in a luxurious "crop of profit" (Annam), enjoyable by the society.

5:14If the Reality, the Self, has nothing to do with the above-mentioned agency or their fruits, our life which is nothing without them, must have no relationship at all with the Self. And yet, where the Self is not there, existence and activities are not possible. Therefore, there must be some relationship between the Self and the non-Self and here this strange "CONTACTLESS-CONTACT" is being explained.

8:13The term 'heart' in Vedanta is not the pumping organ that maintains the circulatory system in a physical structure. In the field of literature and philosophy, heart is a conceptual centre In the mind from where all positive and noble thoughts of love, tenderness,kindness and charity,devotion and surrender, constantly spring up.

10:6THE SEVEN RISHIS --- The personified representation of the Seven Seers, as found in the Puranas, when understood "subjectively," are nothing but one's intellect, ego and the five sense stimuli, which, together, constitute the world experienced by each one of us (X-2).



THE FOUR ANCIENTS AND THE MANUS--Sri Sankara,in his commentary,reads the stanza as the ancients and the four manus, in the context of a subjective analysis,which is recommended and ably supported by the next line,wherein the Lord says that all of them are children of My mind. It is described in the Puranas, the Brahmaji,the Creator at the very beginning of creation produced out of his own mind four eternal boys(Kumaras) Sanatkumara,Sanaka,Sanatana,andSanandana.The creator in us is the life of in us functioning through the 'urge to create ' in any field. [...] The seven seers and the four ancients together indicate thus both the efficient and the material causes of the macro cosmic and microcosmic worlds created.



Source: ISKCON

10:7- "When I play through the Seven Seers I PAINT the universe, and when I play through the Four Ancients I LIVE the tearful life of an individual"

I would request the readers to read Gurudev's commentary to 9:28 and His introduction to Chapter 11, where how the vishwaroopa was possible through blotting time and space has been beautifully explained by Gurudev. Similarly His introduction to Chapter 18 , wherein Gurudev tries to explain the parodoxes of science and philosophy.

The foot note of Rasa leela in 18-16 is a beautiful summary of meditation. Serious students will never be tired of reading Gurudev's Commentary on Geeta.



Source: ISKCON

220. The Guru's Words Are Forever!

13-12-2015

A Letter and an experience shared by Ms. Hemantini Bhatia

Hemantini Bhatia had suffered a slipped disk in Uganda in the 60s which got progressively worse with time. Sometime in 1968 she moved back to India with her husband Narottam. The transfer and relocation had made her slipped disk worse. It was during and after this that she joined the Mission (See Story # 14 of 21st May 2015).

In 1991 Gurudev had announced a yagna at Sidhabari but Hemantini ji dreaded the travel and what that could mean for her spine. Thankfully for her she had a trait that she is always embarrassed by – she used to write to Gurudev about everything that bothered her. Everything. "We planned to go to Sidhbari, but I was so naïve that I wrote to Gurudev as if he was my father who could fix every problem. I wrote to him that my slipped disk was hurting, that I felt unsure about travel, what should I do, I am frightened, I don't want it to get worse, and Narottam had high BP condition, I want to attend the yagna...everything! And Gurudev always, always replied to every little thing I wrote. Then too he replied."

The slipped disk was taken in His charge as one sees in this most encouraging letter Gurudev wrote her:

'If you have a slip disk problem and your husband has high BP, you must be extremely careful during travel. "

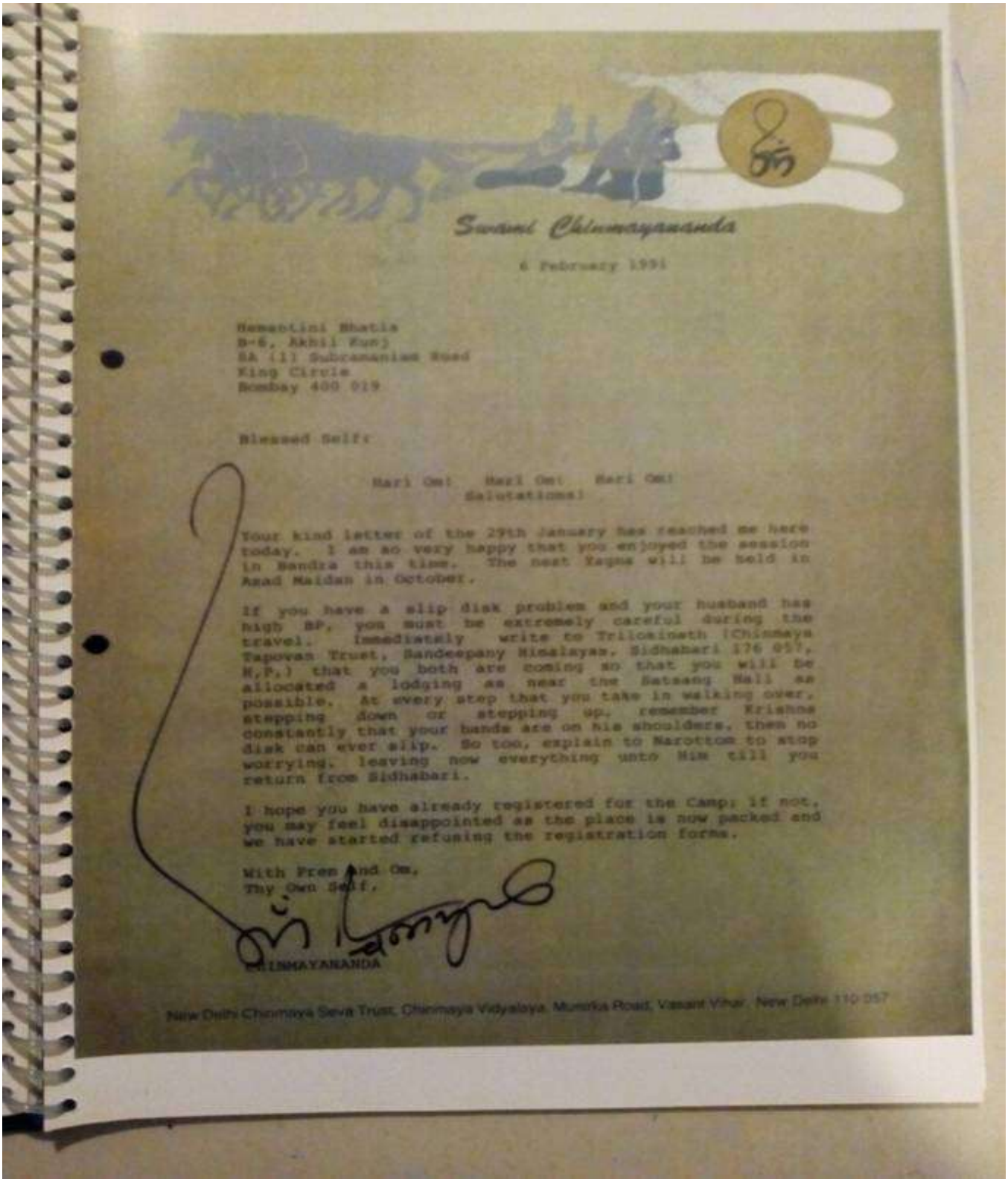
Then comes the first thing to be done, according to Gurudev: "Immediately write to Trilokinath (in Sidhbari) that you both are coming, so that you will be allocated a lodging as near the Satsang Hall as possible. "

And the blessing: "At every step that you take in walking over, stepping down or stepping up, remember Krishna constantly that your hands are on his shoulders, then no disk can ever slip. So too, explain to Narrotam to stop worrying, leaving now everything unto Him till you return from Sidhabari."

For Hemantini ji, who now lives alone, this was an advice for life. Very recently she took seriously ill and had to be hospitalised for over a month. After her discharge from the hospital, she found the courage and confidence to climb her 2 flights of stairs against the advice of being carried on a stretcher. "That was because of HIM!" she says. " I suddenly recalled Gurudev's letter and then I put my hand on Krishna's shoulder and climbed with Him to my apartment. I was able to do that by the power of His advice. It was like climbing Mount Everest as far as time went, but I did it without any effort or struggle or getting breathless, as Gurudev had shown me," she says.

The words of the Guru format the mind and remain available every time their need is experienced.

Hemantini ji is as fit as a fiddle now, back home, and just a few days ago, even offered bhiksha to Pujya Guruji!



Swami Chinmayananda

6 February 1991

Hemantini Bhatia
B-6, Akhil Kunj
8A (1) Subramaniam Road
King Circle
Bombay 400 019

Blessed Self:

Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!
Salutations!

Your kind letter of the 29th January has reached me here today. I am so very happy that you enjoyed the session in Bandra this time. The next Yagna will be held in Azad Maidan in October.

If you have a slip disk problem and your husband has high BP, you must be extremely careful during the travel. Immediately write to Trilokinath (Chinmaya Tapovan Trust, Sandeepany Himalayas, Sidhabari 176 057, H.P.) that you both are coming so that you will be allocated a lodging as near the Satsang Hall as possible. At every step that you take in walking over, stepping down or stepping up, remember Krishna constantly that your hands are on his shoulders, then no disk can ever slip. So too, explain to Narottom to stop worrying, leaving now everything unto Him till you return from Sidhabari.

I hope you have already registered for the Camp; if not, you may feel disappointed as the place is now packed and we have started refusing the registration forms.

With Pren and Om,
Thy Own Self,

CHINMAYANANDA

New Delhi Chinmaya Seva Trust, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Mumirka Road, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110 057

221. Your Wish, My Command

14-12-2015

Sent by Shri Govind Raj ji from Tiruvannamalai

Shri Govindraj personally met Gurudev in 1967, prior to which he had been attending His yagnas. This meeting led to the commencement of Chinmaya Vidyalayas. Deeply deeply devoted to Gurudev, Govindraj ji and his whole family see Gurudev as their family deity. (Govindraj ji was known as Gurudev's spoilt child and he himself called himself Gurudev's faithful dog!) Today he lives as a vanaprasthi at Tiruvannamalai (the abode of BhagavanRamanaMaharshi), tuned in to Gurudev.

The compassion and magnanimity of the Guru can never be adequately expressed. Usually, the devotee is so overcome with joy and shock or joyous shock at being chosen by the Guru to serve Him, that he remains in that beautiful zone of gratitude, unable to feel or think anything else. Govindraj ji finds himself in a similar spot. Without a warning he heard the Guru ask him to accompany Him to one place and then the next and then for the whole trip. Govindraj ji who had gone to the airport to get that 'one more' view of Gurudev, simply joined Him from the airport itself.... Read on please.

Gurudev then wrote this letter to Shri Govindraj ji:

Swami Chinmayananda

Sri Govind Raj,
Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Vaizag.
Chinmaya Marg,
Chinmaya Nagar,
Mirzalaguda, Secunderabad.

Camp: 14 March 1987

Hareom! Hareom! Hareom!

Salutations!

Now when I look back I wonder what would have been my helpless condition if you had not been with me and Dayananda ji. You helped me fully, especially in the department of accounts.

I am sure your family is not angry with me. Suddenly I decided that your Camp in Vaizag — then decided to go to Vaizag via Dayananda ji for a day or two which became in the entire session. I hope this has not upset your School work.

With love, Swamy ji.

on 18th I'll fly to Hyderabad - & immediately catch flight to Delhi. There is 6 Hrs. We all may meet. Sri

Govindraj ji explains:

“Poojya Gurudev was on his way to Vizag (Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh) via Hyderabad (by flight), and had to wait in the airport at Hyderabad for an hour. Hearing of this, some of the devotees went to the airport to have His Darshan. I was one among them.

Seeing me, Sri Gurudev asked if I will be able to accompany Him to Vizag and return the next day. Without second thought, taking it as a great blessing, I readily agreed. To my surprise, one seat was available in that flight and I accompanied Him.

Next day at 5 AM, Sri Gurudev was to leave to Damanjodi (Odisha) by car. Gurudev asked me to accompany Him and I could return by the same car to Vizag and then proceed to Hyderabad. However, in Damanjodi, Sri Gurudev’s stay was arranged at a guest house and He had to stay alone, because Br. Viviktaji (now Swami Viviktanandaji) who was in Damanjodi, and in charge of our Chinmaya Vidyalaya, had been occupied with arranging the yagnas for Gurudev. I therefore volunteered to stay with Sri Gurudev to attend to his day to day work as even His steno could not reach the place on time.

While in Damanjodi, we had to visit few remote areas. It was a great blessing for me to stay with Him for a week. I had the experience of “Vaikuntam” at that time.

Really speaking, Sri Gurudev was not depending on anyone and as a matter of fact, was not helpless any time. Just to encourage me, out of pure compassion He wrote that letter.”

Well said!

222. Surrender

15-12-2015

Sent by L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Every religion emphasises surrender. Hence we have to understand what is surrender, why surrender, how to surrender and the benefit of surrender.

To withdraw our identification from our equipments – the body, mind and intellect, which are continuously changing, subject to "becoming", hence insecure, is to be able to live the dignity of our " being" which is Eternal, Blissful, awareness. This is surrendering our individuality – the ego, inorder to experience the non- dual being. The president of a nation surrenders his personal choices in preference to the responsibility and status of the totality.
Without surrendering one state of awareness we cannot enter into the other. The waker has to surrender to sleep. The sleeper has to surrender to dream. The dreamer has to surrender to become the waker. All these (states) have to be surrendered to enter into the state of Divine Being, the Eternal Blissful Awareness which is our essential being.

Sri Gurudev has said, a teacher’s job is only to teach how to surrender.



Let us now see Gurudev's words on this topic.

BG XI 34The concept of self-surrender and the theory of serving the world in constant awareness of the Lord are not dreams prescribed for escaping the gross realities of the world. It is essential for man to raise his caliber and temper so as to work efficiently and achieve success in the world. It is the technique of keeping oneself constantly in a mood of tireless enthusiasm and joyous inspiration.
The world is too much for the ego. To the extent ego surrenders in the awareness of the greater and nobler, to that extent the entire world and achievements therein become a game of simple and sure success everywhere.

BG XI 44
Surrendering ourselves, so that we may rise above ourselves into spiritual fields, is true prostration. The ego and egocentric vagaries arising out of our false identification with the matter vestures have robbed us of our experiences of the Divinity which is already in us. To the extent misconceptions are annihilated, we, without these over-growths, are sure to realise the serener beauty of the Divine, which in reality, we are. In surrendering the ego unto the Lord, in fact, we have to bring to His feet nothing but a dirty bundle of vasanas, putrified in our own stupidity and lust. Naturally, a devotee, reaching the feet of the Lord in a spirit of surrender and love, has to apologise for the filth that has been offered, as the only tribute of his love at His Divine feet.

Surrender in effect is to surrender my will to His will. This is to accept His will. In effect surrender is acceptance. Good, bad, pleasant, unpleasant, birth, death, honour,dishonour all are necessary experiences for us to shed the dirty thick coating in us to reveal the beauty which is our real being. These are given to us by the all-loving, all- knowing Lord. Gurudev says can the painting question the Painter?

So then, here we have more beauties from Gurudev's plethora of commentaries:

BG 18:66

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्यमामेकंशरणंव्रज
अहंत्वासर्वपापेभ्योमोक्षयिष्यामिमाशुचः ||18.66||

66. Abandoning all DHARMAS, (of the body, mind, and intellect) , take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.

Gurudev says: "The perceiver-feeler-thinker personality in us is the "individuality" which expresses itself as the "ego." These are not our 'essential' Dharmas. And since these are the 'non-essentials,' "RENOUNCING ALL DHARMAS" means "ENDING THE EGO."

[Therefore,] "not to allow ourselves to fall again and again into this state of identification with the outer envelopments of matter around us." Extrovert tendencies of the mind are to be renounced. "Develop introspection diligently" ..... [AND]

COME TO ME ALONE FOR SHELTER (Mam-ekamSharanamVraja) --- Self-withdrawal from our extrovert nature will be impossible unless the mind is given a positive method of developing its introvert attention. By single-pointed, steady contemplation upon Me, the Self, which is the One-without-a-second, we can successfully accomplish our total withdrawal from the misinterpreting equipments of the body, mind and intellect."

VALMIKI RAMAYANA: charama shloka 6-18-33

To link back to BG 18:66 (above) –Gurudev has said in most encouraging manner, " ..... [the Lord] has promised that if we obey His instructions, He will directly take the responsibility of guiding us towards HIS OWN BEING. But nowhere has the Lord so directly and openly expressed His divine willingness to undertake the service of His devotee as in this stanza. [....] And as a reward LordKrishna promises: "I SHALL RELEASE YOU FROM ALL SINS." This is a promise given to all mankind."

This is the same surrender and promise we encounter in the Ramayana, where Sri Rama's abhaya hasta assure exactly this promise in return for our surrender and Gurudev's commentary expresses that same promise.

"Sakrit Eva prapannAyatavAsmiiti cha yAchatE

abhayamsarvabhootEbhyOdadamiEtatvratammama"|| 6-18-33 VR

"He who seeks refuge in me just once, telling me that 'I am yours', I shall give him assurance of safety against all types of beings. This is my solemn pledge"

VIVEKACHUDAMANI 35 & 36

35. O Master, O friend of those who reverentially surrender to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I salute thee; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of change , with a direct glance from thy eyes straightforward glance of thine eye, which rain nectarine Grace supreme.

36. I am being roasted in the blazng infernal fire of change; I am being tossed by the cruel storms of misfortune. I am terrified without and within . O Lord, save me from death, I seek refuge in thee, for I do not know of any other harbor wherein to seek shelter.



Both stanzas glorify and suggest Surrender. In 35, Gurudev says, “A true devotee is advised to surrender himself at the feet of the Lord through prayer, love and devotion in order that during the surrender, the nobler and the diviner in him, now lying dormant may come to manifest itself.” Then a few paras later Gurudev writes, “ AVedantic student is asked to surrender himself to the Guru and to praise him in kirtan and serve him with meek surrender.”

And in 36, the student prays thus to the Guru. Gurudev’s words are very impactful, “ This verse is again a prayer addressed to the Guru, coming from the bottom of the student’s heart, thereby making his attunement with the Guru perfect and complete.

Closing with spectacular stanzas from two other texts that celebrate Surrender:

Kunti’s prayer in surrender:

वपिदःसन्तुनःशश्वत्तत्रतत्र जगद्गुरो।

भवतोदर्शनंयत्स्यादपुनर्भवदर्शनम्॥

Vipadahsantu nah shashwattatratatrajagatguro

Bhavatodarshanamyatsyaadapunarbhavadarshanam [1.8.25]

Kunti Devi to Krishna:

O Teacher of the World! Let us face trials and tribulations once in a while so that we can see you in our midst and such seeing will surely ensure that we never again take birth to face the sufferings of this samsaara

And finally Draupadi's prayer:



govindadvārakāvāsinkṛṣṇagopī-jana-priya
kauravaiḥparibhūtāṁmāṁkiṁnajānāsikeśava
he nātha he ramānāthavrajanāthārti-nāśana
kairavārṇava-bhagnāṁmāmuddharasvajanārdana
kṛṣṇakṛṣṇamahāyoginviśvātmanviśva-bhāvana
prapannāṁpāhigovinda kuru-madhye'vasīdatīm
(Mahābhārata: Sabhā-parva, 67.82–3)

"O Govinda! O resident of Dvārakā! O Kṛṣṇa! O friend of the gopīs! Do You not know I am being humiliated by the Kauravas. O Lord! O Lord of Lakṣmī! O Lord of Vraja! O destroyer of affliction! Save me! I am drowning in the ocean of the

Kauravas! O Janārdan! O Kṛṣṇa! O Kṛṣṇa! O best of yogīs! O soul of the world! O origin of the world! Please protect this surrendered soul, O Govinda! I am sinking in the midst of the Kurus!”

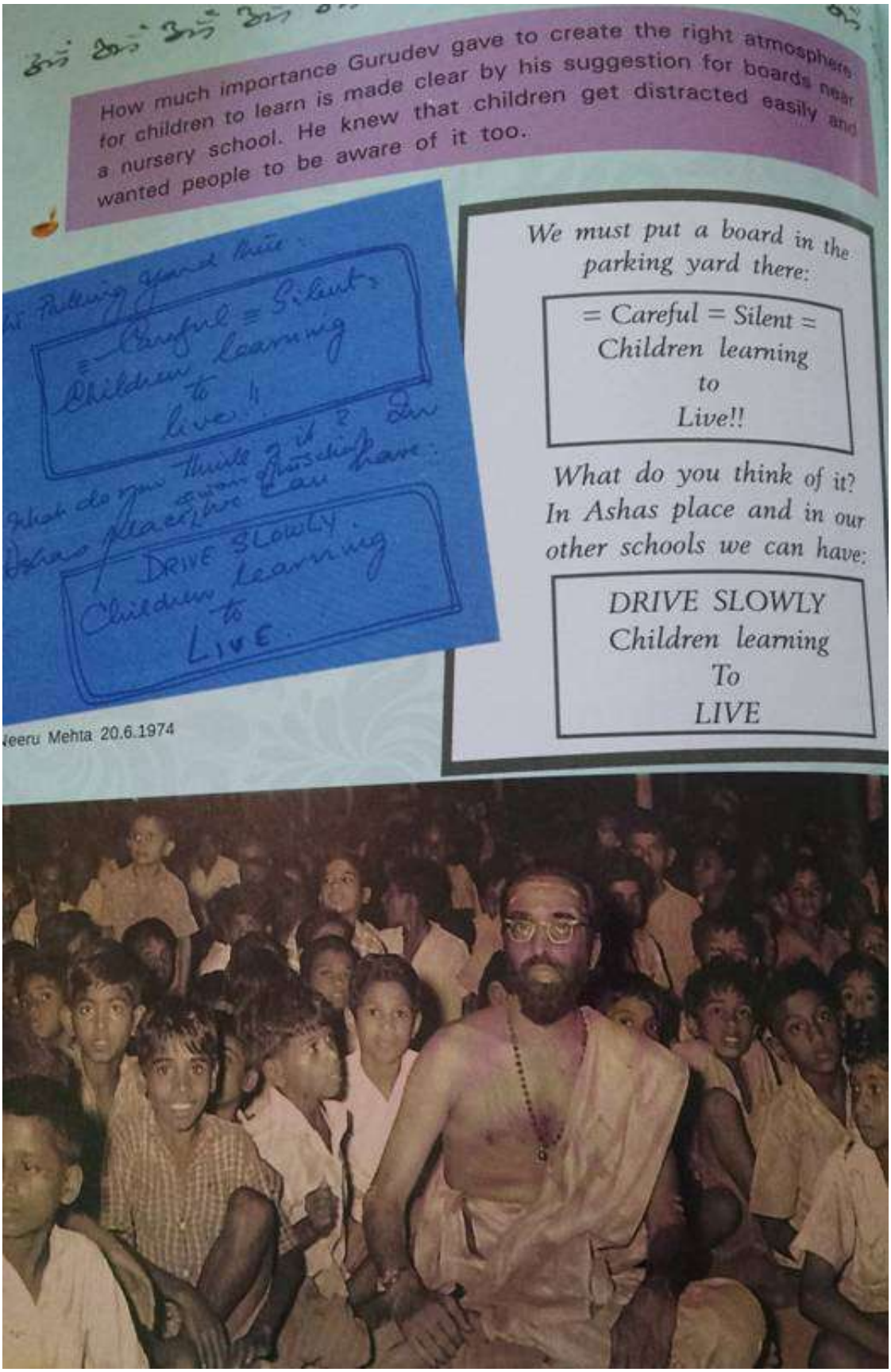
223. Silence Please: Children Learning to Live

16-12-2015

Respecting Children

While we learn Vedanta to cleanse ourselves and prepare for liberation, we have a greater duty towards the children we bring into this world. Gurudev has left such precious gems of instructions for us to guide these beautiful babies. Suddenly we spot them in introductions to books, in little post-it like messages he leaves for sevaks (see below) or marginal thinking on project reports where Gurudev leaves a deep poignant thought. All these messages -- even if not addressed to us –the fact that we find them per chance, means that they are intended for us.

Gurudev has laboured over driving home the point that children must be respected. This is most beautifully brought out in these signs he planned to put in the school parking places. Silence around the garden because little flowers are growing…. Only He could think like that. There is a beauty that children garnish life with. Their innocence, their curiosity, their tinkling laughter that at times seems to not end, their mimicking adults, their wonder about nature, their intensity as they sit on haunches and peer at a slug racing against time…. The way they spend copious time skewering a fork with peas on every prong….it is the beautiful use of time in their world. Hence He said, “Careful …. Children Learning to Live.”


How much importance Gurudev gave to create the right atmosphere for children to learn is made clear by his suggestion for boards near a nursery school. He knew that children get distracted easily and wanted people to be aware of it too.
We must put a board in the parking yard there:
= Careful = Silent = Children learning to Live!!
What do you think of it? In Ashas place and in our other schools we can have:
DRIVE SLOWLY Children learning To LIVE
= Careful = Silent = Children learning to Live !!
DRIVE SLOWLY Children Learning to LIVE
Veeru Mehta 20.6.1974

Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015

For only Gurudev watched children with a different vision. Whole books have been devoted to His interaction with babies and little children. The attention Gurudev gave to upbringing, to teaching, to diet, sleep is stupendous. In Advice to Householders CCMT 2010, Gurudev says in a section marked Your children – Your future: "Start teaching them about spirituality and noble values before the age of three. Do not understand that children of that age are merely passive observers.... How then are they able to learn a language? In fact child psychologists have concluded that children in that [before the age of three] age group need more rest as well as more frequent feeding because during those few years of early childhood they have to be alert and learn more than in their later life. The rate of absorption of knowledge and experiences in those years is stupendous. Therefore, an atmosphere of religion and spiritual values around them is very important in moulding and enhancing their mental life."

And now Gurudev actually spells out what we need to do. For those with such young children at home, this can be an immense guiding principle:

"Between the ages of three and five, your children can be introduced to stories of Christ and Krishna, of Rama and Buddha, of Mohammed and Moses. These stories of the spiritual giants of the world, recounting their experiences, their trials abd inner strength in overcoming temptations, as well as the positive experiences of joy that they gained, may all be passed on to your children with appropriate expressiveness. Let these stories be told now and then by the father also. Make it a point for the children to pray before their meals, not too elaborately, but for a short yet serious moment.

Whenever they ask questions about flowers, clouds, butterflies, or frogs, be alert to flavour your honest explanations with a hint about the play of God around us. Leave them with these small hints; do not go into details.

Let there be a corner in your home for prayer – a quiet chapel or simple altar. Let children watch both of you praying to the Lord regularly. When children have grown to be between the ages of eight and ten, at a fixed time for one half hour everyday, sit down with them and read for them – The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. I suggest this book because in it much is expressed in the innocent language of children. The endless stories and analogies can lead their minds in an independent journey to see for themselves a greater message for life and a larger value in life."

Here are a few more letters that reveal His care, His concern, His approach; importantly, His hope that we imbibe His lessons.

Gurudev guides a parent in teaching a child to write a story, explaining the fine difference between telling a story and writing a story. And he encourages the child, appreciating her stories and giving further tips to improve them:



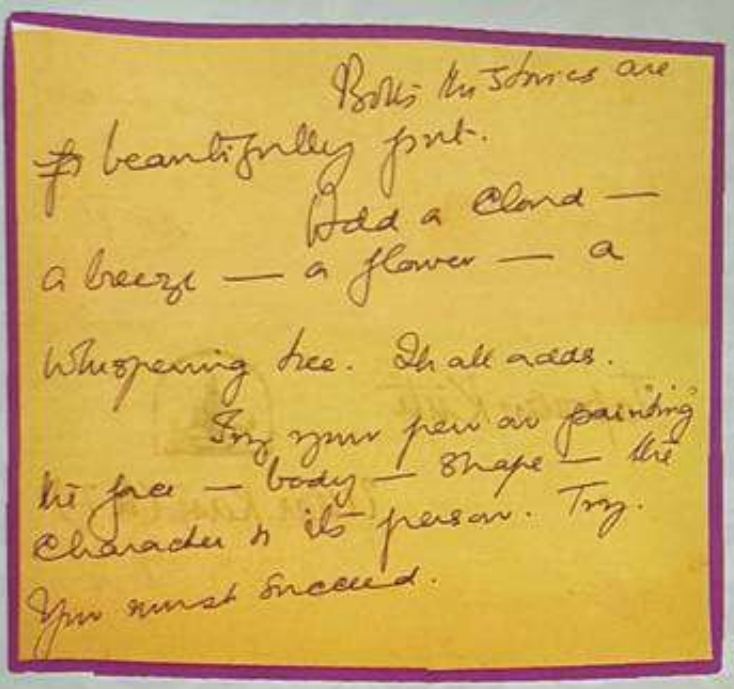
Yes. All the five stories and more. Gowri has a pen: but she must learn how to marshal her thoughts into a story - form. She must learn to build the story up. Telling a story is different from reading a story. When it is written for reading we must put into it a climax, work up a twist, an unexpected turn, a breath-taking escape etc. to hold the readers attention!!

Gowri has a pen but she must learn how to marshal her thoughts into a story form. She must learn to think the story out. Telling a story is different from reading a story. When it is written for reading we must put into it a climax, work up a twist, an unexpected turn, a breath-taking escape etc. to hold the readers' attention!!

I am sending her the thing returned. She can add the dream and send it back to me along with her other stories. MUST. SHOULD. WILL.

I am sending her the thing returned. She can add the dream and send it back to me along with her other stories. MUST. SHOULD. WILL.

Hamsa Salvi 6.8.1969



Both the stories are beautifully put.

Add a cloud – a breeze – a flower – a whispering tree. It all adds.

Try your pen on painting the face – body – shape – the character and its person. Try. You must succeed.

Gowri 17.9.1969

Preeti Shah was a teenager, when she gave all her pocket money to Gurudev, whom she admired and adored. Her entire family was devoted to Gurudev. While acknowledging her "sacrifice", he also makes sure she doesn't develop an ego by saying that perhaps she didn't have the opportunity to spend it! Gently, unobtrusively, Gurudev instilled in children healthy values and right attitudes to life.

... I had announced to your mother that I have received your pocket money, collected and saved by you. That was a great sacrifice. Probably the school is too strict to allow you to go and see all the pictures, and Koonoor is a place where you cannot go shopping!

Preeti Shah 22.9.1983

The world-renowned teacher of the *Bhagavad Gita* was also an admirable teacher of children of all ages. Teachers as well as parents can learn a lot from these letters.

224. Vishnusahasranamam

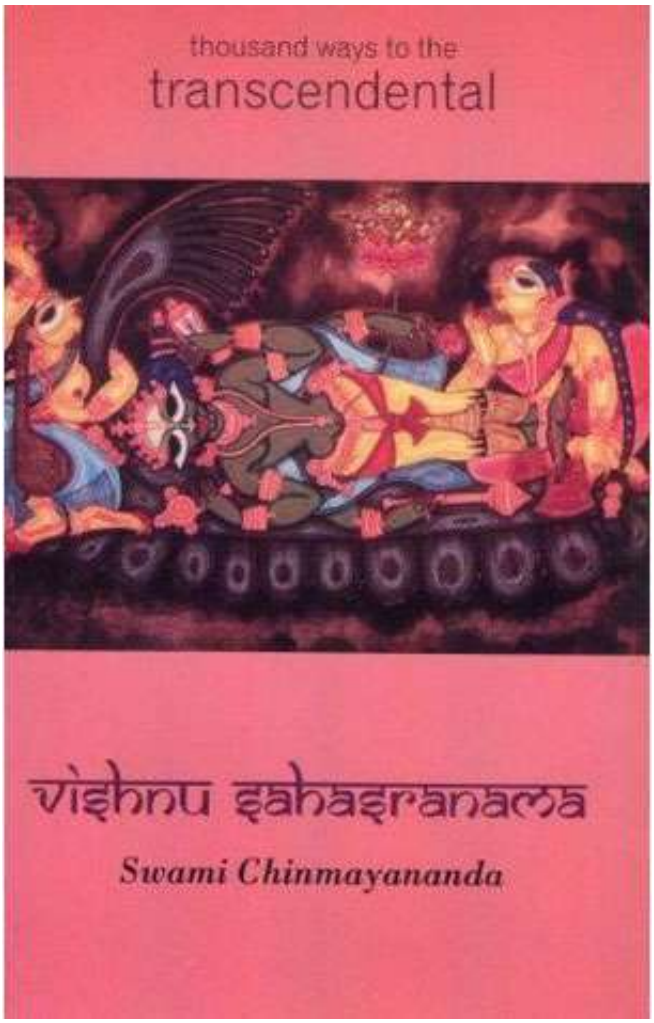
17-12-2015

Almost everyone must have chanted the Vishnusahasranamam, the 1000 names that seek to glorify the Lord, at least once in their life.

But Gurudev makes it a deep and intense lesson in Vedanta with his extremely precise and beautiful explanations. In his commentary on the Vishnusahasranamam, Gurudev draws on the commentary of Sri AdiSankara and wraps together Advaita, the Puranas, the Gita and the Upanishads as He does great justice to the dialogue between Yudhishthir and the 'mighty grandsire of the Kuru family'.

But to get to the individual names needs drive, and that comes from Gurudev's introduction. In most grand opening, Gurudev says, "The Infinite is one. It can only be one. Its manifestation is the world of plurality …. In fact the effects have no existence apart from the cause."

Only the finite, says Gurudev, can be comprehended by man's limited BMI and sense organs, in his present state of Consciousness. "But the attempt of the spiritual student is to transcend his present instruments of perception and awake to the Higher … from where he can experience the one 'objectless-Awareness.'"



Gurudev says that while the rishis had experienced that great Reality behind the Universe, when it came to explaining It or demonstrating It to their students, “they were helpless.”

And in these two sentences what Gurudev says pinpoints the Vishnusahasranamam: “All such indications, pointing out the Infinite, through the world of …. Finite objects are His Glory only. Each one of them is a ‘Glory’ of the Lord which is considered in religion as a ‘sacred name’ of the Lord.”

“In short these ‘Thousand Names of Vishnu’ provide us with thousand clear arrow marks rising from the known, indicating the unknown. Contemplation upon these can deepen our faith in, broaden our devotion to and steel our understanding of the All-Pervading Reality (Vishnu).

“The Infinite is approached by the devotees through love (bhakti) and by philosophers (aachaaryas) through contemplation (vichaara). The differences in their techniques of approach, are the essential differences ordered by the types of vehicles

employed by them. The devotees approach the Temple of their love through the heart, while the philosophers storm the citadel of Truth with reason and logic; they explore the Reality with the head. [….] till they reach the last lap of their pilgrimage, all seekers need, in one form or the other, props (aasraya) to maintain a continuous and efficient play of their instruments of sadhana. The Sahasranaama gives them both: a thousand props – each phrase here has an appeal to the devotee; and each … has also a suggestion to rocket the contemplative intellect to sublime heights of understanding."

And then Gurudev tells us how Sri AdiSankara earned his teacher Guru Govindapaadacharya's blessings at the end of his study. "GovindapaadaAcharya testedSankara by ordering him to write an exhaustive commentary upon the Vishnusahasranaama. He accomplished this great task and the very first work of the Upanishadic commentator, Sri Sankara …… thus came to see the light of the day."

And that explains why Gurudev leaned on Sri Sankara'sbhaashya when he wrote his own explanation of the Thousand Names of Vishnu. And Sri Sankara has also recommended the chanting of the sahasranaamam in his BhajaGovindam – 'geyamgita, naamasahasram …'

And as Bhishmapitamah lay on his bed of arrows, awaiting his hour of departure, Yudhisthir is urged by Sage Vyaasa and Lord Krishna to ask the departing Bhaishma, any questions he may have. And Gurudev says, "Yudhishthir […] asks quite an interesting set of questions which are typical queries which the heart of the seeker will always ask:

Kimekamdaivatamloke? Who is the greatest Lord in the world?

Kim vyaapekamparaayanam? Who is the one refuge for all?

Stuvantamkampraapnuyuhmaanavahshubham? By glorifying whom can man reach the Auspciousness (peace and prosperity)?

What in thy opinion, is the Greatest Dharma?

By doing the japa of what can 'creatures' go beyond the bonds of samsara?"

And explaining the word 'jantu' Gurudev says, " 'Jantu' means, that which is born. So all living creatures are fit for this easy path. Creatures could even include the animal kingdom […]. In the Trikuaachala lake the elephant that was caught by the crocodile, is described as having been saved by the Lord (Gajendra Moksha)."

Prior to this Gurudev narrates how Narada approached Lord Brahma to enquire what is the way out for man to evolve in these hard days of extrovertedness, unavoidable in the kaliyuga. "Repetition of the names of Naarayana is sufficient enough," was the reply given," writes Gurudev.

Read along with His explanation of jantu, we see how Gajendra the devout elephant attained liberation.

One para that is worthy of quoting here: “This Archana is generally performed by devotees daily; if this is not convenient they perform this worship at least on their own birthdays, on eclipse days and on the day on which the Sun moves from one zodiac to another (Samkraanti). This performance has been prescribed by the shaastras for warding off troubles arising from the position of planets, anger of the rulers, incurable diseases and ruthless enemies. The highest effect is for purifying the mind and thus gaining more and more poise for the Sadhaka in meditation.”

Coming as it does in Gurudev’s own words, this is a blessing.

Hari Om

225. Mind No Mind

18-12-2015

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Sri Gurudev says “God+mind=man
Man-mind =God”

The Bhagavad Geeta begins with Arjuna's grief born out of delusion (dharma-sammudha-cetah) and ends by Arjuna saying (nastomohahsmrtirlabdha) my delusion has ended. Delusion belongs to the mind. Hence Bhagavad Geeta can be said to be the treatise on the original structure and transcendence of mind.

This is also substantiated by Bhagavan starting with aśocyān and ending with mā śucaḥ.

Aśocyān = not to be grieved; māśucaḥ = do not grieve.

Again, Sri Gurudev says “grief” is the language of delusion, “nature of mind” is the theme of Bhagavad Geeta, and both these can also be seen from the upakrama and upasamhara Nyaya. When Truth is seen through the prism of mind, it becomes the pluralistic world of names and forms, and the cause of insecurity and grief.

Transcending the mind is to see the One behind the many, the non-dual Eternal Blissful Consciousness. Therefore, understanding the mind, managing the mind, and transcending the mind is Spirituality,

Now let us enjoy the divine sprinklings of Gurudev’s nectarine words on this topic.

Vivekachudamani 171
During deep sleep when the mind is completely dissolved the experience of the individual is that there is nothing. Thus when the mind is not there, there is no world perceived.

VC 170
During dream when there is, in fact, no connection with the waking world, the mind, out of itself, creates the dreamer the dream world and the dream experience. The mind is the dream subject, the mind is the dream object and the mind again is the dream experience of joy and sorrow.
Similarly in the waking-state also there is no reality at all. [...] All that we see around is a projection of our mind. Stop the mind and the world ends. { ...] The other man [others who we see] is also the perceiver’s own creation only.

So the mind in all of us is the cause which gives rise to the feelings and experiences

of the pluralistic world.

VC 171
So then, this world of variable experiences (samsara) of man, this woeful life of plurality and its sorrows, is projected by man’s mind alone. […] Rise above the mind and look "over" it : world of perception then is not possible, as in the deep sleep state of Consciousness.

VC 173

The same mind is useful to liberate the jiva from [this] bondage.

VC 173

Nobody in the world has attachment to poison. No body longs to take a pinch of potassium cynics. When one finds no taste (Rasa) in an object no more is there an attraction Raga towards it.
Wherever there is in the mind a preponderance of Rajas and Tamas, it is agitated and therefore is in bondage.When it becomes predominantly Satwic one has the experience that one is free and so totally liberated.

VC 174

When the mind is turned towards OM, it is a mind full of Satwa and when it is turned towards OET it is mind impure, being mixed with Rajas and Tamas. Both these are traits of mind.
Gurudev says in video talk 10 Chapter 30: Light of Consciousness in mind is Ego.

In a lighter vein, I remember Gurudev saying What is mind -- does not matter. What is matter -- never mind!

VC 170

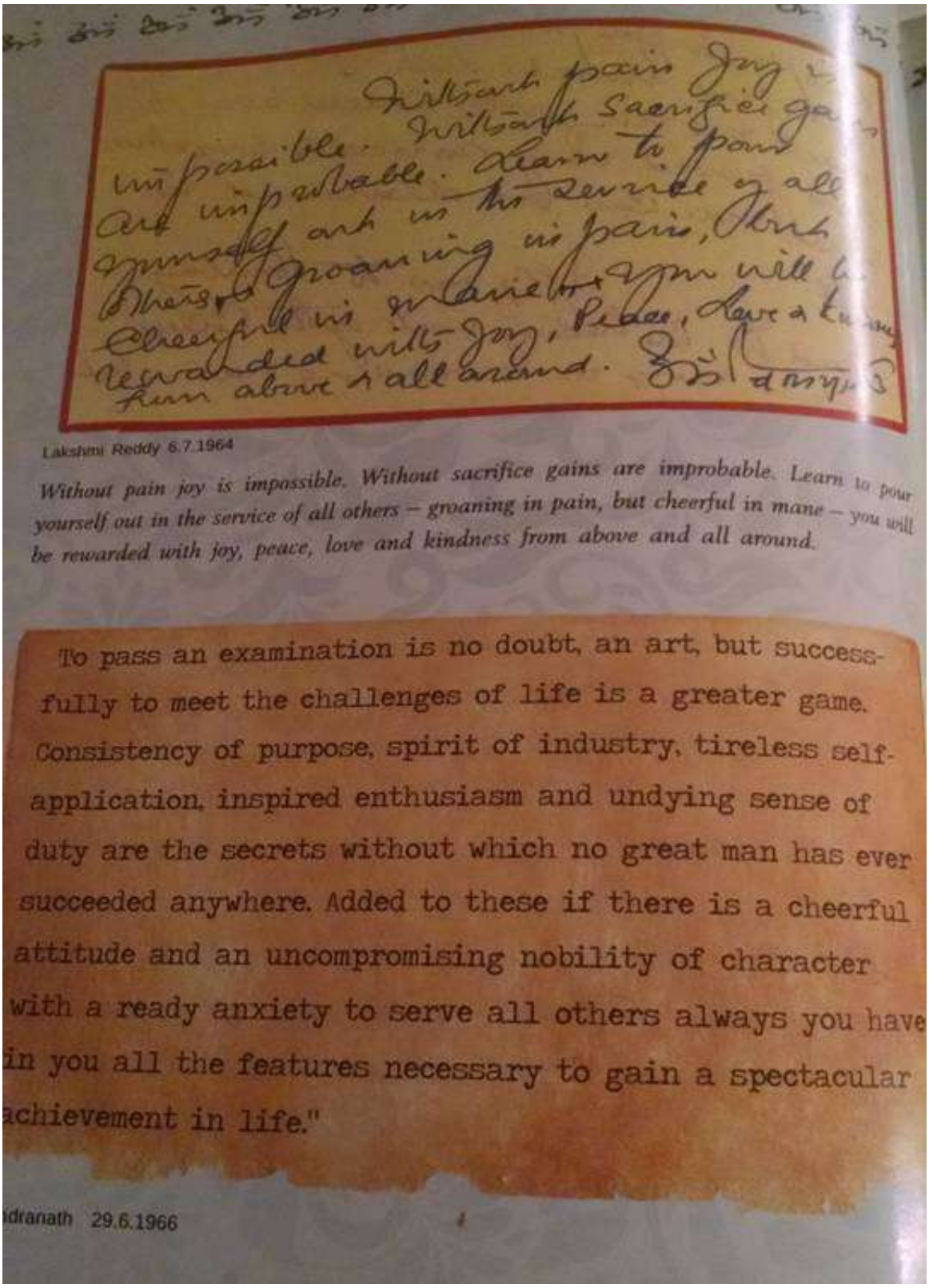
THEREFORE GET OUT, GET OUT -- ROLL UP THE UNIVERSE,CARRY IT AS A SEAT UNDER YOUR ARM.TURN AROUND,FROM INSIDE OUT,STEP INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION.STOP THE MIND.

226. Gardening …

19-12-2015

Gurudev's love for children grew as they grew. He loved them … Like a keen gardener, Gurudev spotted them and gave of his love, guidance, counsel, encouragement, energy, in abundance. Many are the stories in these pages of Celebrating Gurudev where we have heard young ones like Savi, Indu, Somesh, Keshav, describe their lives with him; but it was verily his role in their lives.

As the little toddler began to enter middle school, Gurudev's words and encouragement are remarkable. He says to Lakshmi Reddy a very young student, "Without pain joy is impossible…" How impactful that can be for a young teenager on the threshold of the world of accomplishment! How spectacular that he adds, "Learn to pour yourself out in the service of all others, …" An advice like that at 14 or 15 stays for life and nothing can overwrite that.



Lakshmi Reddy 6.7.1964

Without pain joy is impossible. Without sacrifice gains are improbable. Learn to pour yourself out in the service of all others – groaning in pain, but cheerful in mane – you will be rewarded with joy, peace, love and kindness from above and all around.

To pass an examination is no doubt, an art, but successfully to meet the challenges of life is a greater game. Consistency of purpose, spirit of industry, tireless self-application, inspired enthusiasm and undying sense of duty are the secrets without which no great man has ever succeeded anywhere. Added to these if there is a cheerful attitude and an uncompromising nobility of character with a ready anxiety to serve all others always you have in you all the features necessary to gain a spectacular achievement in life."

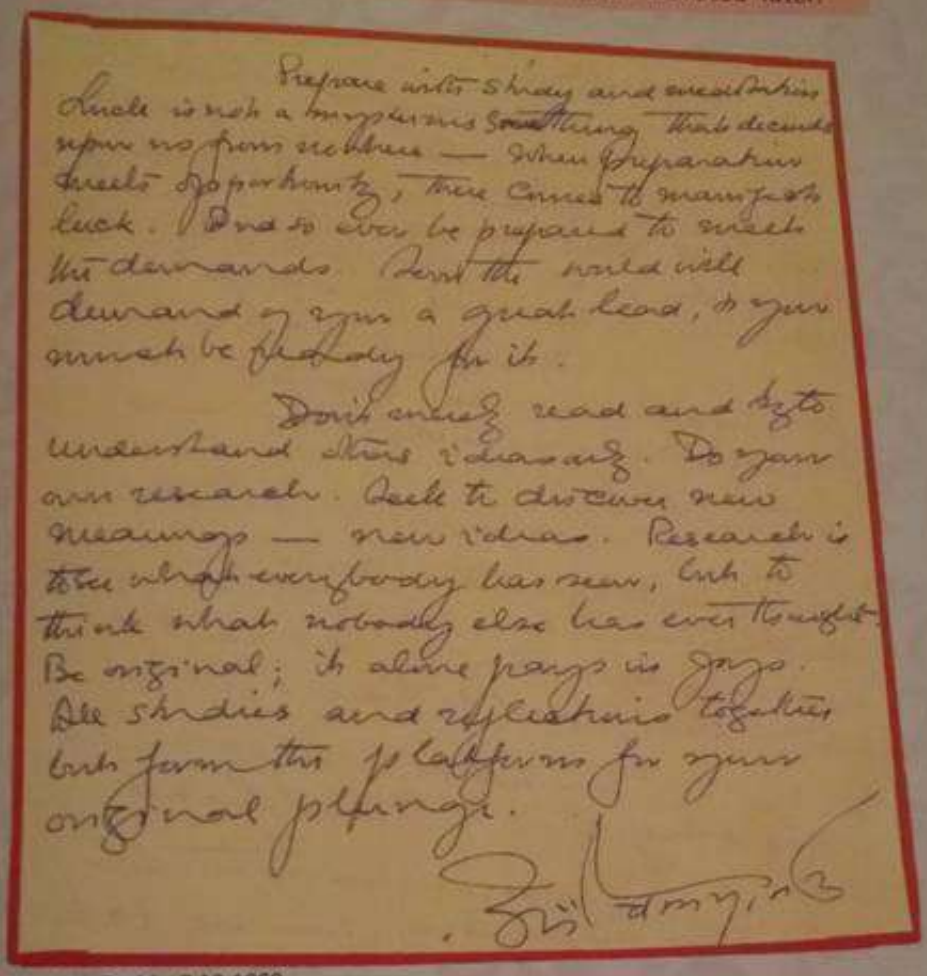
idranath 29.6.1966

Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015

But Lakshmi Reddy seems to be older – likely at the door of competition. Gurudev writes to her, “Luck is not a mysterious something that descends upon us from nowhere – when preparation meets opportunity there comes to manifest luck. So ever be prepared to meet the demands.” If not how easy it is for the young to blame it on luck! Yet what a strong definition he gives to ‘Luck’.

And one more: “Research is to see what everybody has seen, but to think what nobody else has ever thought.” To show a young one that the potential within needs to be stoked and engaged to produce masterpieces, needs to be used to build on knowledge (gained from others) is to show a young one her inheritance, her inner treasure which waits to be employed and kneaded.

He encouraged originality and a creative approach, along with discipline and hard work. Here is his instruction to a young woman named Lakshmi Reddy, who became a staunch devotee later.



Lakshmi Reddy 8.10.1963

Prepare with study and meditation. Luck is not a mysterious something that descends upon us from nowhere – when preparation meets opportunity, there comes to manifest luck. And so ever be prepared to meet the demands. Soon the world will demand of you a great lead, and you must be ready for it.

Don't merely read and try to understand others ideas only. Do your own research. Seek to discover new meanings – new ideas. Research is to see what everybody has seen, bu to think what nobody else has ever thought. Be original; it alone pays in joys. All studie and reflections together but form the platform for your original plunge.

Letters Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by

Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015

So many are they who he brought up with a mere letter, a word, sentencing them to a life of courage and perseverance laced with his own original love.

227. All Work and No Pray? (Part One)

20-12-2015

How Gurudev always emphasised to the young ones, the prayer element in every effort

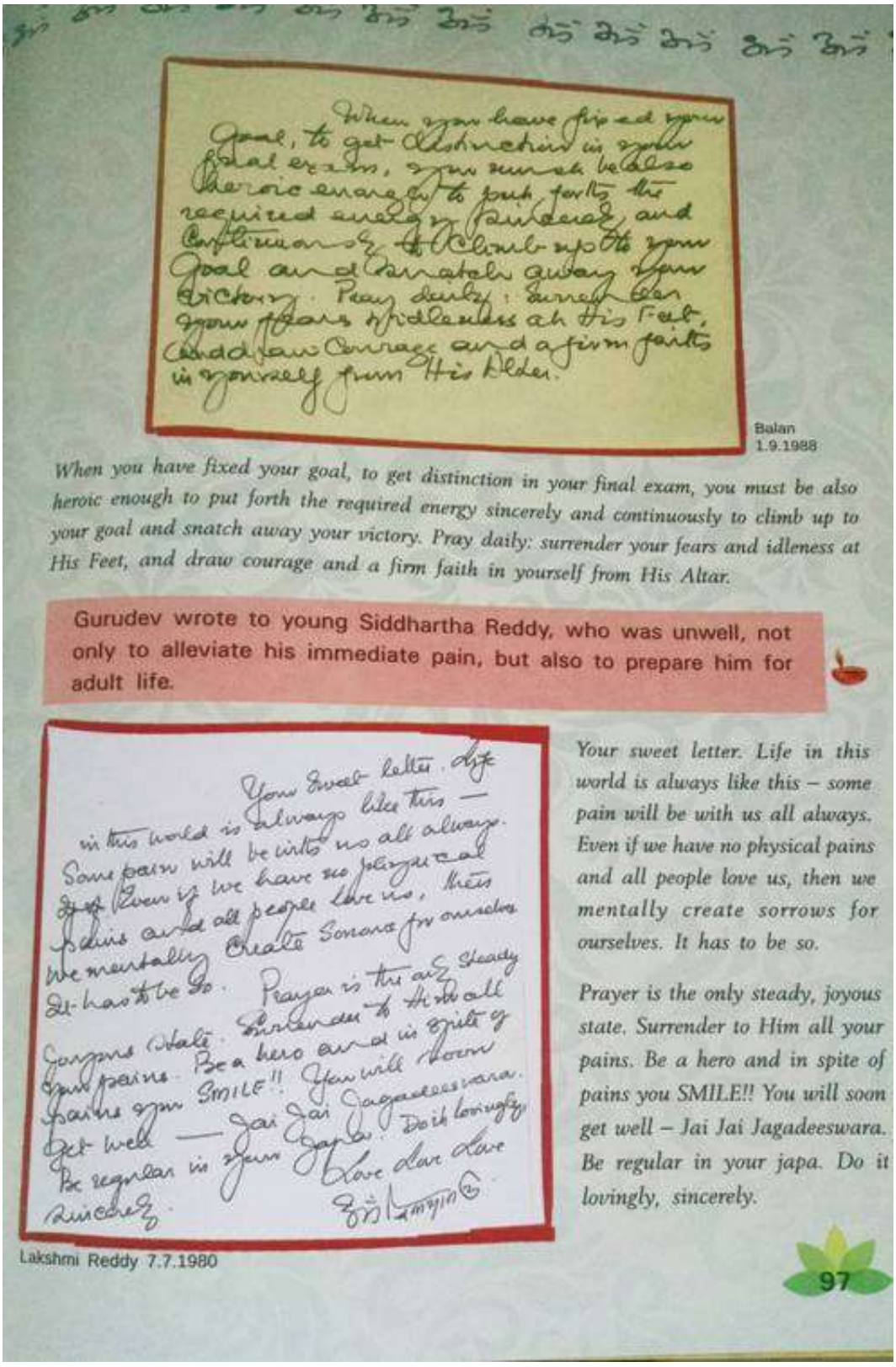
Gurudev knew what the 12 year old needed, what the 4 year old needed and what the needs of the 17-18-21 year old was. He chose his words carefully and as we read through his letters across age groups, one sees the Eternal Father come through. He gave to each according to his or her need and as almost everyone who wrote on these pages have said, he replied to every letter, no matter how trivial it might seem to us. Did not Hemantini Bhatia share how she wrote to him when her back hurt? But to each one he replied and painstakingly, not on a key board, which allows for Backspace and Delete, but in the long hand where you rarely, rarely see a cancellation or overwriting.

It is also noteworthy that none of Gurudev's words point to gender differences. He egged them on to achieve, work and accomplish. But as he himself advised parents (see story 223. Learning to Live), "…..be alert to flavour your honest explanations with a hint about the play of God around us. Leave them with these small hints; do not go into details."

And this is the touch we see in his letters too.

In a letter to a young person striving for excellence in his exams, Gurudev lauds that and adds a line, which would surely have swelled the chest of the recipient, " … you must also be heroic enough to put forth the required energy and continuously …." Thus subtly hinting at purushaaartha to precede prasaada. And once again we see that clinching advice about praarthna, "Pray daily: surrender your fears and idleness at His feet and draw courage ….. from His Altar." Gurudev has sown the seeds of disciplined prayer, 'daily', 'at the Altar'. (See Letter 1, top)

Again we see that in his letter to Sidharth Reddy, "Prayer is the only steady, joyous state. Surrender to Him all your pains. […] Be regular in your japa. Do it lovingly, sincerely." (Letter 1 bottom)



When your have fixed your goal, to get distinction in your final exam, you must be also heroic enough to put forth the required energy sincerely and continuously to climb up to your goal and snatch away your victory. Pray daily: surrender your fears and idleness at His Feet, and draw courage and a firm faith in yourself from His Altar.

Balan
1.9.1988

When you have fixed your goal, to get distinction in your final exam, you must be also heroic enough to put forth the required energy sincerely and continuously to climb up to your goal and snatch away your victory. Pray daily: surrender your fears and idleness at His Feet, and draw courage and a firm faith in yourself from His Altar.

Gurudev wrote to young Siddhartha Reddy, who was unwell, not only to alleviate his immediate pain, but also to prepare him for adult life.

Your sweet letter. Life in this world is always like this — some pain will be with us all always. Even if we have no physical pains and all people love us, then we mentally create sorrows for ourselves. It has to be so.

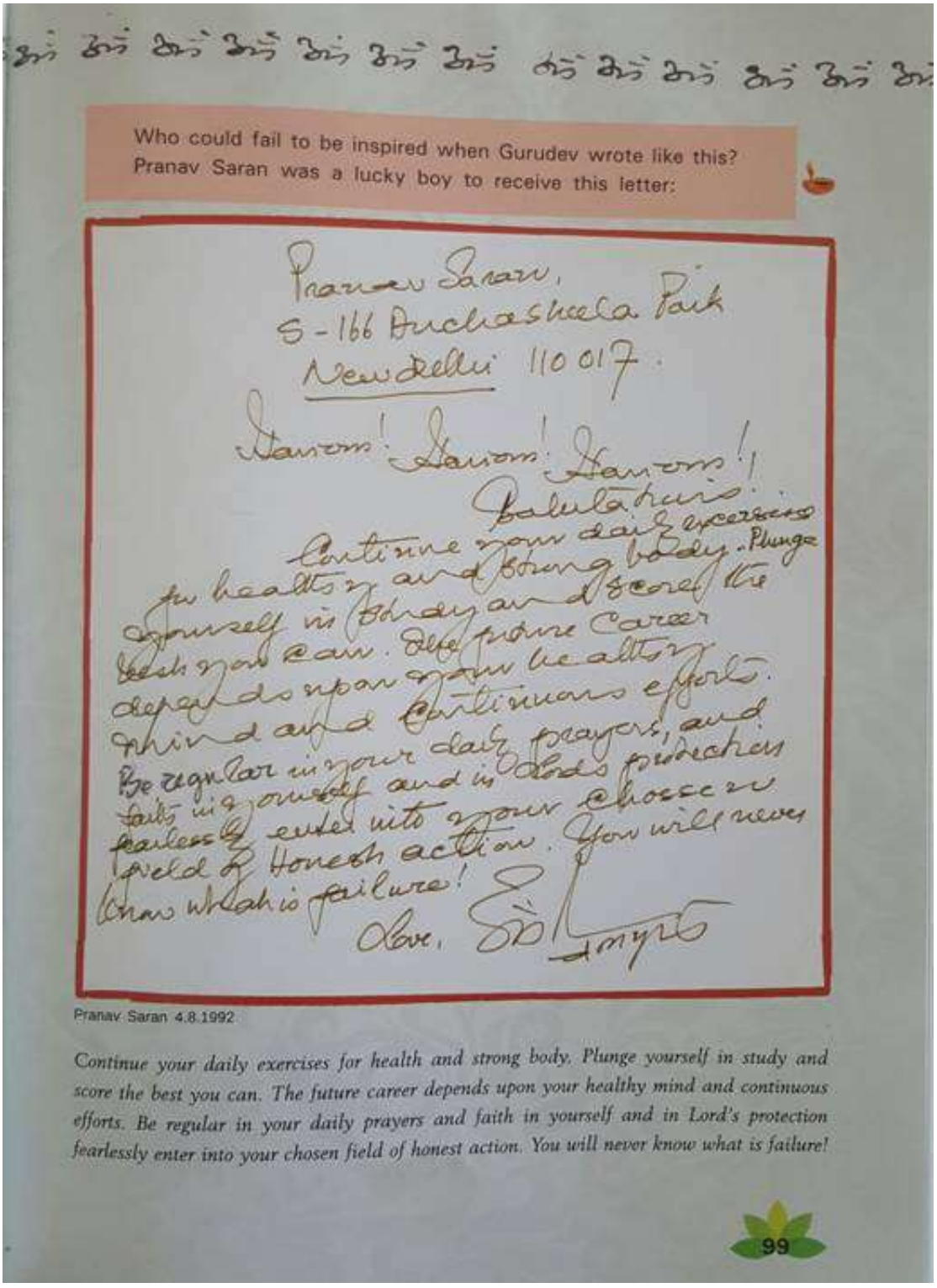
Prayer is the only steady, joyous state. Surrender to Him all your pains. Be a hero and in spite of pains you SMILE!! You will soon get well — Jai Jai Jagadeeswara. Be regular in your japa. Do it lovingly, sincerely.

Lakshmi Reddy 7.7.1980

Letter 1. Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015

Although many books and articles may say that, if the Guru says it directly to a student, it goes straight home...

Likewise, in Letter 2 to Pranav Saran, he says, “Be regular in your daily prayers.... You will never know what is failure!”



Who could fail to be inspired when Gurudev wrote like this? Pranav Saran was a lucky boy to receive this letter:

Pranav Saran,
S-166 Panchsheela Park
New Delhi 110 017.

Pranav! Pranav! Pranav!!

Continue your daily exercises for health and strong body. Plunge yourself in study and score the best you can. The future career depends upon your healthy mind and continuous efforts. Be regular in your daily prayers and faith in yourself and in Lord's protection fearlessly enter into your chosen field of honest action. You will never know what is failure!

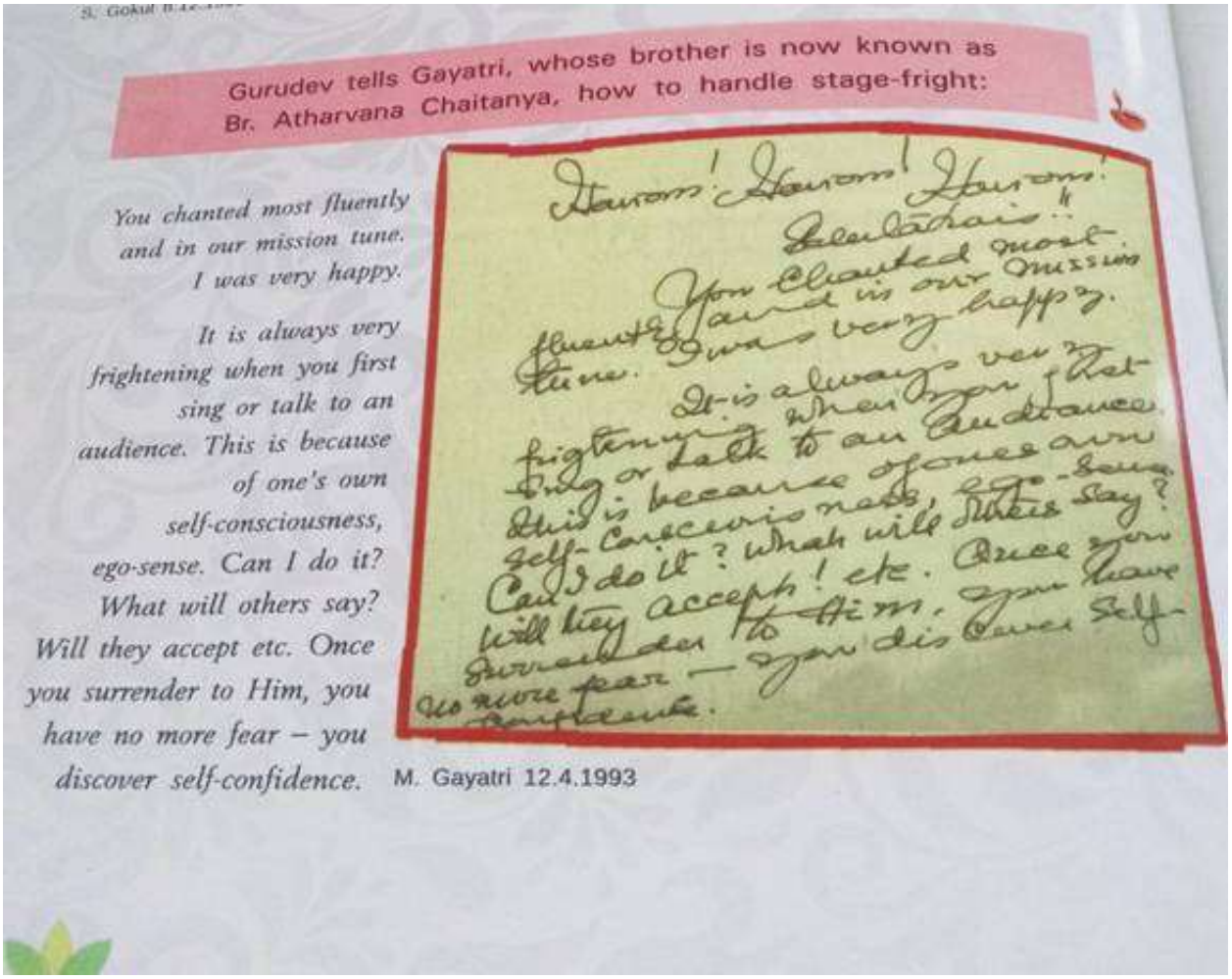
Love, Sd/- Amma

Pranav Saran 4.8.1992

Continue your daily exercises for health and strong body. Plunge yourself in study and score the best you can. The future career depends upon your healthy mind and continuous efforts. Be regular in your daily prayers and faith in yourself and in Lord's protection fearlessly enter into your chosen field of honest action. You will never know what is failure!

Letter 2. Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015

Exactly the same advice Gurudev gave Gayatri who likely wrote to him about her stage fright: “Once you surrender to Him, you have no more fear – you discover self-confidence.”



Gurudev tells Gayatri, whose brother is now known as Br. Atharvana Chaitanya, how to handle stage-fright:

You chanted most fluently and in our mission tune. I was very happy.

It is always very frightening when you first sing or talk to an audience. This is because of one's own self-consciousness, ego-sense. Can I do it? What will others say? Will they accept etc. Once you surrender to Him, you have no more fear – you discover self-confidence.

M. Gayatri 12.4.1993

Letter # 3

As Gurudev rightly said, “Let there be a corner in your home for prayer – a quiet chapel or simple altar. Let children watch both of you praying to the Lord regularly,”

And this:

"Therefore, an atmosphere of religion and spiritual values around them is very important in moulding and enhancing their mental life."

Let us pray and teach our young that it is good to pray.

228. All Work and No Pray? Part Two

21-12-2015

"Without His Grace Nothing Can Ever Happen..."

Insisting on prayer was not for Gurudev, an incidental advice. Gurudev sought to make prayer the crux, the core of living alongside effort and hard work.

In this letter to Sandeep Bindra(Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015) Gurudev says it is not easy to get an admission into Mayo College. But instead of hollow comfort, Gurudev says, "But if it is easy, what is the joy of getting it?" And yet there is a gentle appreciation and recognition of Sandeep's goodness when Gurudev writes, " Tell the principal, 'If you don't want a boy like me here, what college is this?'

So he says a good college should not be easy to get into, yet a good college is one that will take a student as good as Sandeep Bindra!

"In life all that we want cannot come immediately. We must continue trying constantly and wait. While waiting, pray mentally...." But Gurudev adds a gentle one at the end, " pray – not beg, but pray."

The accent on prayer is about patience and allowing the Lord to work in His time. In all these letters we see the emphasis on patience, prayer and perseverance.

Insisting on prayer was not for Gurudev, an incidental advice. Gurudev sought to make prayer the crux, the core of living alongside effort and hard work.

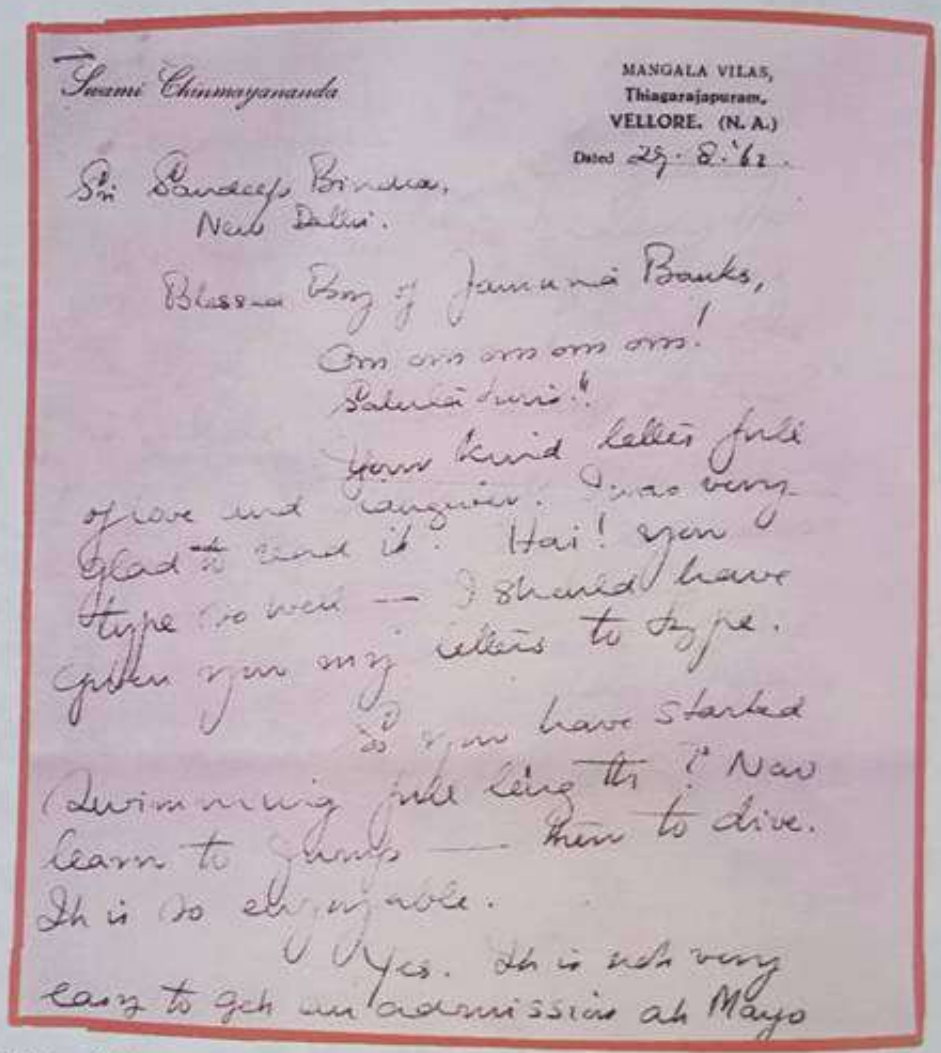
In this letter to Sandeep Bindra(Source: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, CCMT, by Brni. Prarthna Chaitanya and Smt. Parvathy Raman, May 2015) Gurudev says it is not easy to get an admission into Mayo College. But instead of hollow comfort, Gurudev says, "But if it is easy, what is the joy of getting it?" And yet there is a gentle appreciation and recognition of Sandeep's goodness when Gurudev writes, " Tell the principal, 'If you don't want a boy like me here, what college is this?'

So he says a good college should not be easy to get into, yet a good college is one that will take a student as good as Sandeep Bindra!

"In life all that we want cannot come immediately. We must continue trying constantly and wait. While waiting, pray mentally...." But Gurudev adds a gentle one at the end, " pray – not beg, but pray."

The accent on prayer is about patience and allowing the Lord to work in His time. In all these letters we see the emphasis on patience, prayer and perseverance.

The importance of waiting and praying is reinforced to a young man who is impatient that his admission to a famous college is not coming through.



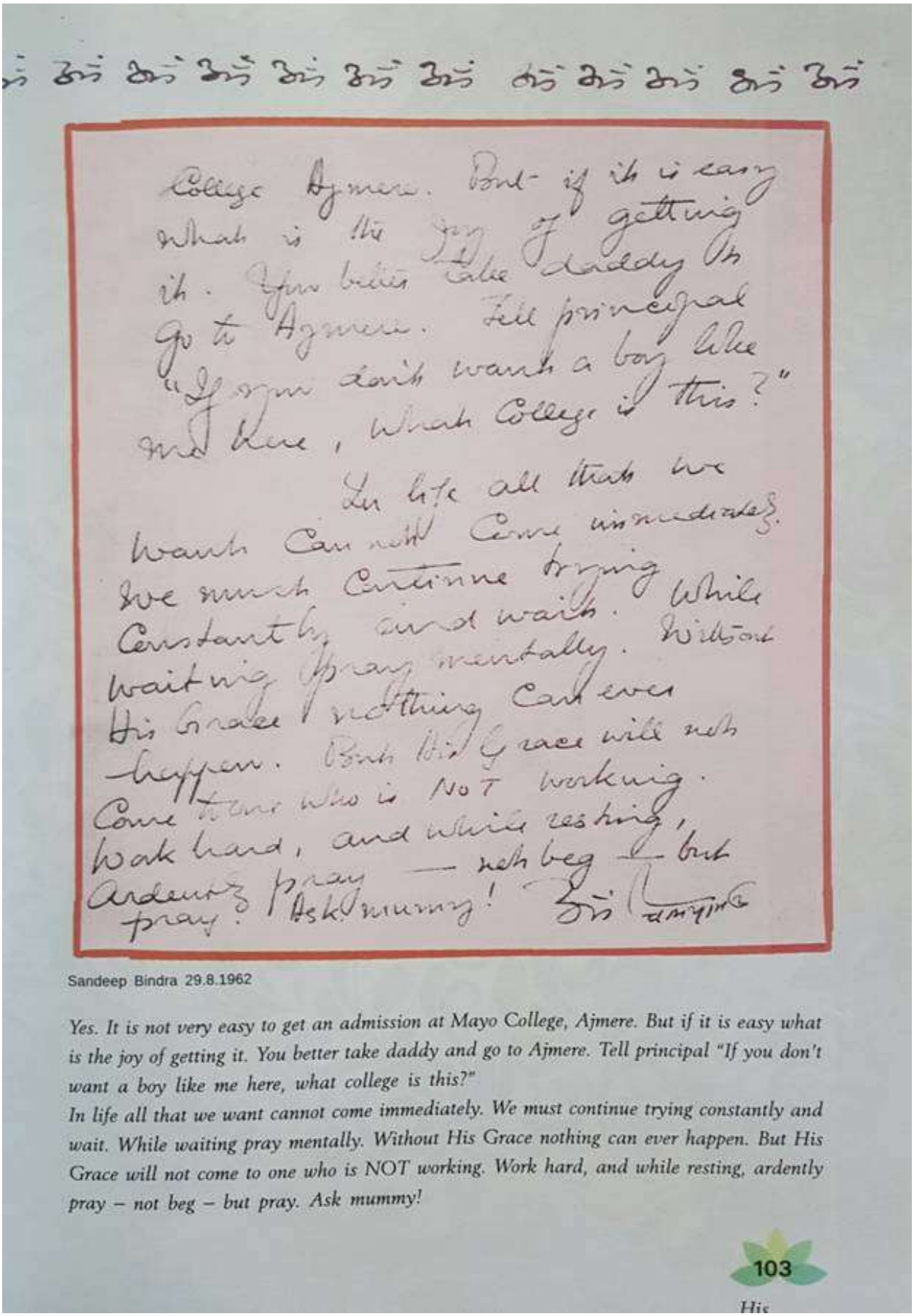
Swami Chinmayananda

MANGALA VILAS,
Thiagarajapuram,
VELLORE. (N. A.)
Dated 25. 8. '62.

Sri Sandeep Birmiwal,
New Delhi.

Blessed Boy of Jamuna Banks,
Om om om om om!
Salutations!!
Your kind letter full of love and laughter. I was very glad to read it. Hai! you type so well — I should have given you my letters to type.
So you have started swimming full length? Now learn to jump — then to dive. It is so enjoyable.
Yes. It is not very easy to get an admission at Mayo

Blessed Boy of Jamuna Banks,
Om om om om om!
Salutations!!
Your kind letter full of love and laughter. I was very glad to read it. Hai! You type so well – I should have given you my letters to type.
So you have started swimming full length? Now learn to jump – then to dive. It is so enjoyable.



College Ajmere. But if it is easy
what is the joy of getting
it. You better take daddy &
go to Ajmere. Tell principal
"If you don't want a boy like
me here, what College is this?"
In life all that we
want cannot come immediately.
We must continue trying
constantly and wait. While
waiting pray mentally. Without
His Grace nothing can ever
happen. But His Grace will not
come to one who is NOT working.
Work hard, and while resting,
ardently pray — not beg — but
pray. Ask mummy!

Sandeep Bindra 29.8.1962

Yes. It is not very easy to get an admission at Mayo College, Ajmere. But if it is easy what is the joy of getting it. You better take daddy and go to Ajmere. Tell principal "If you don't want a boy like me here, what college is this?"
In life all that we want cannot come immediately. We must continue trying constantly and wait. While waiting pray mentally. Without His Grace nothing can ever happen. But His Grace will not come to one who is NOT working. Work hard, and while resting, ardently pray – not beg – but pray. Ask mummy!

229. Thoughts to Think, Verses to Hold, Words to Remember

22-12-2015

The Geeta is 700 verses and overwhelming. Here are just a few paras from His commentary that remind us of things we easily forget in the struggle of living; some paras that comfort,t and some paras that we need to remember, not forget.



No doubt the Lord as Vyaasa compiled all this for us. But we remain grateful and indebted to Gurudev for predigesting this and giving us his Commentary.



BG 11: 34

In fact, to every thinking man, the truth is obvious that in life, he is at best only an instrument in His hands. We are not generally ready to accept this proposition, because, the self-arrogating ego-sense in us will not easily retire so as to allow the Divine in us to play out in all its omnipotence. Everywhere, in all our activities,

when we analyse each one of our actions, we find that our actual contribution in them all is a meagre share, compared to what nature has applied, and what the unseen hand has achieved for us. At best, we can only combine things that already exist, and coax out of their own natural qualities and properties, a certain result, and then claim vainly that we have created something new.

The radio, the aeroplane, the roaring engines, the subtle machinery, the wonder-drugs, in short, the entire "Brave New World," and all its achievements in progress --- are all nothing but the play of children in the lap of the Lord who, in fact, is the One who has ordered and allowed us to have electricity, iron, ether, air, etc., with their special properties. Without these, no achievement is ever possible; and achievements are nothing but intelligent acts of the assembling and reassembling of these very God-given things.

BG 15:5

FREE FROM PRIDE AND DELUSION --- Both these qualities of pride and delusion indicate a false, exaggerated estimate, of one-self and of others. Erroneous estimate of one's own importance is called pride and it brings about an enormous amount of heavy responsibilities upon oneself to maintain it. There is no time thereafter to cultivate oneself, or to seek knowledge, or to get truly educated. Similarly, error in judgement regarding things and beings, happenings and situations, in the world outside, is called DELUSION. It makes us live in a false world of our own imagination without actually facing the immediate problems around us, as they really are.



BG 6: 5

Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, and let him not lower himself; for, this Self alone is the friend of oneself, and this Self is the enemy of oneself.

Some points Gurudev makes:

*It is not very unhealthy to believe that Grace from an external source is constantly helping a true seeker striving on his path --- but this is really healthy only when this thought is correspondingly complemented with sufficiently intense self-effort.

* Man, if he wants to exalt himself into the greater cultural and spiritual possibilities now lying dormant in him, has to raise the lower in himself to the greater perfection that is the true and eternal core in himself.



*when the rational and discriminative capacities of a limited intellect are brought to bear their authority upon the wavering and wandering, sense-mongering-mind, the lower is brought under discipline and made to attune with the nobler and the diviner in us. The processes by which the lower is brought under the direct management and discipline of the higher are all together called the spiritual techniques.

*This process of self-rehabilitation and self-redemption of the Satan in us [.....] - Each will have to do it all by himself: "ALONE TO THE ALONE ALL ALONE" IS THE WAY. No Guru can take the responsibility; no scripture can promise this redemption; no altar can, with its divine blessings, make the lower the higher. The lower must necessarily be trained slowly and steadily to accept and come under the influence of the discipline of the higher. In this process, the teacher, the scripture, and the houses-of-God, have all their proper appointed duties and limited influences. But the actual happening depends upon how far we ourselves learn to haul ourselves out from the gutters of misunderstanding in ourselves.



BG 3:37

The Blessed Lord Said: 37. It is desire, it is anger born of the "active " all-devouring, all-sinful; know this as the foe here (in this world) .

*Desire is the inner SATAN in the individual's bosom. [...]desire is nothing other than our own spiritual "ignorance," expressing itself in our intellectual personality.

* This "desire-anger-emotion" is the very SATAN in us that compels us to compromise with our own intellectually known Higher values of existence, and tempts us to perpetrate sins. Greater the desire, greater the power in the pull towards the sinful and the low. Once desire has come to manifest itself in our intellect, it enshrouds the wisdom in us.

*Desire and anger, and their numberless children of sin and sorrow, must ever come to breed upon the marshy lands of our deluded intellect. To come under their sway is "ignorance." To come to rule over them is "Wisdom."

BG 4:19

Whose undertakings are all devoid of desires and purposes, and whose actions have been burnt by the Fire-of-Knowledge, him the "wise" call a Sage.

*[...]the desire-for-results during any activity dissipates our energies. The fruits-of-an-action can only mature in a future period of time and therefore, to court the results is to escape from the present and live in the unborn periods of time. It is a law that the effects depend entirely upon the causes, and so to be sincere and complete in our activities is the greatest guarantee for all successful achievements.

* One who is a perfect Sage, says Krishna, is one who will undertake to act "WITHOUT PLANNING" and "WITHOUT ANY DESIRE FOR FRUITS."



The instruction to act "WITHOUT PLANNING AND DESIRE" does not mean that a man-of-Equilibrium, in his inspired activity, should not make use of his better intelligence and plan his activities to gain a desired result. It only means that, WHILE HE IS AT WORK, he should not allow his abilities and capacities to run to waste, with his mental preoccupations and sentimental fears regarding the results-of-his-work. Vedanta does not in any way ignore man's intellect.

BG 4: 20

20. Having abandoned attachment to the fruits-of-action, ever-content, depending on nothing, he does not do anything, though engaged in actions.

* Only when we get preoccupied with the expected fruits of our actions do we come to exhaust ourselves, and thus become inefficient in our activities. Forsaking (tyaktwa) our clinging (Sanga) to the fruits-of-action (Karma-phala), we are advised to strive for and to achieve the welfare of the society.



*Again, the anxiety for the fruits-of-action, the sense of discontentment and the feeling of dependency upon the things and beings of the world --- all belong to the misconceived notion of the ego-centre. The ego in us is the sufferer of all the above-mentioned incapacities and inabilities. When the seeker-after-Truth rediscovers his ego to be the Infinite Truth, the limited ego ends its career of sorrow, and naturally, the agony and the incapacities of the imperfect ego also end.

BG 4:21

Without hope, with the mind and Self controlled, having abandoned all possessions, doing mere bodily action, he incurs no sin.

*Mere bodily activity is not action that will merit a reaction. It has already been

seen that the reactions of actions take place in the mental and in the intellectual zones. An action can leave a mark on our subtle-body only when we act with an ego-centric consciousness that we are the actors, and these marks can be effective only when our actions are motivated by powerful and strong ego-centric "desires."

* [Ego has ended when] an individual, (a) when he has completely renounced hope, (b) when he has brought his body and mind under perfect control, and (c) when he has relinquished all possessions, can no longer sustain the illusory concept of the ego in him. When the ego has ended, the actions performed by that individual's body become incapable of leaving any permanent mark upon his mental constitution, or on his intellectual character.



*if, in my sleep, my body kicks my own son, I am not accused of cruelty to my child. For, [...] we know that "for the actions of my body I am not responsible, since I was absent in that body during those activities." This clearly shows that the ego-centric identity with the body is the actor and the sufferer, and where the ego is not, there the mere bodily actions cannot bring about any consequences.

BG 4: 22

Content with what comes to him without effort, free from the pairs-of-opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting he is not bound.

*We generally get agitated due to the pulls of success and failure. On the rising tide of success our ego dances in a vain joy, while in the hollows of failures it feels miserable and crushed. But when the ego is completely divinised, the individual will, thereafter, automatically remain equanimous in both success and failure. Such an individual who has thus conquered his ego-centric misconceptions about himself, "THOUGH ACTING, IS NOT FETTERED" by the natural consequences of the actions performed (Karma-phala).

There is a huge wealth in His commentary. These are just a few!



230. Parent, Brother, Friend

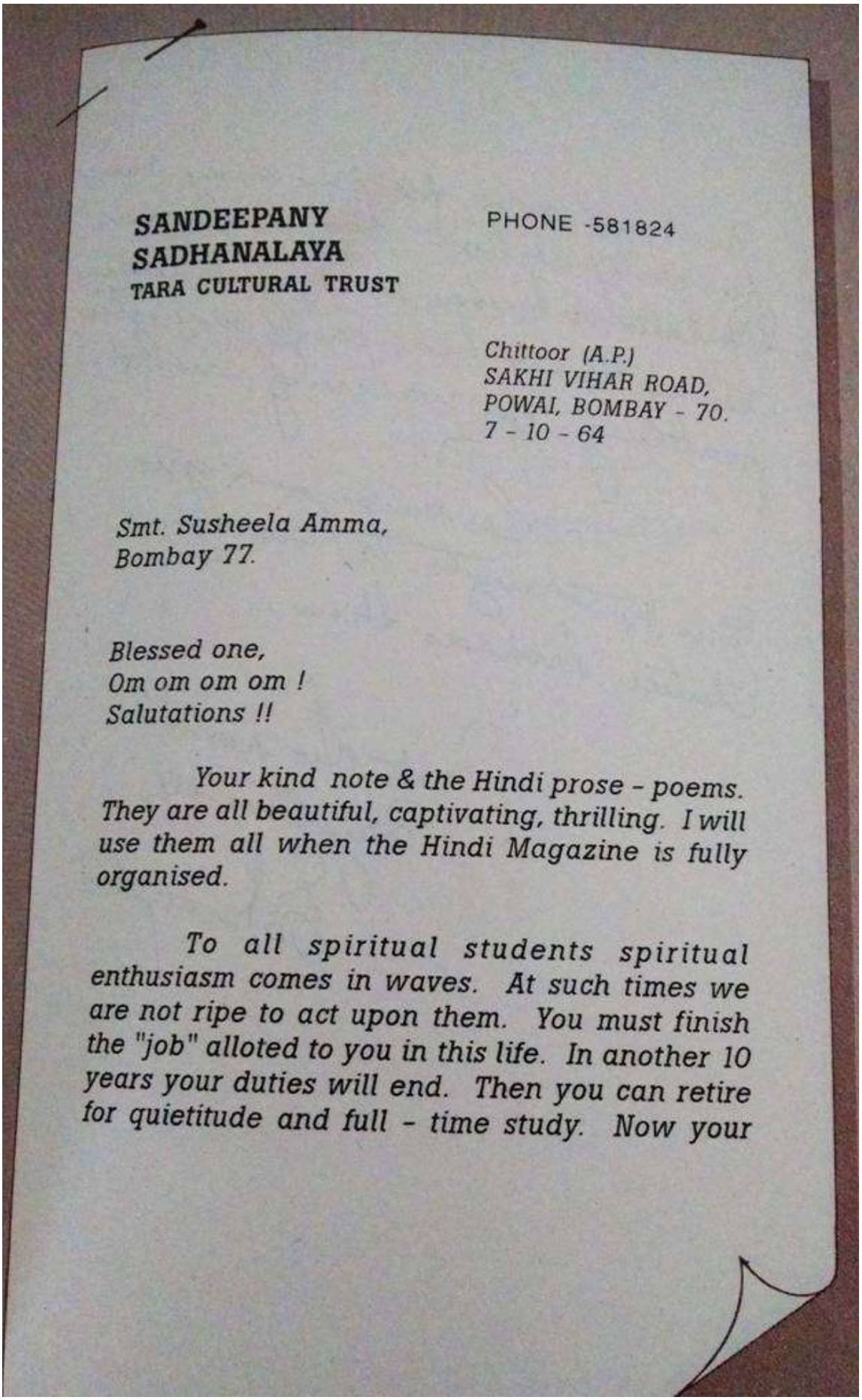
23-12-2015

Keeping Spirituality and Ashrama in parallel

It has been the experience of many sadhakas that a sudden desire to drop the world and hold the Guru, takes over. It has been felt by students in school or college as well as grihasthas – householders. Is it the Is it the transient nature of the world, is it the frustration with a pointless world, is it the heartbreak of relationships that seem thankless, is it the hopelessness of life? Whatever it is, it does become overwhelming.

But Gurudev has dealt with these by encouraging the devotee to fulfil the task at hand and not run away from the world.

As early as 1964, he wrote in a letter to one Susheelaamma:



SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA
TARA CULTURAL TRUST

PHONE -581824

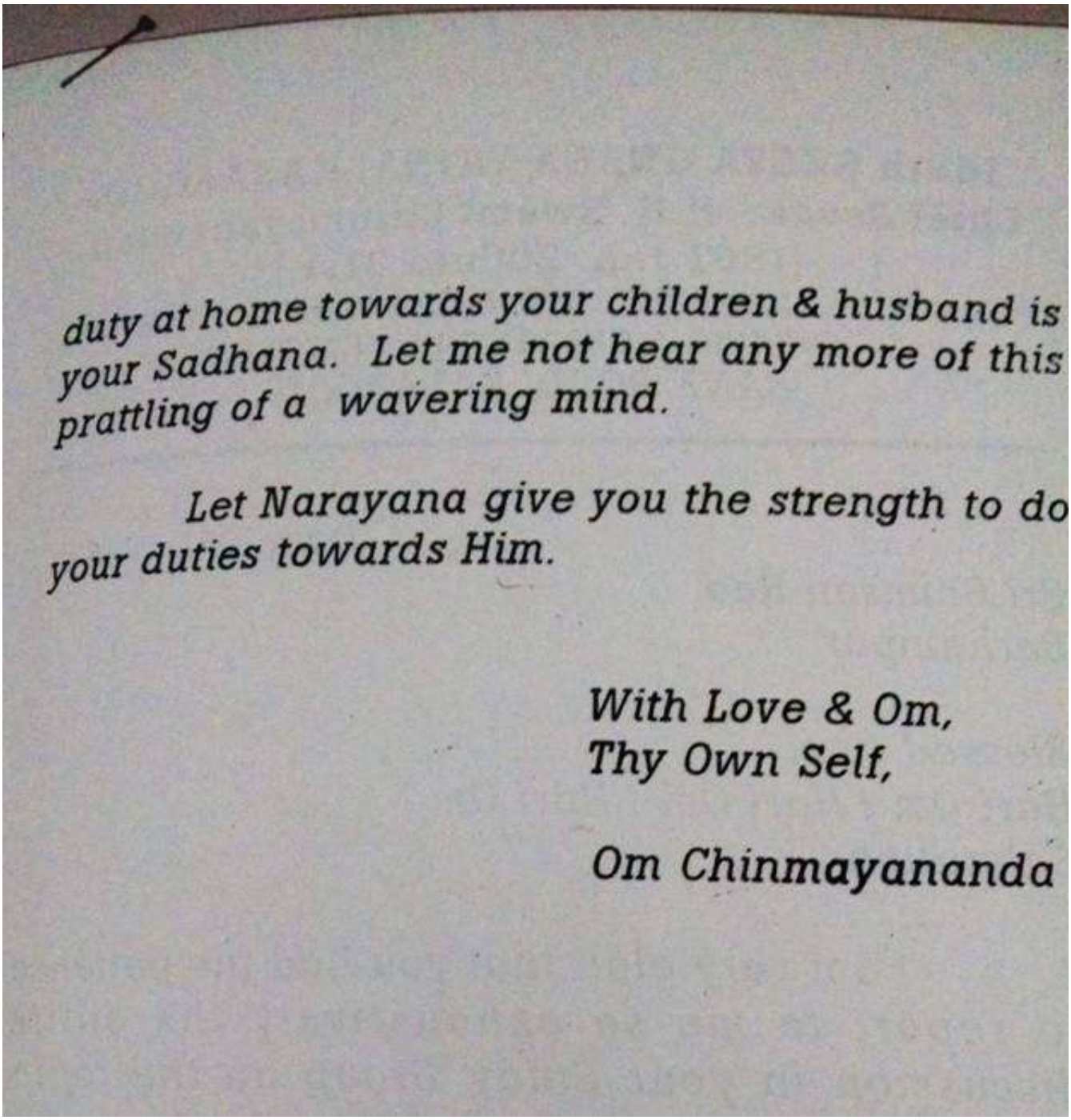
Chittoor (A.P.)
SAKHI VIHAR ROAD,
POWAI, BOMBAY - 70.
7 - 10 - 64

Smt. Susheela Amma,
Bombay 77.

Blessed one,
Om om om om !
Salutations !!

Your kind note & the Hindi prose - poems. They are all beautiful, captivating, thrilling. I will use them all when the Hindi Magazine is fully organised.

To all spiritual students spiritual enthusiasm comes in waves. At such times we are not ripe to act upon them. You must finish the "job" alloted to you in this life. In another 10 years your duties will end. Then you can retire for quietitude and full - time study. Now your



duty at home towards your children & husband is your Sadhana. Let me not hear any more of this prattling of a wavering mind.

Let Narayana give you the strength to do your duties towards Him.

With Love & Om,
Thy Own Self,

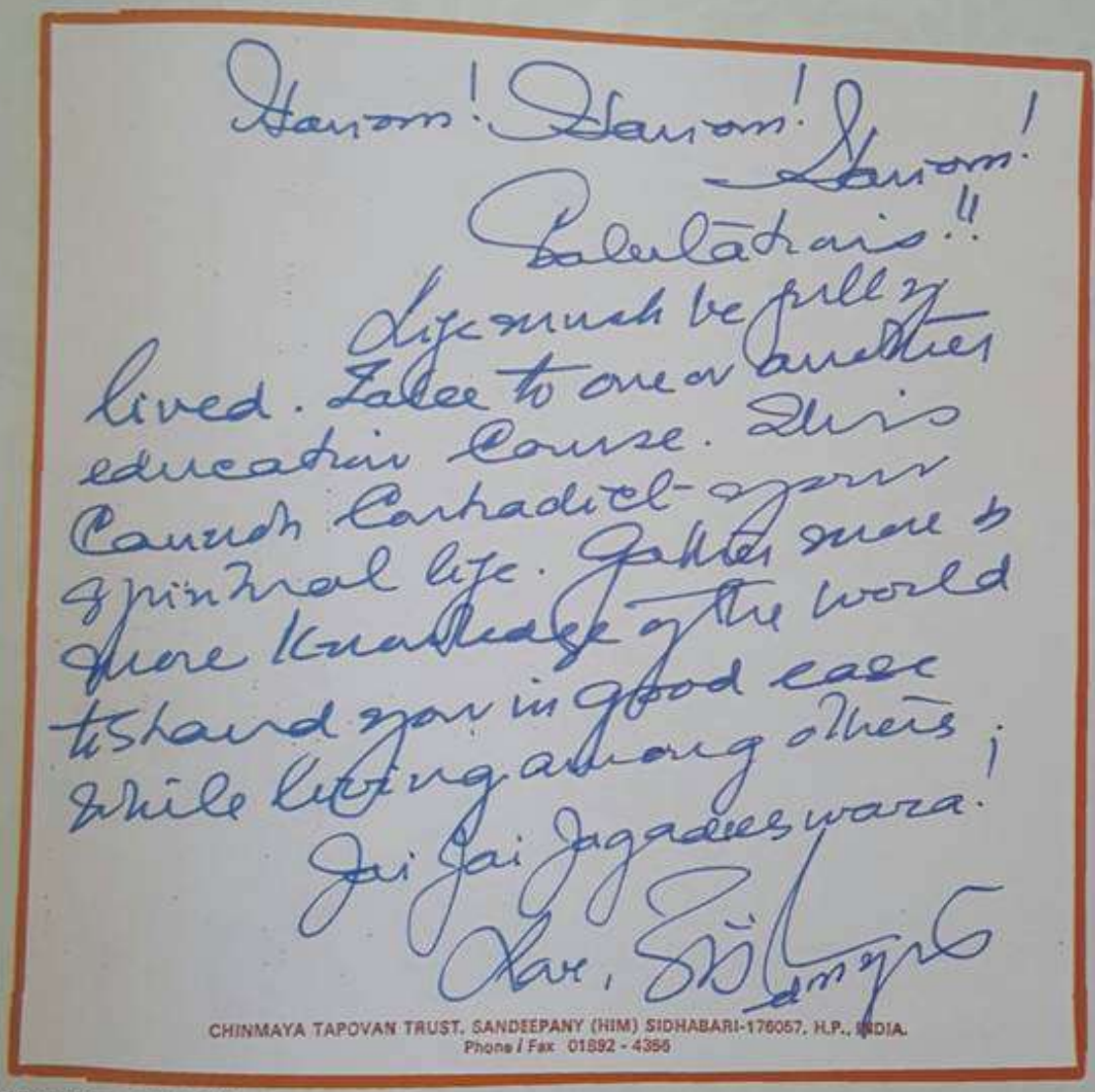
Om Chinmayananda

He says in most unequivocal terms that her duty at home to her family is her Sadhana. And right there he stops the restless, pleading mind with, “Let me hear no more of this prattling of a wavering mind.”

The firmness of approach to stop the mind from grovelling and groaning and make it see its duty according to its stage of life, was Gurudev's way of saying deal with your duty, don't run away from the battlefield.

Likewise, in a letter to a young student Shefali Saran, Gurudev wrote encouraging the spiritual life, yet ensuring the student continued with her education. Once again we see the Guru advising the devotee be guided by the needs of her ashrama:

Just a couple of months before Gurudev attained *mahasamadhi*, he reassured Shefali that study and work in this world do not contradict the spiritual aspirations of a person in any way.


Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!

Lalitā Sahasranāma!!

Life must be fully lived. Take to one or another education course. This cannot contradict your spiritual life. Gather more and more knowledge of the world to stand you in good ease while living among others.

Jai Jai Jagadeeswara.

Love, Gurudev

CHINMAYA TAPOVAN TRUST, SANDEEPANY (HIM) SIDHABARI-176057, H.P., INDIA.
Phone / Fax 01892 - 4356

Shefali Saran 14.6.1993

Life must be fully lived. Take to one or another education course. This cannot contradict your spiritual life. Gather more and more knowledge of the world to stand you in good ease while living among others.

In all these letters we see Gurudev as parent, as teacher, as Guru... tvameva mata ca pita tvameva, tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvamea....!

231. Pumstvam demystified

24-12-2015

With the body no Vedanticsadhana can be undertaken. The main practices in Vedanta are reflection and meditation which are to be undertaken by a healthy mind and a keen intellect.

The reference to masculinity, to a male bias, to an exclusion of women, or an allusion to a gender bias has caused many a devotee to squirm and suffer when she encounters the word pumstvam (masculinity). Surely many men would have struggled too, but Gurudev stopped everything to devote a whole page to explaining what the word Pumstvam means. And only Gurudev, repeat, only Gurudev has gone this extra mile to explain. This is why Gurudev had a fantastic following of both genders – for he taught souls, not bodies.

Pumstvam, Purushah, Klaibyam (BG 2:2) are words that have seen people in many places in the world decry the Lord even. As for 'klaibyam', Gurudev says in BG 2:2, "The word 'Klaibyam' means, the mental attitude of one who is neither masculine enough to feel a passionate courage and daring, nor womanly enough to feel the soft emotions of hesitation and despair."

But Gurudev comes out clearly in his commentary to the Vivekachoodamani (verse 2), where he writes with reference to jantunaamnarajanmadurlabhamatahpumstvamtatoviprata

"Thus the Acharya says that to get a human birth is rare: having got a human birth to have a masculine temperament is rarer still," and Gurudev goes on to explain:

"In the interpretation of this verse (VC:2) a lot of misunderstanding has crept in and some even glorify their misunderstanding on the score of a Vedic sanction. Thus oundits jump to a hasty conclusion and interpret this statement as a direct condemnation of women. According to such a thoughtless reading, women are not considered fit for Vedantic contemplation or Self-realisation. It is indeed strange how such fantastic ideas gained currency in the country of great Rishis, for more than half our scriptural declarations have been either given out by the divine mothers or were addressed to them directly by the Rishis!

Then why this special preference shown to the masculine sex? At this juncture we must bring our discriminative capacity to understandthat when these qualifications were give out, they were not given out with reference to the body. With the body, no Vedanticsadhana can be undertaken. The main practices in Vedanta are reflection and meditation which are to be undertaken by a healthy mind and a keen intellect. So it means that feminine qualities of mind and intellect are to be eschewed[i]. A masculine inner personality full of courage, discrimination, detachment, equilibrium, peace and cheer is the fittest instrument for a quick march to the Goal indicated by

Vedanta.

[…] An applicant for the police force will be rejected if his height is less than the prescribed minimum; but an engineer if fully qualified and experienced, will be accepted even if he looks unhealthy, lean and pale!

[…] what is meant is, qualifications are declared according to the functions required of the applicant. A seeker in Vedanta is expected to carry out daring intellectual flights to the Unknown through a process of deep study, vigorous reflections and tireless meditations. So here, when it is said that, according to the shastras he must be a “he-man”, it must necessarily mean that he should have a special quality of the head and heart.

Woman is the symbol of softness, attachment, sentiments and anxieties; she is essentially a mother. Wherever these qualities predominate, there we have a “woman”. In this sense there are many “women” among bearded ones and if firmness of determination, detachment, intellectual hardiness and steadfastness of composure are signs of a better evolution, these masculine tendencies of head and heart are amply seen in many women. Therefore, the verse refuses none that chance to study the scriptures and seek through Vedanta one’s self-development, simply because one happens to have a feminine body.”

Jai Gurudev! Such clarity and precision combined with a heady conviction of expression is possible only from Gurudev!

232. Sita’sKamala

25-12-2015

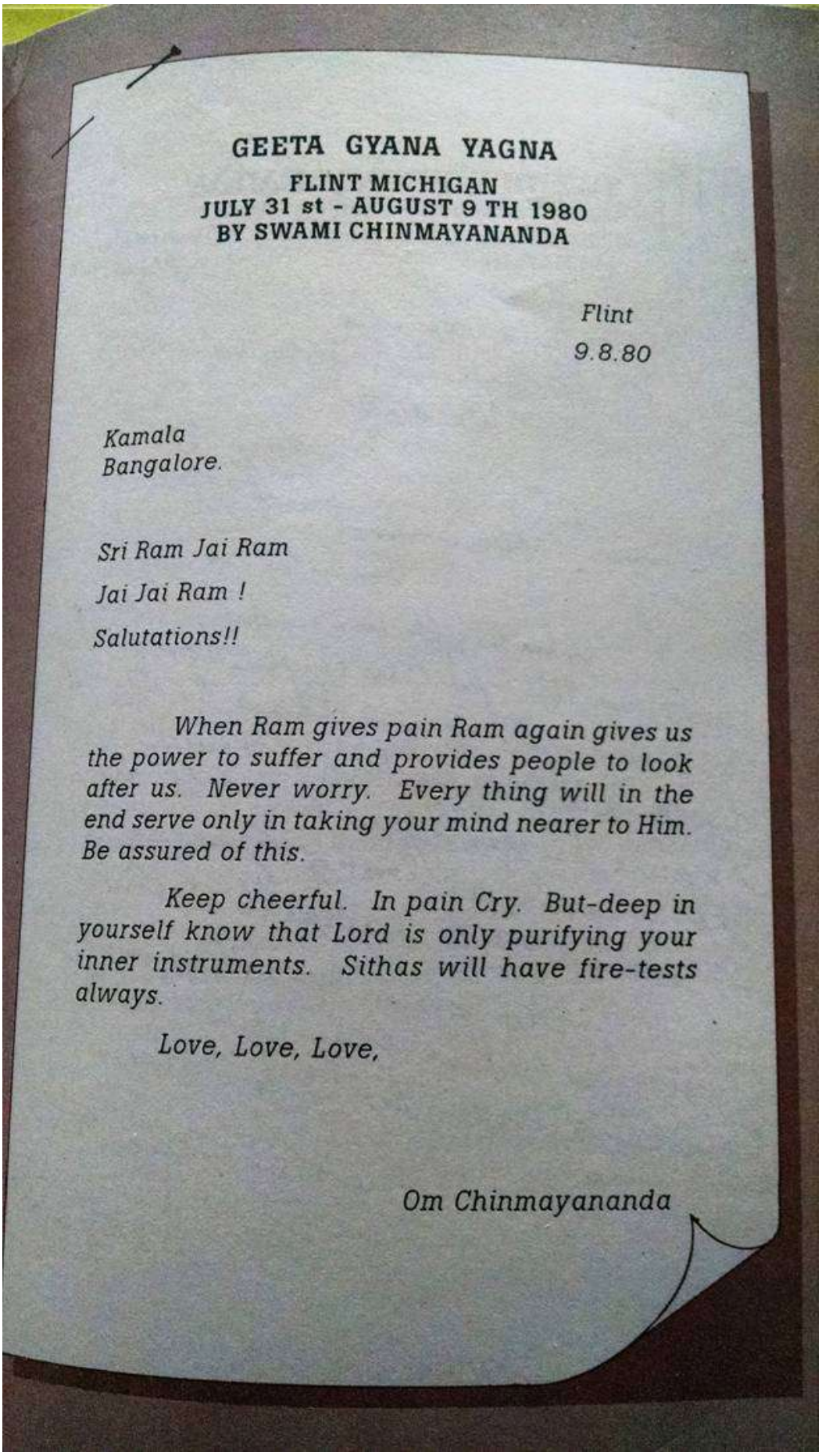
A long time ago, this compendium of letters written by Gurudev to various devotees was produced. It was aptly named ‘Vedanta Through Letters.’ It was published in two volumes comprising the most spectacular letters ever.

On this letter to one Kamala, brief but crisp and succinct, Gurudev writes all the way from Flint. The wonder is Kamala ji found out where Gurudev was and sent her letter to him. The bigger wonder is, the postal service worked like clockwork so that within the 3 weeks of camp and yagna at Flint, Gurudev received Kamala ji’s letter and replied too.

We don’t live like that anymore. But the snail mail system deeply respected the letter writer.

The beauty of Gurudev’s letter is that we don’t need to know what Kamala ji’s difficulty was. Gurudev’s reply holds great truth for each one in an utterly unbearable situation.

Read on …



GEETA GYANA YAGNA

FLINT MICHIGAN
JULY 31 st - AUGUST 9 TH 1980
BY SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

Flint
9.8.80

Kamala
Bangalore.

Sri Ram Jai Ram

Jai Jai Ram !

Salutations!!

When Ram gives pain Ram again gives us the power to suffer and provides people to look after us. Never worry. Every thing will in the end serve only in taking your mind nearer to Him. Be assured of this.

Keep cheerful. In pain Cry. But-deep in yourself know that Lord is only purifying your inner instruments. Sithas will have fire-tests always.

Love, Love, Love,

Om Chinmayananda

An excellent message for all those troubled in the mind: “Never worry. Everything will in the end serve only in taking your mind nearer to Him. Be assured of this. ... know that Lord is purifying your inner instruments.”

233. Mind and Japa

26-12-2015

Advise on Japa, Meditation, Prayer and Pranayam

Source: Vedanta Through Letters Vol 2, CCMT 1996

Managing the chattering mind and reining it in has been the content of many of Gurudev's talks and articles on Meditation. Here in a very carefully written reply to one Shri Radhakrishnan in 1990, Gurudev guides him – likely to use Japa as a tool to rein in the mind. It is valuable to note that Gurudev calls Japa 'an unavoidable pre-requisite if we are to turn our Mind towards the Self.

May 15, 1990 Taipei, Taiwan, ROC

Sri Radhakrishna
40-5-6/2 Tikkil Road (South)
Vijayawada - 520 010
India

Blessed Self,

Harih Om! Salutations!

Your kind letter of the 25th March 1990 missed me in Secunderabad and redirected from there, I got it only today.

1. I don't generally recommend Pranayama. You may, if you like, do 4 or 5 'Sukha Pranayama', meaning slowly filling up the lungs and equally slowly exhaust it. This will remove in case there are any traces of sleep in your bosom.

2. Through Japa we pull our mind from all and this is an unavoidable pre-requisites if we are to turn our mind towards the Self. Every day is not Sunday and those days when you find that you are not able to quieten the mind and get a satisfactory contemplative mood such days do a longer session of Japa and you can miss your meditation. True. Japa is to be done before thought massage.

3. After crying 'Halt' try to experience and live the total silence that is created in your own bosom. Practice this and you will come to know Him.

   I strongly feel that you must try to attend one of our Camps where meditation classes are generally taken and when you do it along with others all these doubts will clear.

4. Prayer is done by chanting some Hymns from the very moment you wake up all through the time you are cleaning yourself before coming to the seat of meditation. This is to avoid the mind gushing out to the world outside. In a weeks time you will find this attitude in the mind grows up stronger and stronger.

.....2 .....

II. Subtle Body has been deliberately described in two ways for the students easy grasp. It is easier for the students to grasp that the anatomical physical structure (Food Sheath) and physiological functions together constitute Gross Body and Mind-Intellect (M & I) of the Chart (constitute the Subtle Body) and the Vasanas in the Chart (constitute the Causal Body). It is not a difference but it is felt by the need of bringing to the mind of the students a clear picture.

I don't mind such long letter in which you tried to clarify your doubts.

Your letter of 25th March came to my hands only today and hence this delay.

With Prem and Om,

Thy Own Self,

Chinmayananda

234. Spiritual Anxiety, Anxious Spirituality

27-12-2015

Letter to Dr.SuchetaThukral, Houston

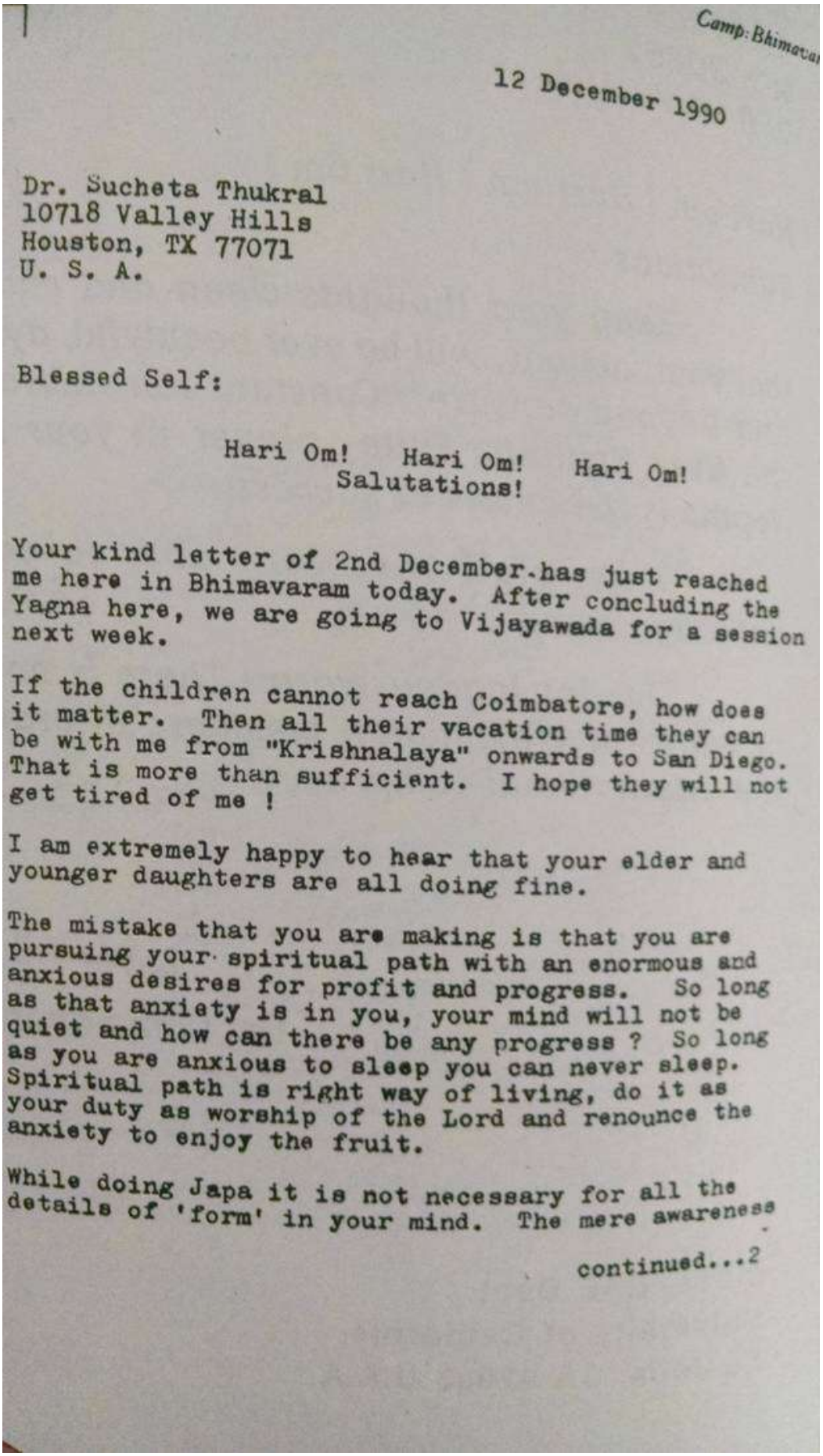
Source: Vedanta Through Letters Vol. 2, CCMT 1990

How poignant this letter to Smt. SuchetaThukral is for us. Gurudev cautions the seeker from getting anxious for the results of her spiritual effort.

He says, “So long as that anxiety is in you, yiour mind will not be quiet and how can there be any progress?”

And in most stunning sentence he says, “Spiritual path is right way of living, do it as your duty as worship of the Lord, ….”

Read on…



Camp: Bhimavaram

12 December 1990

Dr. Sucheta Thukral
10718 Valley Hills
Houston, TX 77071
U. S. A.

Blessed Self:

Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!
Salutations!

Your kind letter of 2nd December has just reached me here in Bhimavaram today. After concluding the Yagna here, we are going to Vijayawada for a session next week.

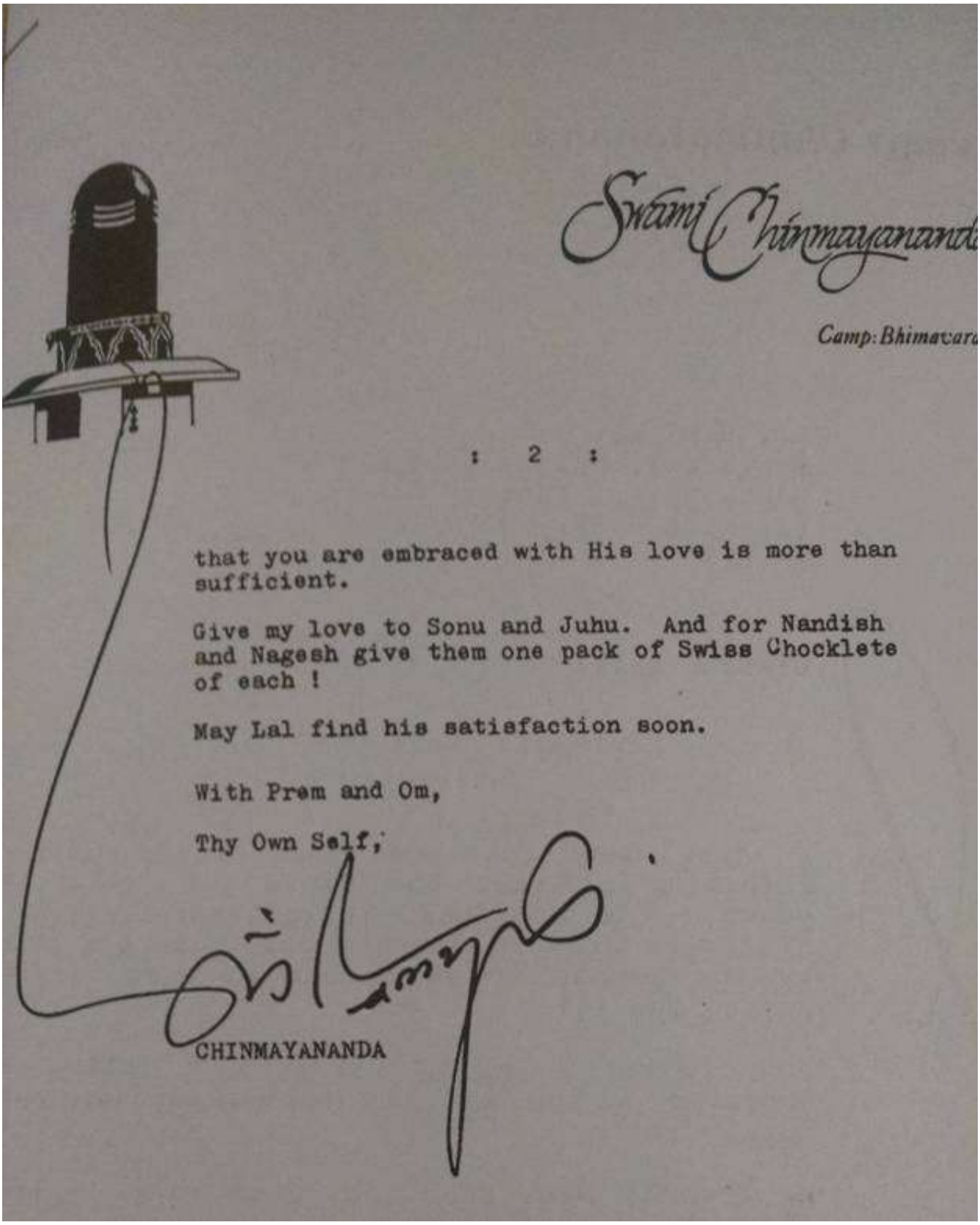
If the children cannot reach Coimbatore, how does it matter. Then all their vacation time they can be with me from "Krishnalaya" onwards to San Diego. That is more than sufficient. I hope they will not get tired of me !

I am extremely happy to hear that your elder and younger daughters are all doing fine.

The mistake that you are making is that you are pursuing your spiritual path with an enormous and anxious desires for profit and progress. So long as that anxiety is in you, your mind will not be quiet and how can there be any progress ? So long as you are anxious to sleep you can never sleep. Spiritual path is right way of living, do it as your duty as worship of the Lord and renounce the anxiety to enjoy the fruit.

While doing Japa it is not necessary for all the details of 'form' in your mind. The mere awareness

continued...2



Swami Chinmayananda

Camp: Bhimavara

: 2 :

that you are embraced with His love is more than sufficient.

Give my love to Sonu and Juhu. And for Nandish and Nagesh give them one pack of Swiss Chocklete of each !

May Lal find his satisfaction soon.

With Prem and Om,

Thy Own Self,

CHINMAYANANDA

235. Mind versus Minds

28-12-2015

Letter to BharatiNaik, Illinois

Source: Vedanta Through Letters Vol II, CCMT 1990

What a wonderful insight we get in this letter from Gurudev to BharatiNaik! “It is our own mind that interprets to us how we react to other minds.”

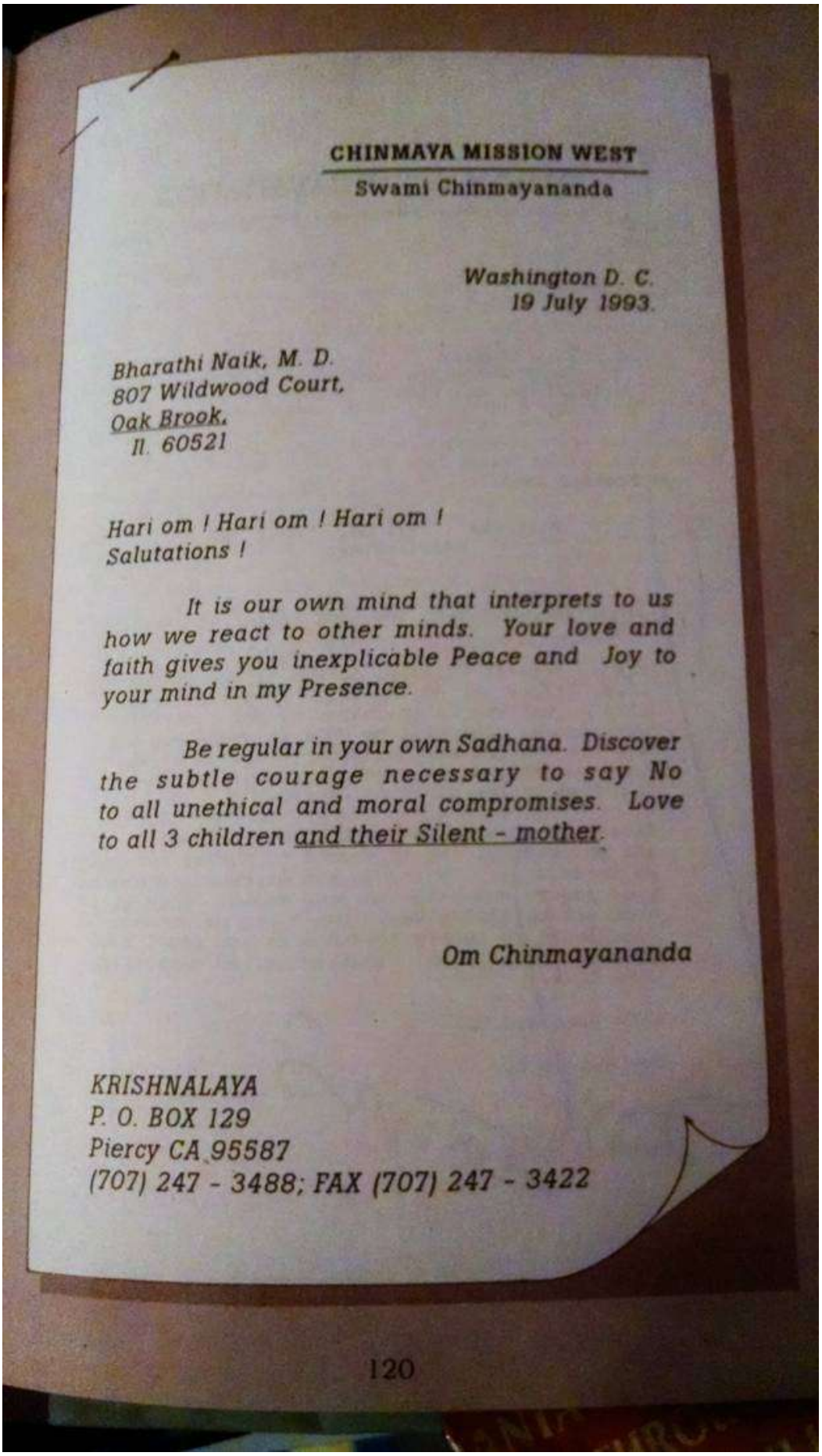
Often we suffer our own interpretation of our behaviour! It would seem from this letter that how we react and how we think we reacted are two different things!

One more sharp reminder from Gurudev for us to develop: Discover the subtle courage necessary to say No to all unethical and moral compromises.

Yes.

The moral courage to know what we will not do. And then express it from the standpoint of our spiritual path.

Interestingly, this letter was written on 19th July, exactly 2 weeks before His great mahasamadhi....



CHINMAYA MISSION WEST
Swami Chinmayananda

Washington D. C.
19 July 1993.

Bharathi Naik, M. D.
807 Wildwood Court,
Oak Brook,
Il. 60521

Hari om ! Hari om ! Hari om !
Salutations !

It is our own mind that interprets to us how we react to other minds. Your love and faith gives you inexplicable Peace and Joy to your mind in my Presence.

Be regular in your own Sadhana. Discover the subtle courage necessary to say No to all unethical and moral compromises. Love to all 3 children and their Silent - mother.

Om Chinmayananda

KRISHNALAYA
P. O. BOX 129
Piercy CA 95587
(707) 247 - 3488; FAX (707) 247 - 3422

236. Defining ‘Brahmin’

29-12-2015

The texts often refer to a Brahmin. So do the media and news people. So does our society and our neighbours. Everyone has a severely distorted explanation of what a Brahmin is. If some thought you got it by birth from a parent, some thought you got it from the thread and some others thought you got it by wearing markings.

Our Gurudev has consistently and precisely clarified it to us, for our understanding.Brahminhood is a maturity of the mind and intellect heading towards the Lord. Here are three completely different texts where his comment has been identical and extraordinarily clear.

Vivekachoodamani Verse 2:

jantoonamnarajanmadurlabhamatahpumstvamtatoviprata

Explaining Viprata or Vipra Gurudev writes as only he can, with such intensity and power. Every word is pure gold in this para:

“This again is a term upon which the orthodoxy built up an absurd interpretation that Self-realisation is available only for those who are (by sheer accident of birth), worthy or unworthy sons of Brahmins. This misunderstanding has been glorified to the status of wisdom and the amount of devastation it has brought Hinduism looks almost irreparable now. As before, we must consider this qualification also as indicating a special quality of head and heart.”

Then explaining the animal-man, the man-man and the God man, Gurudev writes:

*He who is ever a victim of his gross instincts and a hopeless slave to his emotions and impulses is classified as an animal-man.

*When he has disciplined these instincts in himself, he is considered a full grown, mature he-man. Such a Vipra, meaning a man-man has the necessary viprata to strive rightly and grow steadily into the last stage of his evolution – the supermanhood or Godhood, when he becomes a God-man.”

And making it even more clear, Gurudev writes,

“When one has a human body along with the serener qualities of the heart and the Sattwic attitude of the intellect, one is indeed blessed will all the preliminaries for his evolution.”

(Which means what you need you develop and mature into, and are not born into. Viprata is a purushaartha, not a prarabda!)

Bhagavad Gita 2:13

13. The fourfold-caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of GUNA and KARMA; though I am the author thereof know Me as non-doer and immutable.

Here is an extract from Gurudev’s own commentary in the Holy Gita:

“This is a stanza that has been much misused in recent times by the upholders of the social crime styled as the caste system in India. Varna, meaning different shades of texture, or colour, is employed here in the Yogic-sense. In the YogaShastra, they attribute some definite colours to the triple gunas, which mean, as we have said earlier, "the mental temperaments." Thus, Sattwa is considered as white, Rajas as red, and Tamas as black. Man is essentially the thoughts that he entertains. From individual to individual, even when the thoughts are superficially the same, there are clear distinctions recognizable from their temperaments.

“On the basis of these temperamental distinctions, the entire mankind has been, for the purpose of spiritual study, classified into four "castes" of Varnas.

“[…]The decadent Hindu-Brahmin found it very convenient to quote the first quarter of the stanza, and repeat "I CREATED THE FOUR varnas," and give this tragic social vivisection a divine look having a godly sanction. They, who did this, were in fact, the greatest blasphemers that Hinduism ever had to reckon with. For Vyasa, in the very same line of the couplet, as though in the very same breath, describes the basis on which this classification was made, when he says, "BY THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE MENTAL QUALITY AND PHYSICAL ACTION (OF THE PEOPLE)."

“This complete definition of the Varna not only removes our present misunderstanding but also provides us with some data to understand its true significance. Not by birth is man a Brahmana (Brahmin); by cultivating good intentions and noble thoughts alone can we ever aspire to Brahmana-hood; nor can we pose as Brahmana merely because of our external physical marks, or bodily actions in the outer world. The definition insists that he alone is a Brahmana, whose thoughts are as much Sattwic, as his actions are.”

Vishnusahasranama Stanza 71,

naam 667: Braamanah:

One who has realised that the pluralistic world is a mere superimposition upon the Brahman, caused by error of judgement, and who experiences he Supreme Consciousness of the One Reality is a Braahmanah. […] By mere accident of birth one does not become a braahmanah. Visvamitra and others through their Tapas and Divine Experience had reached the status of Brahmanhood, so we read in the Puranas.

(By definition therefore, the Lord is the epitome of brahmanhood, hence godliness is Brahmin-ness.)

Naam 670: Braahmana-priyah:

One who is the beloved of and One Who is the lover of true men of full realization, the Braahmanas. Not the caste, but the men of supreme experience-divine. The Lord is dear to them, and they too are dear to Him.

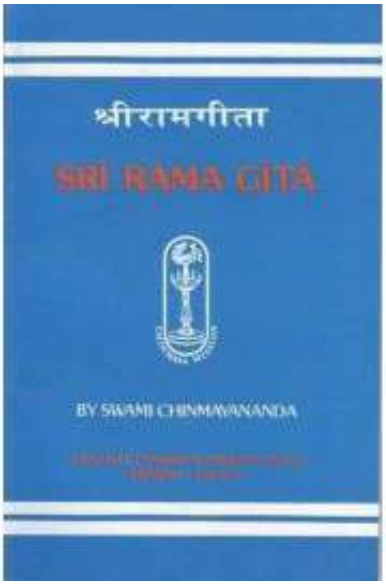
(which means that he to whom the Lord is dear, hence who works at becoming godly, who is keenly desirous of eradicating his vasanasinorder to unite with Brahman, which means who works for greater good, without egocentric desires, without an eye on results, without accumulating for himself….such a one is working at brahminhood. And him/her the Lord loves.)

(Also read Story 115 A Confusion Called Varna, 30.08.2015)

237. Why Karma and Jnana cannot be pursued together

30-12-2015

Rama Gita Is a discourse on the Self by Sri Rama to his dear brother Lakshmana. In a graded manner the text (and hence Gurudev's commentary) explains why Karma and Jnana cannot be pursued together. Some potent sentences from Gurudev's commentary are placed here as a collection. The point here is the painstaking manner in which Gurudev repeats his arguments with the same clarity that he gave us in the Bhagvad Gita and Vivekchoodamani.



Verse 10

* Work cannot end ignorance nor reduce oneís attachment to the fruits of action; on the other hand, from such karmas new, evil (binding) karmas arise, because of which samsara also becomes unavoidable. Therefore, a wise seeker should inquire into and contemplate upon the nature of Knowledge − Reality. Karma cannot ever destroy spiritual ignorance. Here, ignorance may be considered as the product of ignorance, the ego the sense of limited individuality (the perceiverfeeler-thinker). The sense of doership cannot be totally eliminated from the field of work. In fact, no matter how alert we may be in our work can only fatten the sense of doership in us.

*Sri Rama therefore concludes with the idea that the wise seeker,

after purifying his or her vasanas through selfless work, undertaken in a loving spirit of dedication, “must begin to contemplate upon the nature of Reality.”

*karma can never release our personality from itsmisapprehensions : “Knowledge alone can end ignorance; karma is but the product of ignorance.”

Verse 14

*Karma is performed by the ego with noble, not-sonoble, or stark-selfish desires. The ego asserts itself in all karmas. The ego is the doer-experiencer entity in each one of us.

*Jnana, the path of contemplation, starts when the ego is curbed; in the final stage of the path, the ego disappears totally as we glide into the state of pure Consciousness, the Self. Movement into the state of Self-Awareness is not possible unless we leave the ego of the previous state. The dreamer-ego can never perceive or enter the waking state. The waker-ego must end in sleep. The waker-dreamer-sleeper ego must cease to be when we realize the Self.

*Therefore, to claim that karma and jnana are to be pursued at one and the same time is a misconception. In the path of karma, the ego must play, while in the path of knowledge, the ego must disappear.

*Through karma we gain inner purity, and such a purified mind gains its necessary poise in contemplation. The process of contemplation purifies the mind more and more. The quieter the mind, the more intense becomes the contemplation; the higher the intensity and steadiness of contemplation, the quieter becomes the mind. (Gurudev reiterates this in Vivekachoodamani Verse 2 when he elaborates on VaidikaDharmamaargaparata)

Verse 15

*The exclusive thought of the Self, arrived at through comtemplation with a purified heart, is called knowledge (vidya). Karma rises from its various (five) causes, while vidya demolishes all these instruments of karma.

*Karma and jnana cannot be lived at one and the same time because of their opposite natures. Karma springs from its unavoidable five essential factors: the body, which is the basis of actions; doership and enjoyership together called the individual; the instruments, the sense organs; the various functions in the body; and the presiding deities of the sense organs, which are the conditions necessary for each sense organ to function efficiently. The path of knowledge has its destination in direct apprehension (jnana), wherein all these factors and the sense of doership end.

Thus, because of their essentially contrary natures, karma and jnana can never be practiced at one and the same time by the same seeker − as the SamuccayaVadins

recommend and fanatically argue to prove their viewpoint.

In this verse, Sri Rama applies an axe to the very root of all the arguments of those who recommend integral yoga. We can pursue a variety of karmayogas−− service of the people, prayer, worship, and so on. But work and contemplation cannot be pursued at one and the same time. In karma, the mind is active and turned outward into the field work, while in contemplation, the mind's attention is turned away from the outer world, and the mind is exclusively engaged with thoughts of the nature of the Self, seeking to realize the total identity of 'I' (ego) with the divine Self.

238. The Biased Sun

31-12-2015

…. And the master of metaphors

So many letters Gurudev has written to so many people. Each one a masterpiece, each one tugs at the heart of those who have never received a letter, brings that lump to the throat on realising what all this One Guru has done for mankind. From the Gita to the Upanishads to the Bhagvatam to Vedanta to …. He has ground and minced and blended all knowledge and kept it ready for us to reach for as we grow up spiritually.

How simply he feeds it to us in the only language we are comfortable in – English, as if he knew of our handicap. All this since 1950.

And no letter went without a tiny fantastic message tucked in the margins or postscript, in case most of the letter was work-based. But there are so many many letters bursting with knowledge. Reading that one sentence too, causes the whole being to swell in realisation of one more knowledge gained….

Here is a letter presumably to celebrate Prabhakarji's great narrative of a yagna proceedings. But here and there little precious gems He leaves with love.

"I am happy you are always going for satsang with your wife…" is a message for many who it matters to.

But suddenly he says, "The more neat and clean the surface, the more the sunlight will get reflected….

But the sunlight is equally available to all surfaces, can we say the sun has more love for the mirror-like surfaces?"

He refers to the sadhaks who are striving to live the lofty spiritual values…. But what a metaphor!

Kindly read….

Swami
Chinmayananda

Chinmaya Tapovan Trust, Sidhabari 176 057. H.P. Fax : 1892 - 4356

4 June 1993

Sri A.K. Prabhakar
"Aradhana"
Veerabhadra Gardens
Pattom
Thiruvananthapuram 695 004
Kerala

Blessed Self:

Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!
Salutations !

Your kind letter of the 21st of May has reached me here today, describing so vividly the yagna held by Brah. Prabhuddha Chaitanya at Tirunelli, south Kerala. You have an enchanting style in reporting the yagna as I had noticed it earlier also. It moves smoothly.

I am happy that you are always going for Satsang along with your wife. The Brahmachari there in Thiruvananthapuram will be directly responsible to revitalize the centre and its missionary activities.

As for Sadhaks who are striving to live those healthy spiritual values their minds come to reflect more and more light of the Self and through them to the world around us.

The more neat and clean the surface, the more the sunlight will get reflected.

But the sunlight is equally available to all surfaces, can we say the sun has more love for mirror-like surfaces ?

With Prem and Om,

Thy Own Self,

CHINMAYA

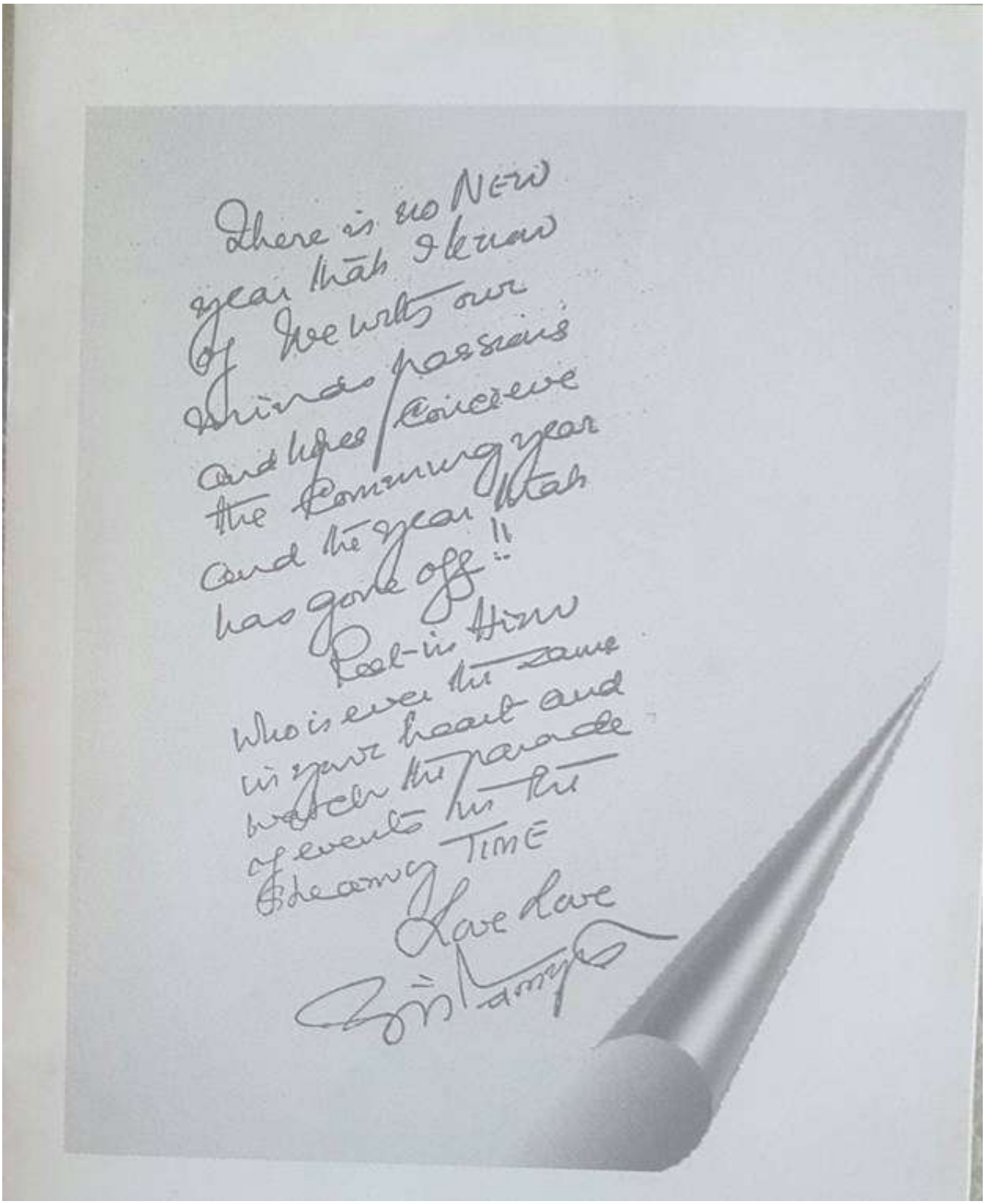
239. Gurudev’s Prayer

01-01-2016

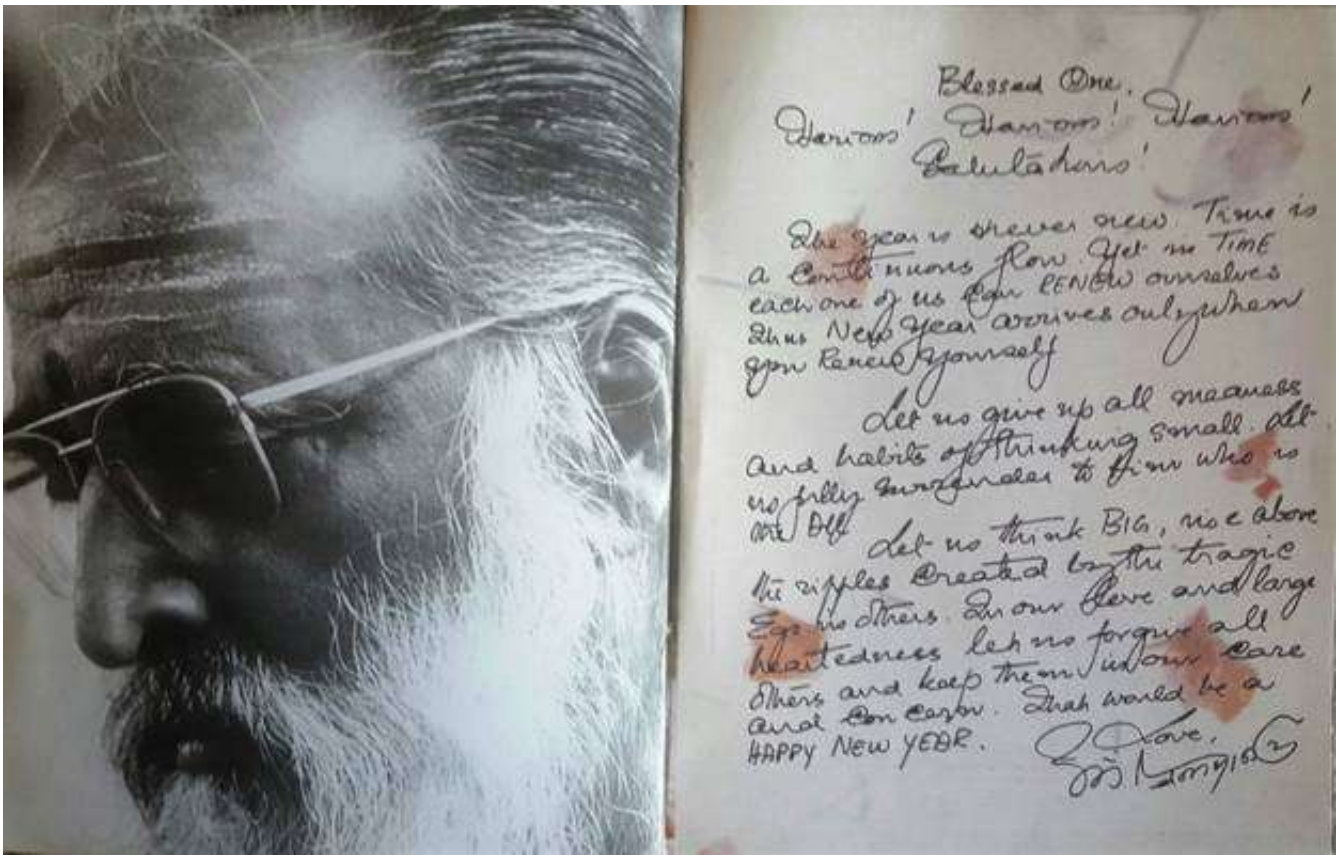
On the Beautiful New Year Day of 2016

In Time each one of us can RENEW ourselves. Thus New Year arrives only when you Renew yourself,” says Gurudev to us.

Here is Gurudev’s reminder to us on New Year’s day:


There is no New
year that I know
of. We write our
dreams, passions
and hopes / aspirations
the coming year
and the year that
has gone off !!
Rest in Him
Who is ever the same
in your heart and
watch the parade
of events in the
Stream of TIME
Love Love
Love
Gurudev

Gurudev's Prayer



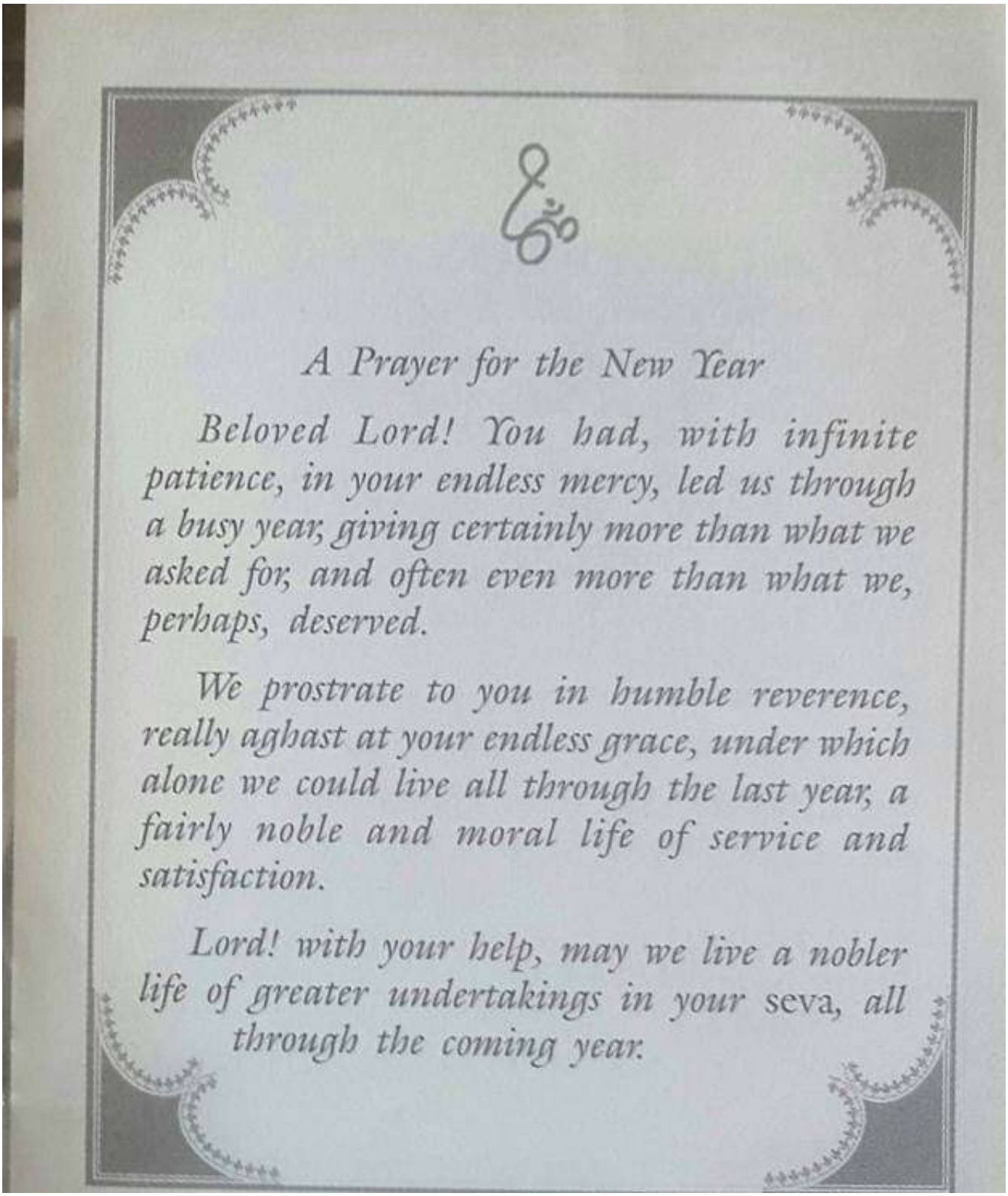
Blessed One,
Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!
Babulādhara!

The year is forever new. Time is a continuous flow. Yet no TIME each one of us can RENEW ourselves thus New Year arrives only when you Renew Yourself

Let us give up all meanness and habits of thinking small. Let us fully understand to live who is the Self

Let us think BIG, rise above the ripples created by the tragic Ego in others. In our love and large heartedness let us forgive all others and keep them in our care and on earth. That would be a real HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Love,



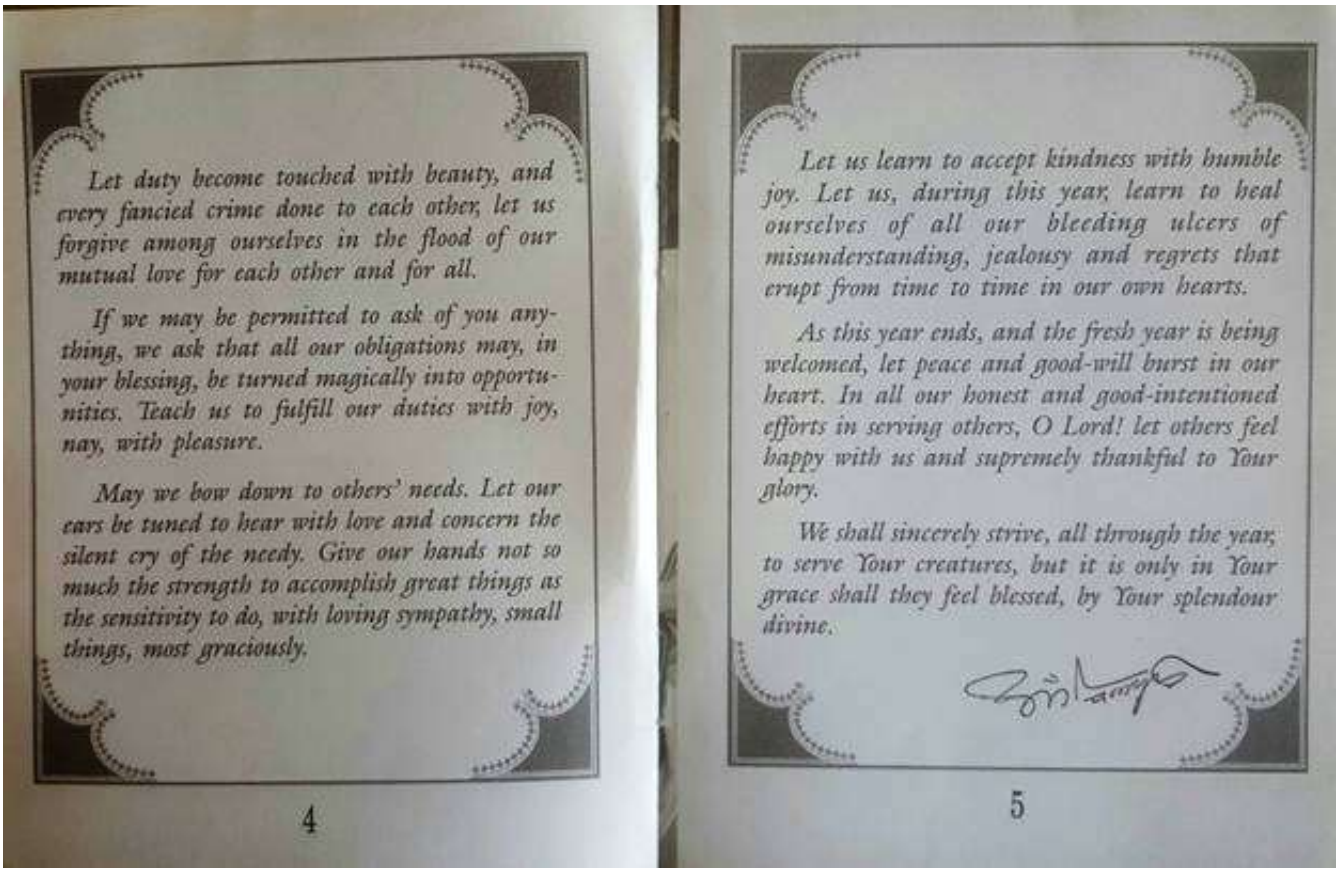
ஓம்

A Prayer for the New Year

Beloved Lord! You had, with infinite patience, in your endless mercy, led us through a busy year, giving certainly more than what we asked for, and often even more than what we, perhaps, deserved.

We prostrate to you in humble reverence, really aghast at your endless grace, under which alone we could live all through the last year, a fairly noble and moral life of service and satisfaction.

Lord! with your help, may we live a nobler life of greater undertakings in your seva, *all through the coming year.*



Let duty become touched with beauty, and every fancied crime done to each other, let us forgive among ourselves in the flood of our mutual love for each other and for all.

If we may be permitted to ask of you anything, we ask that all our obligations may, in your blessing, be turned magically into opportunities. Teach us to fulfill our duties with joy, nay, with pleasure.

May we bow down to others' needs. Let our ears be tuned to hear with love and concern the silent cry of the needy. Give our hands not so much the strength to accomplish great things as the sensitivity to do, with loving sympathy, small things, most graciously.

4

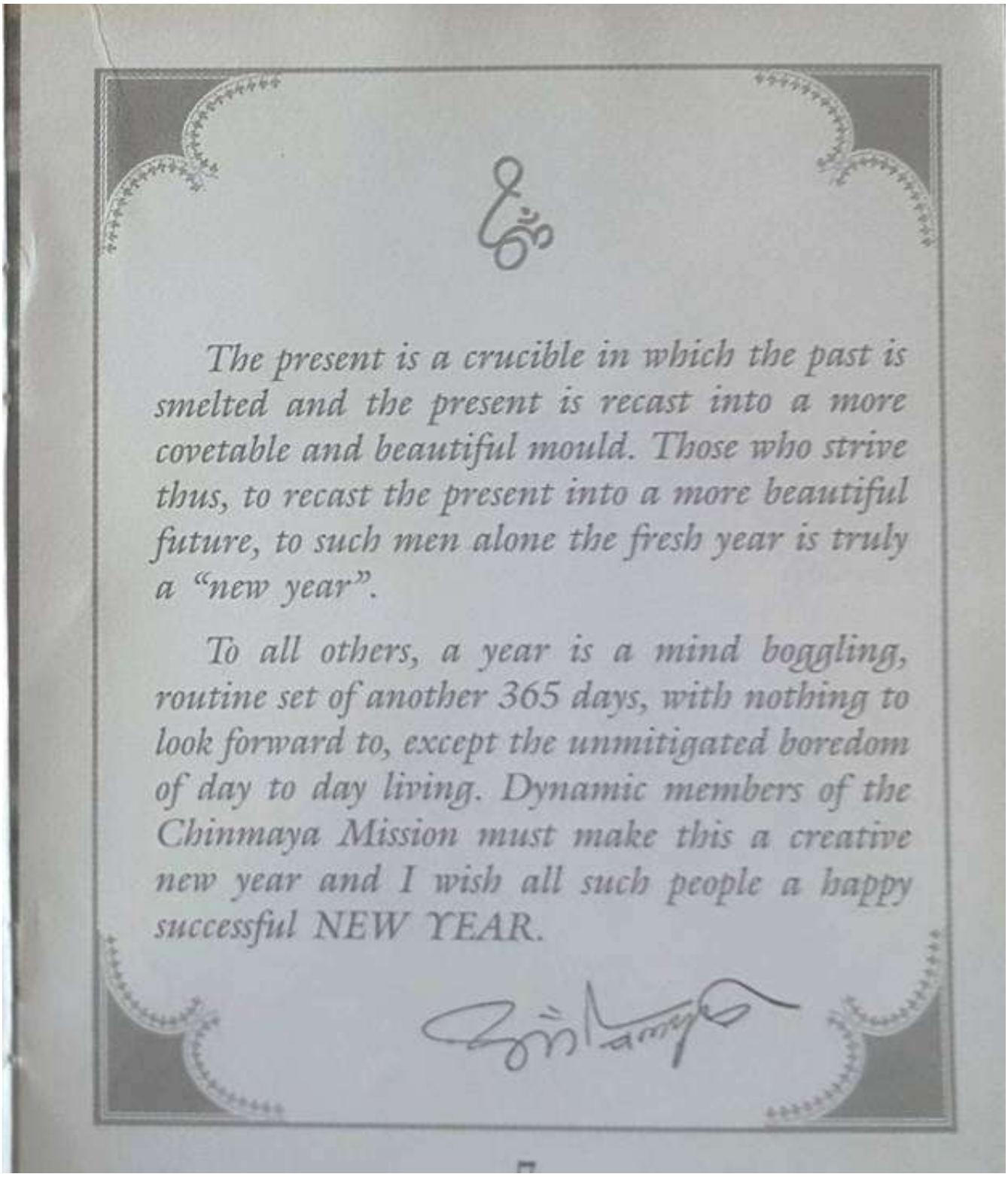
Let us learn to accept kindness with humble joy. Let us, during this year, learn to heal ourselves of all our bleeding ulcers of misunderstanding, jealousy and regrets that erupt from time to time in our own hearts.

As this year ends, and the fresh year is being welcomed, let peace and good-will burst in our heart. In all our honest and good-intentioned efforts in serving others, O Lord! let others feel happy with us and supremely thankful to Your glory.

We shall sincerely strive, all through the year, to serve Your creatures, but it is only in Your grace shall they feel blessed, by Your splendour divine.

5

And some invaluable gems for us to begin the new year with, specific glance at Mission sevaks,

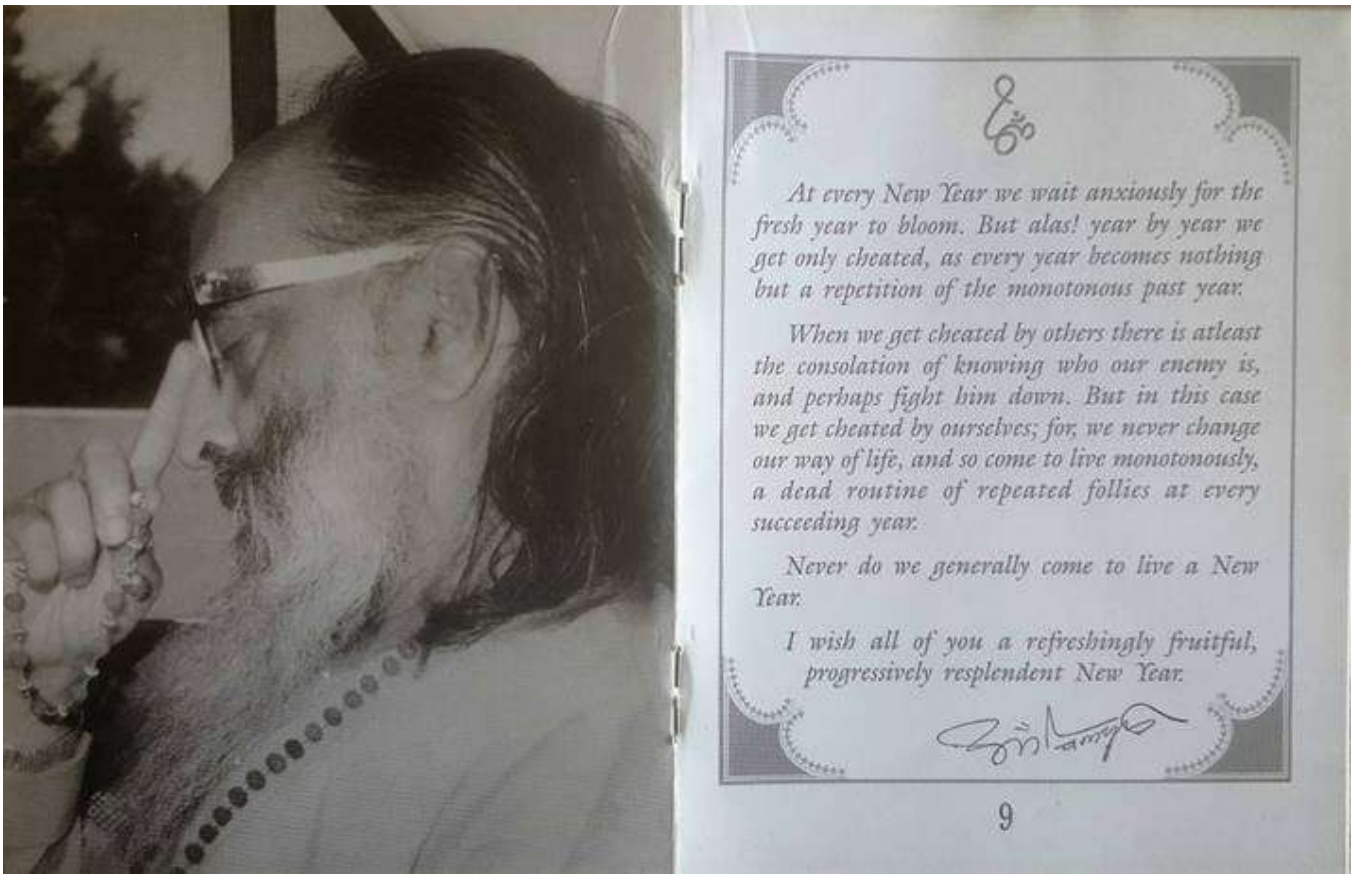


ॐ

The present is a crucible in which the past is smelted and the present is recast into a more covetable and beautiful mould. Those who strive thus, to recast the present into a more beautiful future, to such men alone the fresh year is truly a "new year".

To all others, a year is a mind boggling, routine set of another 365 days, with nothing to look forward to, except the unmitigated boredom of day to day living. Dynamic members of the Chinmaya Mission must make this a creative new year and I wish all such people a happy successful NEW YEAR.

And His wishes for (us) a refreshingly fruitful, progressively resplendent 2016:



ॐ

At every New Year we wait anxiously for the fresh year to bloom. But alas! year by year we get only cheated, as every year becomes nothing but a repetition of the monotonous past year.

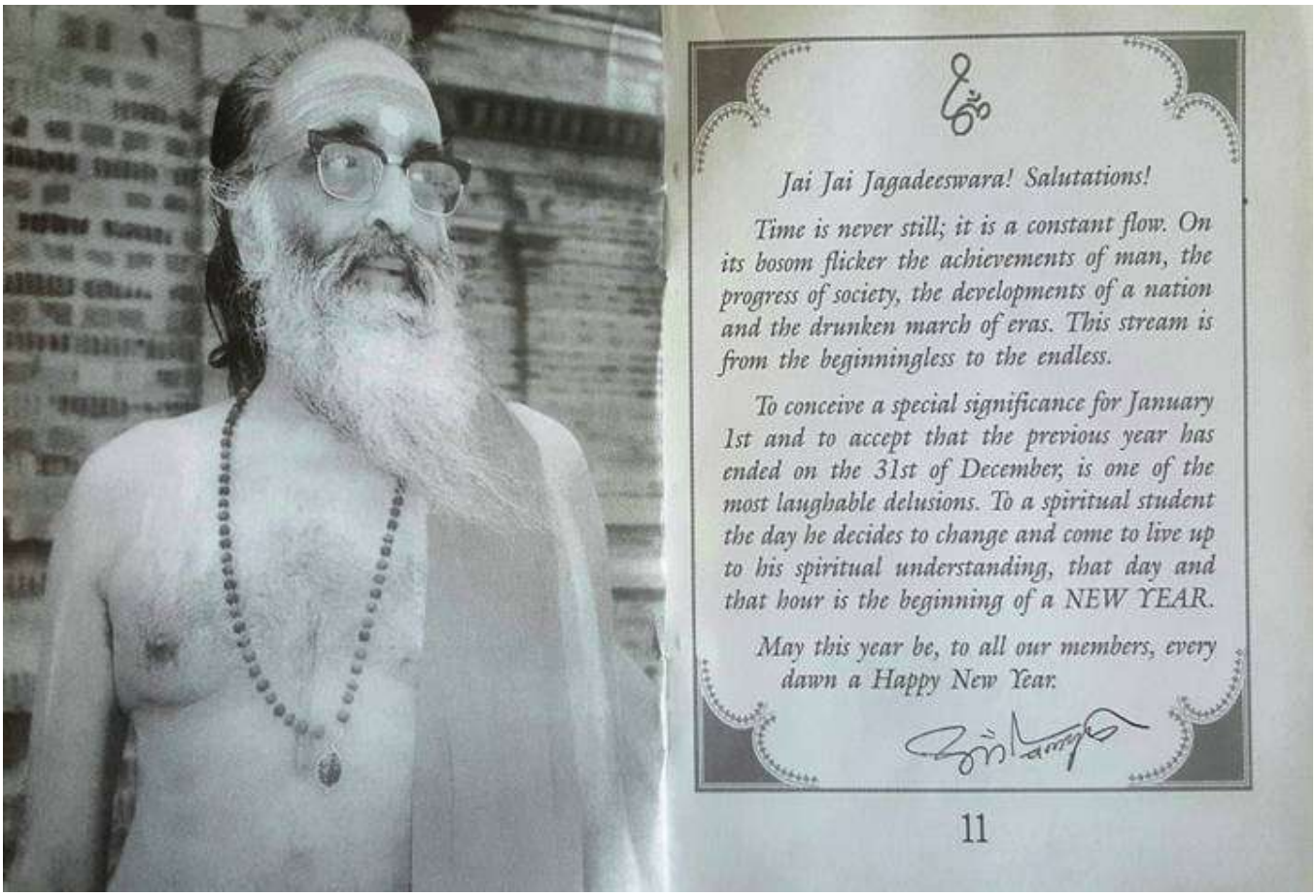
When we get cheated by others there is atleast the consolation of knowing who our enemy is, and perhaps fight him down. But in this case we get cheated by ourselves; for, we never change our way of life, and so come to live monotonously, a dead routine of repeated follies at every succeeding year.

Never do we generally come to live a New Year.

I wish all of you a refreshingly fruitful, progressively resplendent New Year.

9

And why every dawn is a New Year for the spiritual seeker:



ॐ

Jai Jai Jagadeeswara! Salutations!

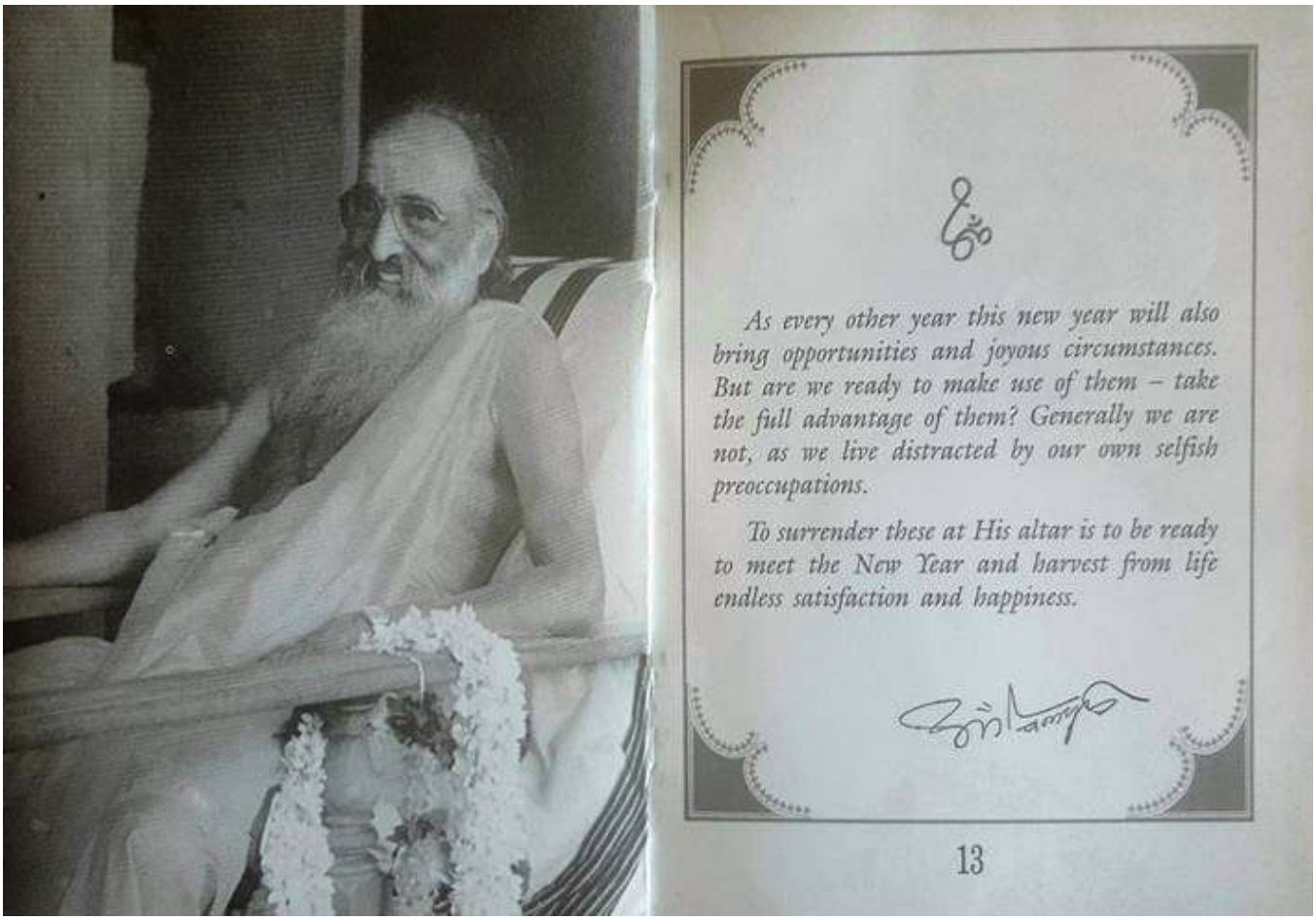
Time is never still; it is a constant flow. On its bosom flicker the achievements of man, the progress of society, the developments of a nation and the drunken march of eras. This stream is from the beginningless to the endless.

To conceive a special significance for January 1st and to accept that the previous year has ended on the 31st of December, is one of the most laughable delusions. To a spiritual student the day he decides to change and come to live up to his spiritual understanding, that day and that hour is the beginning of a NEW YEAR.

May this year be, to all our members, every dawn a Happy New Year.

11

And now He urges us to take advantage of every opportunity that 2016 will send our way, to surrender our selfish preoccupations at His altar.....

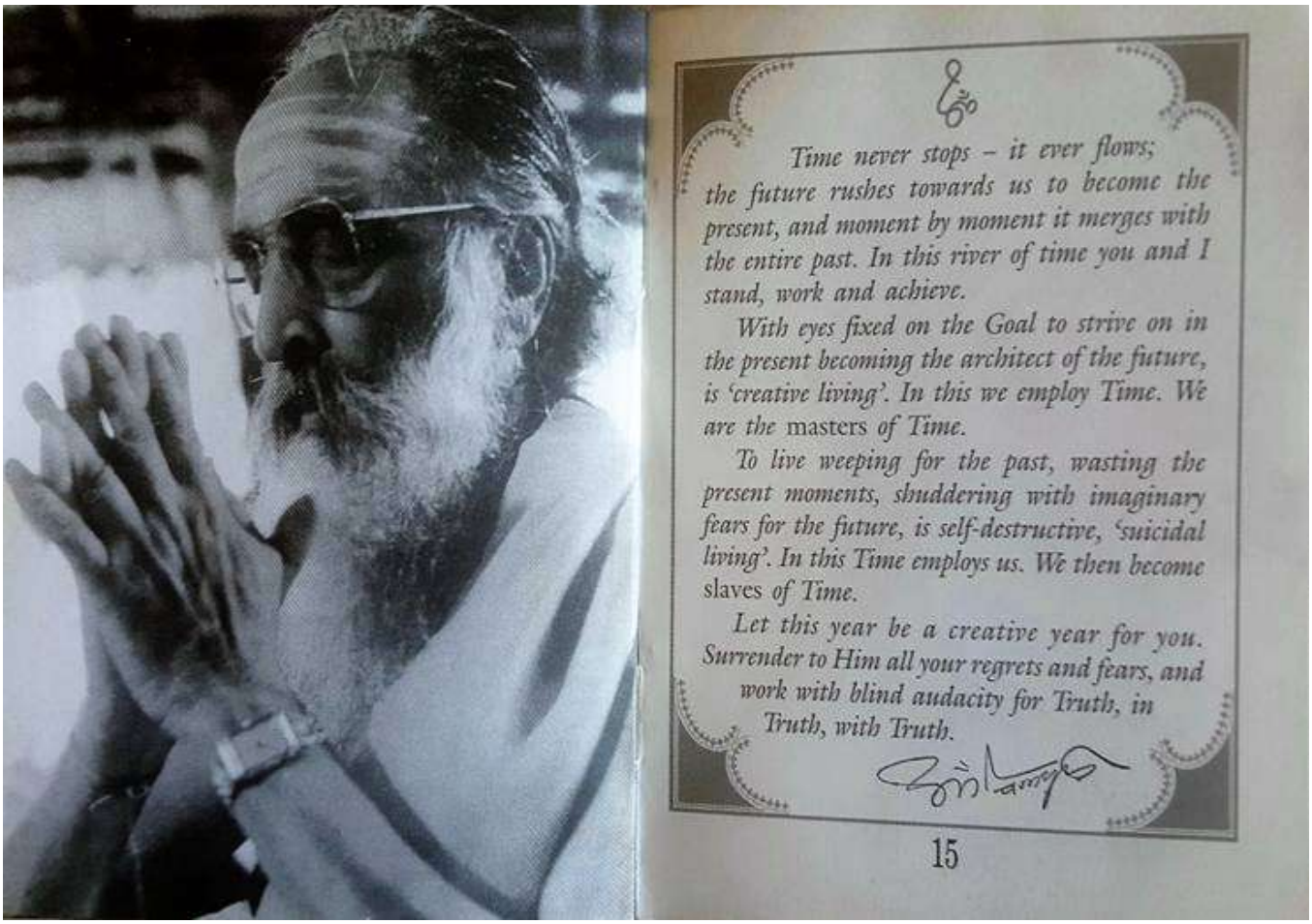


As every other year this new year will also bring opportunities and joyous circumstances. But are we ready to make use of them – take the full advantage of them? Generally we are not, as we live distracted by our own selfish preoccupations.

To surrender these at His altar is to be ready to meet the New Year and harvest from life endless satisfaction and happiness.

13

"Work with blind audacity for Truth, in Truth, with Truth..." – a message He closes with, and very pertinent to our times. May we have the courage.



ॐ

Time never stops – it ever flows; the future rushes towards us to become the present, and moment by moment it merges with the entire past. In this river of time you and I stand, work and achieve.

With eyes fixed on the Goal to strive on in the present becoming the architect of the future, is 'creative living'. In this we employ Time. We are the masters *of Time.*

To live weeping for the past, wasting the present moments, shuddering with imaginary fears for the future, is self-destructive, 'suicidal living'. In this Time employs us. We then become slaves *of Time.*

Let this year be a creative year for you. Surrender to Him all your regrets and fears, and work with blind audacity for Truth, in Truth, with Truth.

15

Source: Tapovan Prasad's collection of Gurudev's New Year messages brought out during Chinmaya VishwaSammelan.

CIF wishes everyone a blessed 2016!

Hari Om.

240. How Cathedrals of Service are Built

02-01-2016

Letter sent by Shri Som Oberoi, an old devotee of Gurudev going back to 1982 in Kuwait where a small group of ardent devotees came together to form what was known as the Chinmaya Family of Kuwait, on whose executive committee he was.

In 1982, the Mission was attempting to set up a Center in the US (what is now called Chinmaya Mission West). And Gurudev was writing to all Mission Centers to come forward to offer loan or donation for the Center.

This letter gives us an insight into how every Mission Center came up, one by one with Gurudev going around raising funds, members and devotees making offerings …

The Mission we see today standing large and vast, grand and magnificent, standing tall and confident in so many countries and their many States and cities and towns, collectively stand for the grandeur of Gurudev's Glory. When each one says, "We stand as one family….," every heart skips a beat, every throat feels a lump, every eye grows hot and moist.

Every Center has a history and a story to tell. A story of complete ecstasy over the idea of setting up a temple for his Mission. Followed only by bewilderment on seeing the funds needed to realise the dream. But Gurudev always said, unhesitatingly, "Pray to Narayana and tell Him to come with Lakshmi…"

In this letter he wrote to the "Chinmaya Family of Kuwait" Gurudev lays out an understanding of every Center being a Divine Cause, called for by the Lord Himself and all the devotees coming together to do His bidding. He states clearly for those willing to know, that it is not always that the Lord directly calls upon devotees to make an offering…

He says,

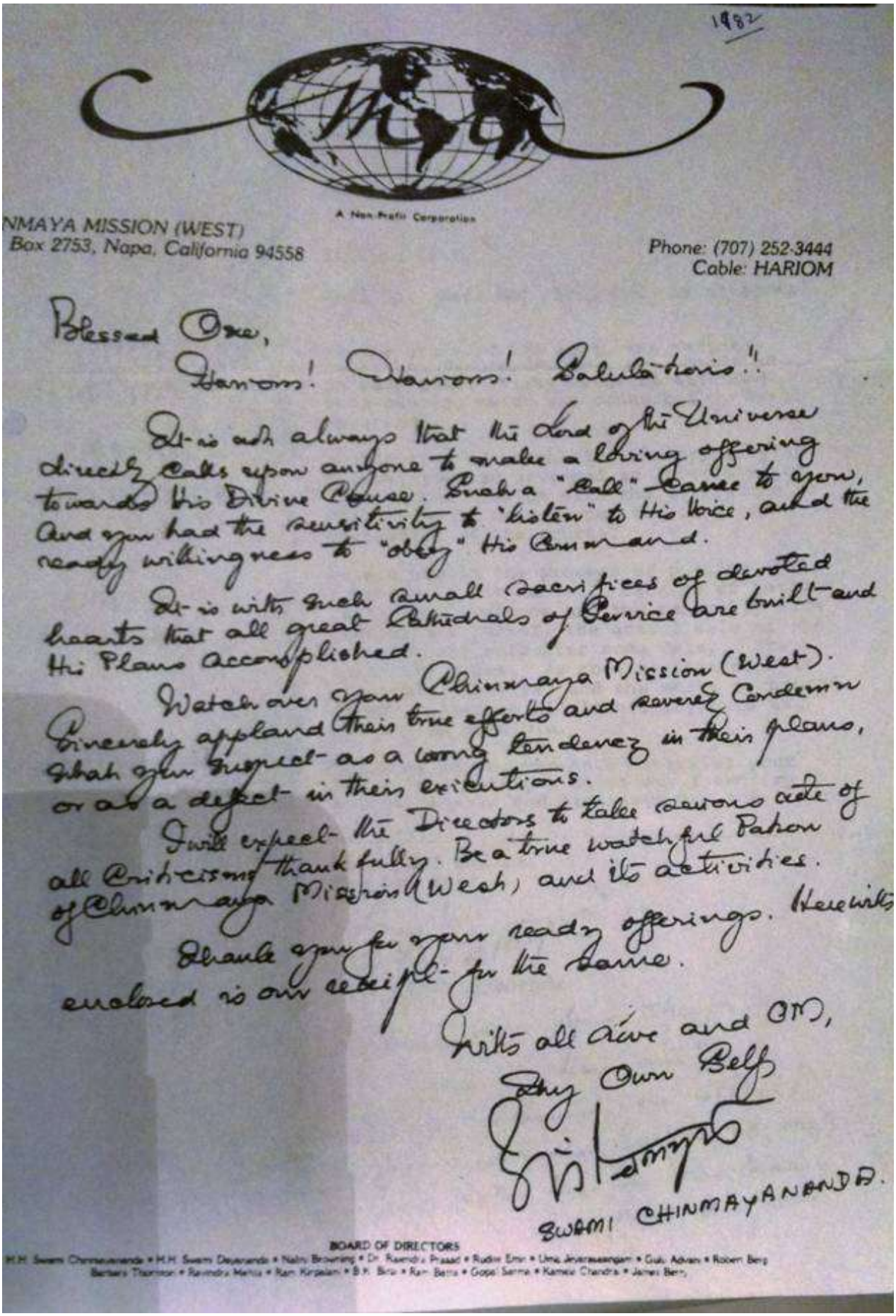
"It is not always that the Lord of the Universe directly calls upon anyone to make a loving offering towards His Divine Cause. Such a "Call" came to you and you had the sensitivity to 'listen' to His voice, and the ready willingness to "obey" His Command.

It is with such small sacrifices of devoted hearts that all great Cathedrals of Service are built and His Plans accomplished.

Watch over your Chinmaya Mission (West). Sincerely applaud their true efforts and severely condemn what you suspect as a wrong tendency in their plans, or as a defect in their executions.

I will expect the Directors to take serious note of all criticisms thankfully. Be a true watchful patron of Chinmaya Mission (West) and its activities."

He built, He sustained, He taught, He guided – not just brick and mortar Mission buildings, but also devotees and sevaks. Hari Om.



1982

A Non Profit Corporation

NMAYA MISSION (WEST)
Box 2753, Napa, California 94558

Phone: (707) 252-3444
Cable: HARIOM

Blessed One,

Namaste! Namaste! Pahuta-hariḥ!!

It is ash always that the Lord of the Universe directly calls upon anyone to make a loving offering towards His Divine Mission. Such a "call" came to you, and you had the sensitivity to "listen" to His Voice, and the ready willingness to "obey" His Command.

It is with such small sacrifices of devoted hearts that all great Cathedrals of Service are built and His Plans accomplished.

Watch over your Chinmaya Mission (West). Sincerely applaud their true efforts and severely Condemn what you suspect as a wrong tendency in their plans, or as a defect in their executions.

I will expect the Directors to take serious note of all criticisms thankfully. Be a true watchful Pahon of Chinmaya Mission (West) and its activities.

Thanks you for your ready offerings. Herewith enclosed is our receipt for the same.

With all love and OM,

Yours Own Self

Swami Chinmayananda.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
H.H. Swami Chinmayananda • H.H. Swami Dayananda • Nalini Browning • Dr. Ravindra Prasad • Rudiv Emr • Uma Jayarasangam • Gulu Advani • Robert Berg
Barbara Thomson • Ravindra Mehta • Ram Kirpalani • B.K. Birla • Ram Batra • Gopal Sarma • Kamesh Chandra • James Berry

241. Hymn ToBadrinath

03-01-2016

Advaita Vedanta in perfect capsules

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Vedanta is vast. There are some terms and topics that as if form the edifice for the clear understanding of the subject. Some of these are: Brahman, Maya, avidya, jiva, Iswara, Hiranyagarbha, Adhyasa, apavada.

Some writers spend many paras and pages explaining their meaning. Each of these topics is vast and difficult to grasp, and people feel exasperated.

In his commentary to “Hymn to Badrinath” (referred to as ‘Hymn” hereafter), a wonderful composition of Swami TapovanMaharaj, Gurudev gives explanations in the shortest simplest clear terms. The few paragraphs here will satisfy even the erudite.

Paramatman: [Hymn to Badrinath 1-7]

The Infinite is that from which the world of perceptions,emotions,and thoughts,constituted by the five gross and subtle great elements, rise up to play their games of infinitude and change. The field of time and space and its seemingly real things and beings that form the world must have risen from some existent Principle of Truth - because otherwise, we will be in effect insisting upon that all these must have come from,nothing; something can come, if at all only out of something.

Super imposition1-21

In the introductory discourses given by Acharya Sankara to his commentary upon Brahma Sutra,there is an exhaustive thesis upon this phenomena of delusory superimposition. In his analysis he has brought out,that there is in fact a kind of mutual symbiosis-process between the delusory vision and the real substratum. He says the slimness,the spots,the hood,the tapering tail,the crawling movement etc,which are the nature of the serpent(sarpatwam) are offered to the smooth,round,twisted rope lying in dim light. But at the same time in return,the roundness,the linear lengthand the very existence of rope are presented in turn to the delusory serpent vision. As a result of this mutual processes, we find the non-existing qualities of serpent conceal the essential qualities of the rope (Rajjuttwam), and the distant rope becomes non- existent,while the non-existent serpent becomes an existent factor to be reckoned with. This is almost a summary of the entire process of "mutual super imposition" (AnyonyaAdhyasa)

Maya hymn 2-5

In Vedanta,the capacity in an individual to delude himself,to perceive a world of plurality,is called Maya.

In an ordinary arithmetic problem, the unknown factor is generally taken to be indicated by some symbol X or Y or Z. This supposition is only to be convenience in our calculations. Similarly,our problem is how can the finite come from the Infinite, [from which] the finite world of plurality and sorrows has seemingly emerged out. In all delusory superimposition there is the ignorance or non-apprehension of the real substratum (rope or the garland of flowers) and out of this ignorance rise up the endless misapprehensions of unreal experiences of the unreal experiences (ghost or serpent).This ignorance of non-apprehension of the real is the power of Maya.

2-3

We live in the Infinite as fish in the "belly" waters--as the living creatures live with their physical structures,in the "belly" of the atmosphere.

In this state of beatific experience of the One without- a-second,the teacher says there is neither a world (Jagat) nor an individual (jiva) nor a God principle Iswara--to be experienced as separate from It.

In this context it is better that we try to understand what exactly do we call, as the world,(jagat) as the individual (jiva) as the God (Iswara). In each individual the anatomical structure and the physiological functions put together the Gross --body; the mind and intellect,the thought flow,constitutes the Subtle body; and the consciousness and the unconscious Vasanas that order the immediate behaviour of our thoughts, are together called as the causal body. The divine consciousness,the Infinite Self,is the substratum for the delusory projections of these bodies.

The Infinite Consciousness expressing through the total gross body is called virat. The same consciousness Infinite and Changeless,expressing Itself through a given " microcosmic mind and intellect" is the expression of the individuality,Jiva.The Infinite Life manifesting through the "total causal body"(macrocosmic) is called God or Iswara.

When the body mind and intellect are transcended,the individual apprehends the Pure,Infinite nature of Reality,wherein in Its non dual existence, no such distinction as world,individual or God,can ever arise.Having seen and experiencing the post,there cannot remain the ghost vision to give us a share of the old dread or sorrow.This is the result of Godhood,we take shelter at the feet of Lord of Badrinath, who is none other than this Atman divine.

242. Geeta For Children

04-01-2016

Gurudev's life was dedicated to the Gita and its propagation. In an ode to Swami Tapovanam, Gurudev says, "[I was] the darkest, dreariest, stupid fellow that ever was, he in his own way, with his own light touches carved out of it what I am now.

"So I thought that I must come and bring it out to others. [...] Now how to explain to you all that I saw him outside was what I saw in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Geeta. Therefore I thought that these two books must become permanently known by everyone and therefore the work started..."

That we all study the Gita with such intensity, are taught by well versed acharyas, is all the doing of Gurudev. But he also drew young children into this. Gurudev planned their path with the care of a keen parent. He was verily building the future of the world when he wrote an exclusive Geeta for children and young adults. Called Geeta for Children, CCMT 2009, 12,13, the book modulates the tone and the intensity to suit the young person.

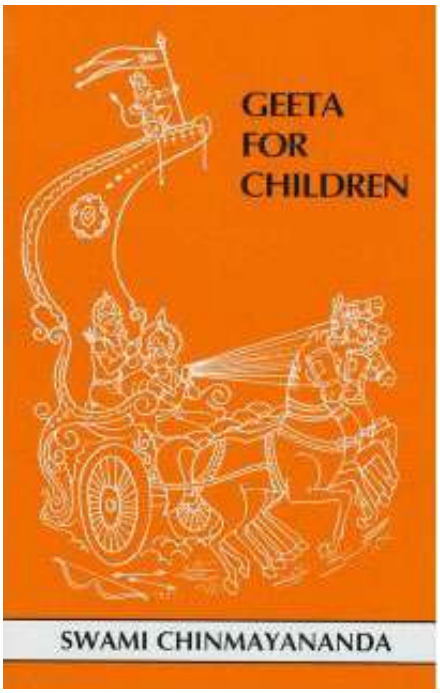
Here is Gurudev's note to parents and Mission workers, something that needs imbibing so that the next time we want to gift a young parent a book, we gift the Geeta For Children .

Some poignant sentences which we need to repeat to ourselves time and again:

*To mould their (children) thoughts and aspirations is the true fulfillment of a national education.

*The ideal given to them in their early childhood alone can again and again inspire their future years of life and supply them with the courage to face their problems, [...] guts to pursue their purposes diligently , the faith in themselves and in their country, and the heroism [...] to act according to their conviction.

That reference to faith in their country is so very very relevant. A good many who today feel angst over their country are unable to differentiate between governance and the nation. A nation is always the substratum. Governance is the superimposition that distorts.



*SreemadBhagvadGeeta is the very quintessence of our entire ancient cultural lore, based upon the irrefutable arguments and inspired thoughts of the Rishis, recorded for us in the Upanishads.

* Balaks and Balikas growing in [...] the Balavihars have started demanding to know the meaning and contents of the Geeta Verses which they have learnt to chant.

This, Gurudev said even before 1975. Gurudev drew our attention to this 40 years ago. This Centenary Year His call is being renewed. May we hear.

Gurudev points out that there are ponderous volumes of the Gita commented by various scholars and others; but “the highly involved arguments expressed in a laborious style, studded with very many Upanishad quotations and sprinkled with the conclusions of other schools of philosophers, make all such volumes useless to the children.”

Never a truer word spoken. Scholastic writings have their place but to a mind seeking and on the learning curve, a mixture of philosophical schools, only adds to the confusion, and not remove it. Gurudev followed the philosophy of Advaita as propounded in Vedanta. Every text he taught, wrote or talked on, were grounded deeply in Vedanta. Which is how when we see his explanation of SINS (see story 216) in the Vivekachoodamani or the Geeta or the Upanishad remains unchanging, the same in clarity. Not just because the person was the same, but because his philosophy was the same. Often times key terms are explained by different schools from a different standpoint. Hence sticking to one school, one teacher, helps assimilation.

"... we found that even our Sewaks and Sewikas were not able to help the children. Hence we conceived the idea of bringing out a BhagvadGeeta for Children. [....] These chapters were written (earlier serialized in the TapovanPraad!!) so that Chinmaya Mission workers or the intelligent parents of our children may read and digest and then explain these ideas to the members of the Balvihar Branches."

Now Gurudev explains how the book is to be used:

- They will read and understand these simple thoughts and thereafter present these ideas to theor wards in the local language, in simple and clear expressions, without any hurry or impatience.
- Explain these ideas again and again. Make the children discuss with you.
- Let them ask questions.
- Let them among themselves teach each other what they have been taught in the previous classes.
- Make this the Geeta-study lively, allowing full participation of the children themselves in all the discussions.

The book is so structured that every chapter has stanzas to be memorized, and questions to be discussed in class.

And then Gurudev writes, "whenever there is any great difficulty for you to understand, please refer to me by a note. I shall try to clarify. [...] To many parents this volume would in itself be, I am confident, an education and a helpful initiation into the heart of the Geeta."

How grateful we are!

Hari Om

243. Gurudev on a Holiday.....

05-01-2016

Sent by Brni Maitreyi Chaitanya

Holiday!!! a word most of us love! When the new year calendar is out, we often look for those 'red dates' when we can freak out, relax, enjoy.....

Relaxed schedule or may be no schedule is an important part of any Holiday....

But dear friends, not for our great Gurudev...

In a letter he describes his Holiday...

“Yes. After the continuous work, it looks a holiday here when I have only (1) a morning class of Mandukya (2) an evening class of Geeta (3) 7 students and 12 guests (4) dictating on to tape recorder Vivekachoodamani book (5) finishing a commentary upon Sri Gurudev's “Shri Ganga Stotram” (6) finishing the fortnightly letters to the study group members (7) my own studies (8) a little sadhana (9) a lot of correspondence with Mission Branches!!”

Can you believe this is a holiday for him! Mind you dear readers, this letter was written on 7th May 1969 and at that time he is speaking about his studies and personal Sadhana.....

What bhagya that we have Gurudev as our Guru.....

On 9th September 2013 our deeksha day, someone asked to the newly initiated group, how many holidays would you have now? And one of us so wonderfully said, “Amma, now whole life is a holiday....”

May we also spend our Holidays like our dear Gurudev.

And working days?.....

Reference: Yours Forever, Life and Letters of Swami Chinmayananda, by Brni Prarthna Chaitanya and Parvathy Raman

Hari: Om

244. Attachment Detachment

06-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Two of the very familiar terms in Vedanta are attachment and detachment. And Gurudev has used them with great aplomb in his teachings.

The reason why we who are essentially Pure-Blissful-Eternal-Consciousness, are insecure is because we see ourselves through the mind and see ourselves as individuals. This is the ego, the 'I' which, in order

to make the mind feel secure, wants several things and becomes dependent on them. This dependence is the bondage and getting out of it is moksha.

Therefore the spiritual goal being moksha one has to lose/drop this dependence on the outer world with the help of knowledge, “I am not the individual”. Hence it is necessary to understand attachment and detachment.

Gurudev says, attachment is: ‘I’ plus ‘I want’.

Gurudev gives us a nice nugget: ‘Some body wants the shortest form of Vedanta as he is climbing the bus, one foot on the step. To such a man, the answer is detach and attach. Detach from the lower attach to the higher.’

Thus the knowledge and application of these two terms is important. Let us see a few tips from Parama Pujya Sri Gurudev.

BG 2:47 – inspired activity and renunciation of attachment

Not only is it sufficient that a true worker should act in the world, established in equipoise and equanimity, but he should, amidst the changes of the world, also reinforce this poise, through a renunciation of his "attachment" (Sanga) to the immediate fruits of his actions.

We shall try to enquire into the "attachment," mentioned here, which a seeker should renounce, so that he may become more efficient in performing inspired activities. To all sincere students, who have so far followed the Lord's words, it should be clear that "attachment" here means all factors against which Krishna has already warned us in the earlier stanzas and insisted that we must renounce them all --- viz., wrong imaginations, false expectations, day-dreams about the fruits of actions, anxieties for the results, and fears for future calamities that have not yet appeared to threaten our lives.

BG 2:63 – vishaya sangha and the ladder of fall

"Like a tree emerges from a seed, the source of all evil starts from our own wrong thinking, or false imaginations. Thought is creative; it can make us, or mar us. If rightly harnessed, it can be used for constructive purposes; if misused, it can totally destroy us. When we constantly think upon a sense-object, the CONSISTENCY OF THOUGHT creates in us an ATTACHMENT for the object of our thought; and, when more and more thoughts flow towards an object of attachment, they crystallize to form a BURNING DESIRE for the possession and enjoyment of the object-of-attachment. The same force of the motion, when directed towards obstacles that threaten the non-fulfilment of our desires, is called anger (Krodha)." This is the start of the ladder-of-fall.

BhajaGovindam stanza 9: Satsanghaand the ladder of rise

And in BhajaGovindam the ladder of rise starts with satsangha. Therefore one has to be alert to where his/ her mind is centred.

Gurudev writes in his commentary to stanza 9:

*To live in attachment is certainly an ill-rewarding programme of existence.

*Through pratipaksabhavana we must try to withdraw from them all and spend the energy so conserved in seeking and serving Govinda.

* In order to reinforce the efforts of a student in his early days of seeking, Sankara advises him to have plenty of 'company of the good'.(satsangah). […] In order to fight against the hordes of tempations in everyday world [read: detaching from worldly attachments] he needs a fortress around him, which is drawn from his association with good people [read: forming better attachment]

* as a result of the influence of the 'good company' the human mind develops steadily a capacity to withdraw from the sensuous fields of attraction and thus discovers in itself the secret of detachment. [This is the rise of man] – Gurudev cross references this to Gita 2:62-63.

B.G XII -19

Attachment to and identification with the matter equipments - body, mind, and intellect - is the cause by which we are helplessly made to dance to the mad tunes which the chance happenings dictate. One who is detached from these equipments is the one who is a master of them all.

In the company of sages page 53

At this moment what is your freedom? Your freedom is to go on a particular line. When I go to office, everybody must smile at me. From morning till evening you repeat yourself in everything you do. You have no freedom. I can make you angry in no time. If I happen to move the papers on your desk, you will be dancing around in anger! Thus we give our strings to the world outside to pull and make us dance as it wishes. We have no freedom. The outer world dictates to us all the time. And the mind and intellect persecute us. I am a poor slave, being killed from within and from without. What freedom are you talking about? Only a person detached can be free.

VivekaChudamani 173
From the stand point of the mind, the body the sense organs and the objects of the world are all "objects". Not only does the mind project all these but having projected them, it creates an attachment in man for these objects. By this attachment he gets bound and becomes limited and sorrowful.

Kathopanishad1-28
To attach ourselves to the divine is to detach ourselves from the undivine. To walk into light is to walk out of darkness. To wake up is to escape the dream. Thus all religions can be called either as Religion of attachment or Religion of detachment according to the emphasis that has been laid by the Master of the Bible!

245. A Powerful Peace Invocation

07-01-2016

By Swami Chinmayananda

Here is a shanti mantra or peace invocation that many would have chanted or heard chanted. Gurudev's explanation and presentation here, brings out a certain emotion and feeling which is special. Addressed to the One Cosmic Power prior to the Pauranic Rama Krishna and other greats, this invocation says Gurudev, brings student and teacher together as they chant together. The prayer is addressed to Varuna, Mitra, Vayu, Brihaspati, who are the representations of the One all-pervading Power, to whom powers have been delegated by the One Power.

In so invoking them all, both teacher and student seek protection of all their faculties, the clarity of their speech (by the teacher) and healthy limbs so that the knowledge is well-gained and assimilated and imbibed so that the gross in them is suitably divinely transformed. What a stunning explanation by Gurudev. Supremely stunning. It alerts, wakes up, reassures .. everything at the same time. That the Teacher Himself should bring this to us now, is poignant. Nobody has packed in so much expression into a commentary as He did. We are blessed to read this during His centenary year.

ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः ।शं नो भवत्वर्यमा ।
शं नो इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः ।शं नो विष्णुरुरुक्रमः ।

नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो ।
त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि ।
ऋतं वदिष्यामि । सत्यं वदिष्यामि । तन्मामवतु ।
तद्वक्तारमवतु । अवतु माम् । अवतु वक्तारम् ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Shan No Mitrah Sham Varunnah | Shan No Bhavatv-Aryamaa |
Shan Na Indro Brhaspatih | Sham Na Indro Brhaspatih |Sham No Vissnnur-Urukramah |

NamoBrahmanne |Namaste Vaayo |
Tvam-[e]Iva PratyakssamBrahmaasi |Tvaam-[e]Iva Pratyakssam Brahma Vadissyaami |
RtamVadissyaami |Satyam Vadissyaami |Tan[d]-Maamavatu |
Tad-Vaktaaram-Avatu |AvatuMaam |AvatuVaktaaram ||
Om ShaantihShaantihShaantih ||

May Mitra be Propitious to Us, May Varuna bless us. May the blessings of Aryama be upon Us,May the grace of Indra and Brihaspati be upon Us,May Vishnu the all-pervading be propitious to Us,Salutations to Brahman,Salutations to Thee O Vayu! Thou Art

the Visible Brahman,I shall declare that Thou alone art the Visible Brahman, Thou art the ‘right’, Thou art the ‘good’. May ‘That’ protect me; may ‘That’ protect the speaker (teacher). Please Protect Me. Please Protect the Speaker. Om!
Peace! Peace! Peace!



This peace chantis recited by the teacher and the taught together, and it is a prayer raised in devotion to the recognised gods of the Vedic period who were representations of the one divine Cosmic Power. The ideals of the divine such as Rama, Krishna and others are a later development, being the products of the Puranic age. In early Hinduism, the devotees prayed at the feet of the one Cosmic Power recognised through its various representations as Mitra, Varuna, Aryama etc. They are all, as the Veda declares, different names and expressions of the one Power that functions behind the entire phenomena of nature and presides over their destinies.

These deities invoked are all delegates representing in themselves a specific power each, given to them by the All-Powerful. Thus Mitra is the guardian spirit of prana and the day, since all energy and activity are expressed in full swing in the day time. Varuna governs the outgoing breath ‘apana’ and the night. Here it may be noted that whenever we undertake any physical exertion, such as lifting a weight, pushing a thing, or even the effort of expressing our thought in speech – in all such moments of activity we breathe in hard, and when the activity ceases, we breathe out (apana) in exhaustion after the expenditure of energy or prana.

Aryama is the presiding deity of the sun and the eyes. The Cosmic Power, identifying with the source of all energy and light, the Sun, is called at that moment of identification with reference to its particular conditioning, as Aryama. If the Sun were not there – sun meaning the light principle – the objects and things of the world will not be illumined by the eyes, for the sense organ ‘eye’ functions only in the medium of light. Even the most powerful telescope or microscope cannot illumine an object in a dark room. In the medium of light alone can the eyes function, and therefore to consider the sun, the source of all light, as the presiding deity of the human eye is quite reasonable and scientific.

To those who have been initiated into the secret of this concept, it will be easy to understand that Indra is the governor of all might (physical strength) and the

presiding deity of the hand. The physical strength in an individual though it cannot be given a specific location expresses generally through the instrument of the hands.

Brihaspati is an expression of the divine which controls intelligence and knowledge. Vishnu, in his all-pervading nature, governs all movements and thus becomes the deity of the feet.

Thus, in invoking the blessings of Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Indra, Brihaspati and Vishnu, the Vedic teachers and students were invoking speech and healthy limbs so that day and night with energy and strength, they might gain intellectual accomplishments and fulfil the study by transforming the gross in themselves to become the divine.

The word sammeans well-being, and so the entire invocation is a prayer addressed to these forces for their grace, so that through their blessings all the above-mentioned instruments in us maybe assured of their well-being. For a perfect and profitable listening (sravana) to the philosophical discourses and for the diligent pursuit of acquiring, maintaining and living the new values pointed out in the Sastra, it is clear that we should have all these instruments and power in full vigour and health.

To lift our eyes from the import and secret implications of this invocation to the society around us, crawling in disease and premature death, is to understand how far we have ignored the spirit of our culture and have come to suffer. Vedanta does not dole out any excuse for the society to ignore their health. Physical health is of consummate importance; this is perfectly evident when we lift the veil of words and understand the true import of this invocation.

So far, the invocation was dealing with the individual and his anatomical and psychological powers. The prayer now becomes a direct call to the Supreme: “Our salutations to Brahman,” a name uniformly used in the entire Vedic literature to address the infinite Supreme Truth upon which the pluralistic phenomena with their partial expressions of dynamism and energy are but an idle superimposition.

“Salutations unto Thee, O Vayu!” Here Vayu is the expression of life in and through the infinite variety of equipments constituting the entire universe. In Vedanta, Vayu is referred to as the Sutratma, meaning the ‘evident expression of life’ that strings together the entire kingdom of the living – the plant, the animal and the human, just as a string holds together a variety of flowers to form a garland. The supreme Brahman is unmanifest and all-pervading, and hence not available for our cognition either through the organs of knowledge, or through the mind or the intellect. Vayu represents the implicit expression of the infinite dynamism of the one Reality as it is available for human cognition during the close observation of life, and so Vayu represents the manifested Brahman (Hiranyagarbha).

Rtam is a technical term which, in its Vedic usage, indicates the positive meaning of the Sastra, when correctly understood through an intellectual appreciation of the spirit of the scriptures. Its practice in our day-to-day activities (acara) becomes dharma and it is called satyam.

May ‘That’ (meaning the Supreme, the essence of all, represented in deities such as

Vayu) bless me, so that my studies be fruitful. This is chanted by a vidyaarthi, meaning one who demands (arthi) the blessings of Brahma-vidya. The student prays to the Supreme that his teacher also be blessed so that no obstacles may come during the sacred transmission of the supreme Knowledge. The repetition of the phrase is only to emphasise the point.

The invocation is rounded up with a thrice repeated call for peace. This is to avert all the possible obstacles. Obstacles are many and to exhaust all possibilities by name or label is impossible. But all obstacles can be classified under three heads with reference to the source from which they arise. The sources of obstacles can be (a) unseen, (b) seen and known, or (c) subjective, within ourselves, in our own mind. In order to avert all the obstacles rising from the above three types of causes, we have the thrice-repeated peace call.

Source: Tapovan Prasad, November 2009

246. Stinking Sewage of Life

08-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

To recognise the Lord in all objects, experiences and people is to end the mind, the cause of duality, Jeeva----the mortal--the sufferer. This is emphasised all over the BhagavadGeeta 2:38,6:8 and 9,29-32,13:27 and so on.

We read them and hear them all the time. If we assimilate them, then there is nothing not-divine or redundant; we shall not complain of anything.Everything is positive,divine,purposeful. To understand this is to accept the One in the many and His wisdom. This is surrendering our egoistic perceptions. Freedom from mind is called moksha or liberation.

Here is a very powerful message from our Gardner,Parama Pujya Sri Gurudev the source of sunshine and light, converting filth into a garden of flowers whose fragrance is unforgettable.

In the company of Sages page 60.
Question: A lazy husband and a job that is terribly boring! Any solution?



Gurudev replies:

Your kind letter has crawled up here,with its entire load of agony,sorrow,misery,confusion,tears,sighs,defections,protests,and similar other negative tendencies. In spite of them all, the world moves in its own rhythm. To detach from it,to stand apart,and watch the entire surging,rolling,curlings, STINKING

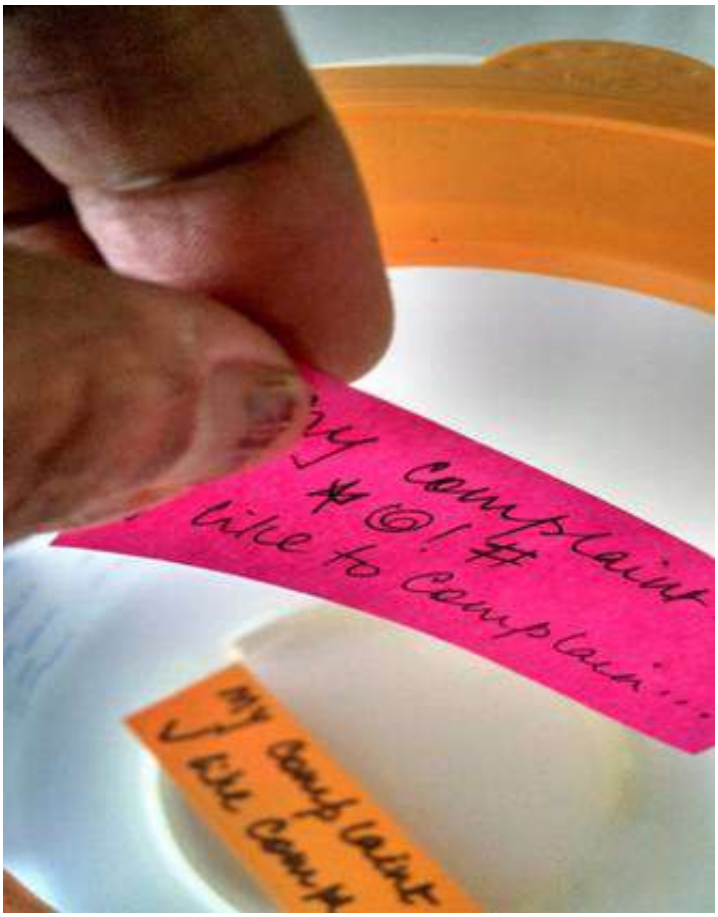
SEWAGE OF LIFE gushing all around you,with a smile of understanding,is to recognise a beauty in the entire flood,even though there is insufferable stink.



Turn your attention to Him,the all purifying source of light,which is constantly DRYING UP THE SEWAGE AND SLOWLY MAKING IT INTO LIFE GIVING MANURE bereft of pollution.

Never try to complain of the little tossing in your outer environment. Understand that is life and it has to be so. It cannot be otherwise.

Social changes, communal strife, and political storms will try to shatter the status quo position of each individual. Added to this, sickness and disease, rivalries between individuals, likes and dislikes and misunderstandings and confusions will constantly gather to wreck the inner poise of individuals. This is life. What are you complaining about?



Winter will be cold. Summer will be hot. These things happen. It is purposeless to complain. These come and go. They never remain. Do not allow them to sweep you down. From within, centered in your inner peace, look out and enjoy the clamorous confusions all around. “They are in Me, I am never in them.”

I have read elsewhere Gurudev saying the teachers job is to teach how to surrender. He has shown the way here with the use of very firm words.

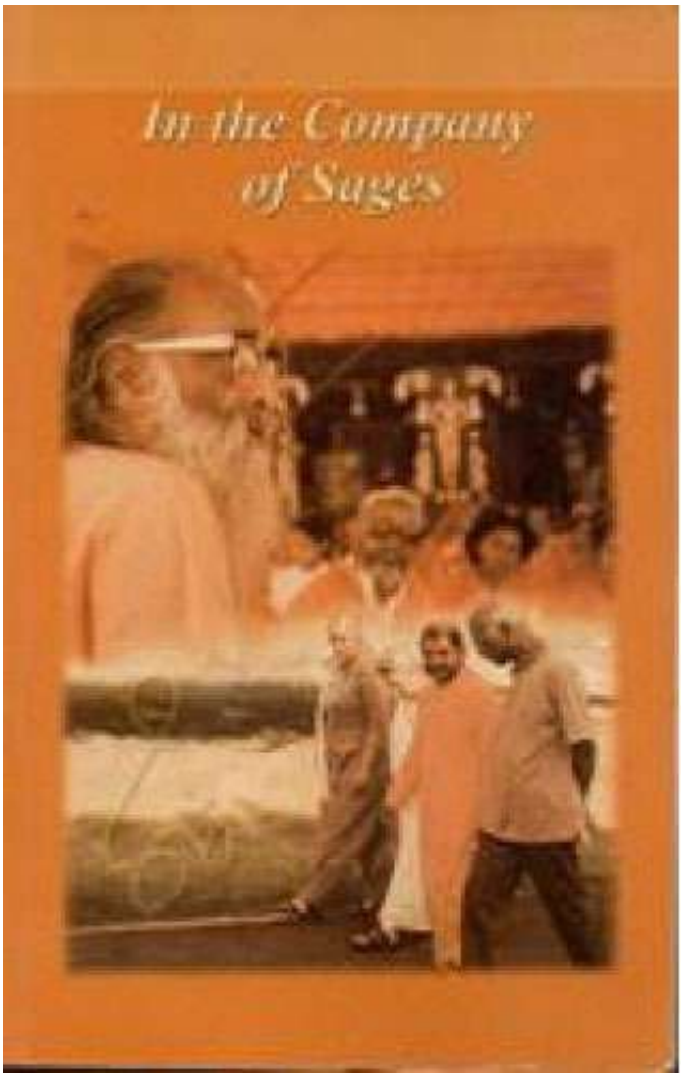
247. To Pray Or Not to Pray

09-01-2016

..... without knowing the meaning of chants

Often we have wondered whether it makes any sense chanting mantras and shlokas whose meanings we have no clue about. Some prayer groups distribute books to those present so that they can follow the chant in the book. But mostly people are numbed by words they do not have any identification with and feel it does not make sense chanting without the meaning. In the book In the Company of Sages, CCMT 2008, Gurudev answers a similar question with disarming clarity.

In the Company of Sages is an attempt to compile the many questions that devotees asked Gurudev during his 42 years of world travel when He expounded the teachings of the Vedas through lectures, books and videos. Devotees asked many questions. Answers to these questions are found in this book.The third part of this book contains questions put to Pujya Guruji.



Qs: Is it better to pray or not to pray when you do not understand the meaning of chants?

A: If you compare and try to decide between praying and not praying, the one who prays is more noble than the one who cannot pray. One who regularly prays at least has the decency to accept the presence of a superior intelligence, guiding, protecting, helping, and serving all beings. When such an individual prays, his mind's attention is, at least for the time being, lifted in devotion to that mysterious, unknown, but-ever-benevolent Supreme. In order to maintain the mind in that uplifted mood, chant, hymns, mantras and rhythms and special sanctified areas like temples or churches, call all be a great help.

The next best thing is to understand the meaning of what we are chanting. In itself the meaning has nothing to add to the seekers' spiritual stature because there are many erudite scholars who can understand the meaning of a chant, but they have no devotion to lift their minds toward it. Even if you do not know the meaning,

chanting is useful. A mother lovingly hugs the child, prattling and humming, and the child, who can understand nothing of the words, becomes consoled and falls asleep. Practice chanting for six months; bring it within your own personal experience and you will know the truth of it.

A looter merely repeated the word “Ram, Ram” and reached the status of Valmiki; and a little innocent child, Dhruva, repeating the mantra “Om NamoBhagavateVaasudevaaya,” attained enlightenment. It is not the meaning of the words that is important. They are a crutch for the mind to turn in the direction of the Self. In ardent faith, with true and deep devotion, and with the mind not running to the sense objects, if we can turn our attention for a few moments a day to call out to Him, it will be the most effective prayer. The child maybe in any part of the house; it need not know where the mother is;, but the moment the child cries “Ma, Ma,” the mother appears and gathers the child to her bosom.

Hari Om

248. “I Am”

10-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

When we introduce ourselves, all of us begin with “I am” as the common prefix to our introduction. Then we say, “I am so-and-so.”

The ‘I am’ is the Common Eternal Blissful Existence. When this reflects through Maya or moolaprakririti,total names and forms, and total thoughts, it is called Iswara, Virat,Hiranyagarbha etc. The same ‘I’ reflected in the individual thought pool is the Jeeva. ‘I’ being the same, it manifests as though different, according to the reflecting media,like the space seen through round holes look round; through square holes, the same space appears square. Or water in bottles of different sizes and colours, looks different in each shape or color.

If ‘I’ can detach from these things that envelop me (and treat them as though they are detachable) I will be able to see and enjoy my state of Immortality and Infinite Bliss.
To help us to know the 'I' as it is and the matter vestures that apparently condition this ‘I’ making this'I'the ego, we shall go into some of the guidelines of the compassionate Gurudev, in His own words, as He wrote them.

BG XIII 7
The Supreme functioning through Maya(moolaprakriti) is the creator of total universe and the same Supreme functioning through the vasana layers in the individual (avidya) is the creator sustainer and destroyer of the individual life the Ego.

VC 185
This intellect, due to the light of Consciousness playing in it,develops the capacity to illumine things projected by the mind,and as a final result of all these,it comes to identify with the body,the sense organs, etc. It becomes the restless ego the ' I-ness' and identifying with the objects perceived by the sense organs, it provides the "my-ness".

VC 217
The subject illumines the object outside. The subject can be recognised inside, in the deeper recesses of the personality,as the ever expressing I-I-I -- the individuality. The I (Aham) is the factor by whose grace our experiences within and without are possible. The one Reality illumining the various types of experiences at the various personality levels, and ever expressing itself as I-I-I,deep within,is one's Real nature which is to be realised.

The diverse forms and their modifications are cognised through the intellect as the individual knowledge. We say "I know","I experience", etc. When these differences of

objects and their changes are transcended, this great Reality can be cognised in Itself, in its pure nature as the Self in all.

VC 218

Any one,who cries out -- "The Sun has fallen into a bucket of water in the verandah!" is indeed a fool. Those who consider themselves fallen into PFT are equally foolish.

Keno intro

In short,I am the sum-total of all retained memories of all vivid experiences I have had in the past. The ‘I’ concept includes,also my hopes for the future.Pursuing our enquiry further,we shall, on analysis of the memory bits and hope flakes discover that they have a reality with reference to the dead past or the unborn future. This means the ego in me has no existence in the present moment. It thrives in the burial ground of the dead hours and in the womb of time. So then, this ego is in fact a myth, a non-entity,a dream,an unsubstantial nothing,a phantom,a mere shadow. All the sorrow and mortality belong to this shadow of our Reality.
"Detach yourself from the shadow; know the Real Self. Kill the tyrant within us. It will bring the real Rama Rajya in your bosoms"

249. The Bhagwad Gita, A Bird's Eye-View

11-01-2016



Gurudev presented the Gita to us in numerous formats. There were lectures of course that became audio cassettes, then audio CDs, then those glorious DVDs…. Then there was/is the Holy Gita all 700 verses with commentary unsurpassed. Then there is the Geeta for the Young which we saw some days ago. There is also "GeetaFor Children".

Today we look at The BhagwadGeeta – A Bird's Eye View. This is what we would call an executive summary by chapter, of the entire Geeta. But why did Gurudev take the pains to write this?

When we read His introduction to this book, we see it was a fire of national pride and pride of our age-old Sanatana Dharma, what over time in modernity, has come to be called Hinduism. Gurudev calls out for a coordination of effort and efficient harnessing of 'National Will' and says, "What we need today is not merely our cooperative strength, not merely our intellectual ability, but we want character and cultural unity in the country." How perfectly stated!

This book clearly appeals to all teachers and guides and mentors and everyone who can influence the youth to transform so that, as Gurudev writes, "Each individual of a nation must develop his inward character without which the national character cannot be developed."

Of course every chapter summary is a masterpiece, no doubt, but during this centenary year let us examine all that He did to build us, groom us, shape us, help us, clean us. And this we get closer to when we read His introduction to this book. Very poignant are His words that describe the Geeta as a Charter for Success – for the courageous!

In the introduction to this little book, Gurudev writes:

" It is extremely pleasing to see that many young men of the country have started taking such keen interest in trying to understand what Geeta is and what religion is. We are not out to throw away our secular outlook in life, and try to turn completely inward to have a total religious contemplative life, but we are trying to understand what India stands for and what Indian culture is, so that we may harmonise in the country our secular activities and material prosperities with our cultural growth and character re-building.

There is nothing wrong with us at this moment. Poverty is one of the incidents in the history of any nation in the world. What we need today is not merely our cooperative strength, not merely our intellectual ability, but we want character and cultural unity in the country. Then alone it will be possible to organise ourselves with determination and see that our country comes forward to command a greater recognition than other nations of the world. The effective coordination of efforts and efficient harnessing of the national will cannot be created merely by planning or by legislation. It depends entirely upon the individual improvement in character. Each individual of a nation must develop his inward character without which the national character cannot be developed.

Even when this truth is realised, our national leaders find it difficult to discipline the citizens to regain their moral stature, or rediscover their cultural beauty. Here in Geeta the theory of perfection and technique of its attainment are given out by a Master of Life, the ancient Seer Vyasa. Lord Krishna propounds this Way of Life as an efficient treatment for the Arjuna-disease. We all know how the situation changed when neurotic Arjuna was for once woken up from his stupor to wield his Gandeeva-bow.

Every man is more or less in this typical "Arjuna Condition". Hence our failures in our life; our tears; our pangs. Let us learn to revive and snatch the laurels of Victory from her hesitating hands. Geeta is the Charter for Success in Life for every man who is courageous enough to live the Geeta way-of-life. Hinduism at a glance is Geeta."

Chinmayananda

The BhagwadGeeta

(A Bird's Eye View)

Swami Chinmayananda

CCMT – 1991 Fourth Reprint

250. Investigating Love

12-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

One of famous Upanishad topic in Brihadaranyaka is a dialogue between Yagnavalkya and Maitreyi. In a startling statement, Yajnyavalkya says, that everything is dear to us because our self is dear to us.

The purport is, whatever is dear to us is that which gives us maximum happiness. Atman being most dear to us Atman is maximum source of happiness. Everything else is secondary. This understanding will make us withdraw from seeking happiness in the external world and instead seek it in our own selves.

Sri Gurudev makes it easy for us as is usual with him with a very convincing illustration.

Vivekachudamani 106

A thing in itself has no joy. The happiness that we seem to gain from the objects outside, is,in fact due to the nature of the Atman which is happiness itself. The most enjoyable thing in every one of us is our own Atman.

A man learning that his house is on fire runs to the house. When he comes to know that his only child is sleeping inside the house,he announces a large cash award for whoever will go and bring the child out to safety. When there is no response he increases the sum of his reward,and at last he offers all his wealth for his child. But he himself does not risk the blazing fire and burning rafters to bring the child out. This is because he loves himself more than anything else, [more than] the wealth and even his only child.
"The wife is dear to a man not for the sake of the wife but for the sake of the Self". (BU II 4-V)

Man loves himself only.His attitude universally is, 'So long as you contribute to my happiness, I love you'. When a father chides his son and asks him to get out of his house he only means to say 'you are bringing more sorrow to me. Therefore I do not want you in the house.
The Atman at all times, is indeed blissful(sadananda). Never is there any sorrow in the Self. When I have a vasana for smoking,the agitations created in my mind due to that vasana, are temporarily quietened by smoking and therefor I say 'I feel happy when I smoke'.

Similarly the human mind runs after sense objects like the dog after the dry bone. In fact,the joy content is not in the object. It is in the Consciousness,the Atman,the

pure Bliss of the Self,arising when the object is acquired and the mental agitation for that object ceases.
It is only because of the Atman,the Self, that each one of us ekes out for himself the maximum joy.
Ref: atmanastukamayasarvampriyambhavati (Bri.U. 2.4.5)

251. Bhuddhim tu Sarathim Vidhi

13-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

The intellect is the discriminative power and at the same time the one that basically causes jeevahood and makes us bound through various schemes it projects to us, in the form of desires, with a promise of making us adequate, fulfilled and so on.

There are two dimensions to intellect. In fact there are two dimensions to mind and to actions of the body too. The intellect turned towards the Self, guides the mind to victory. This is Krishna as sarathy (charioteer). Sarathy is intellect in the RathaKalpana of Kathopanishad. Elsewhere, another charioteer Shalya, brings the down fall of Karna!

So too mind guided by pure intellect yogeswara Sri Krishna, becomes free from agitations, develops detachment, identifies with Totality in love and respect. The mind not under the control of Pure Intellect will develop all negative qualities of greed, jealousy, etc and will be full of agitation. So too a body that is under the influence of such a mind that is NOT guided by a pure intellect, lives a sensuous disastrous reckless life.

I shall give a few extracts from Sri Gurudev to clarify this.

Kathopanishad 1-3-9
Concluding the analogy portion, the sruthi states in this stanza that the individual who has allowed his indriyas to function under the dictatorial charge of
Pure Intellect alone can reach the Supreme Destination. In our ordinary drives, if the driver be a dead drunken fool, it is obvious that we will not reach our place of appointment.
In our life,ordinary,we are careless,and under the instructions of an impure intellect,we run amuck among the sense objects of an uncontrolled mind’s vicious urges.

Kenopanishad chapter II
The Supreme Intelligence (the Atmachaitanya) eternally self-effulgence, shines ever bright at the Centre of the Centre in the human heart. It gets reflected as it strikes against our intelligence. As we are living today in a passionate hunt after sensuous objects,our intellect,along with our attention,is totally turned outwards.

When the intellect is dimmed by the fumes of jealousy,anger, and passion and lust, the egocentric entity in us undergoes corresponding modification. In every Dr.Jekyll, there is manifestation of Mr. Hyde, every now and then.
So long as the intellect is turned outwards, propped up by our mortal desires,this

egocentric delusion and the consequent sense of separateness will continue in us.

The extrovert nature in us is the cause of ego sense: ending Ego is reaching the perfect.

We have already found that the intellect when it raises its serpentine hood, in its outward running nature, throws a pool of reflected Atmic Glory called the Ego. When the intellect is entirely turned within.the reflection coincides with or merges into the Eternal,the Reality.

***

I would also like to bring to mind Gurudev's explaining the triple principle of ignorance-desire-actions. Avidya Kama Karma. Ignorance at spiritual level manifests as desires at intellectual level, agitations at mental level, and actions through the body.

252. Japa – the Struggle

14-01-2016

Japa is one of those practices that many devotees struggle with. It is intended to be so one thinks. The very difficulty in getting established in this practice is what makes the practice so valuable. The difficulty itself is the learning. The struggle itself is the tapasya. So one feels.

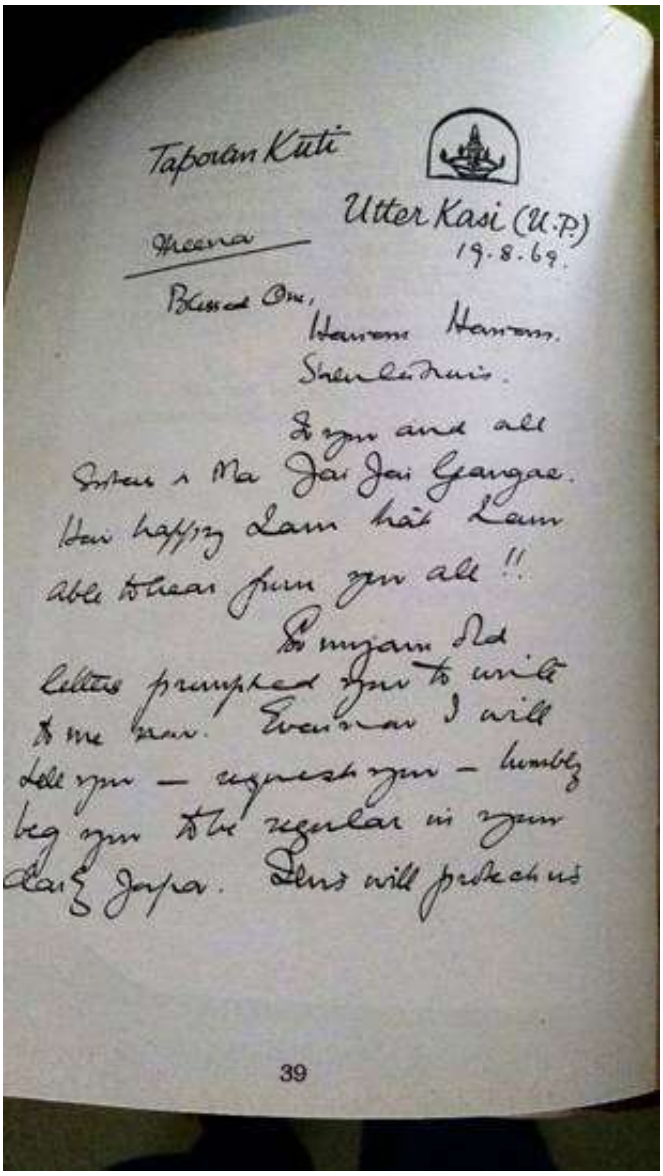
In this most simple short letter, Gurudev has left for those of us who have risen and fallen and risen and fallen and risen and fallen trying to hold on to japa, a very good message of faith.

(And the handwriting is breathtaking…)

The advice is very simple, one may say even predictable. But when it comes from Gurudev, it is a guarantee!

This centenary year let us gift Him what He begs of us ….

Hari Om.



Taporan Kuti

Utter Kasi (U.P.)
19.8.69.

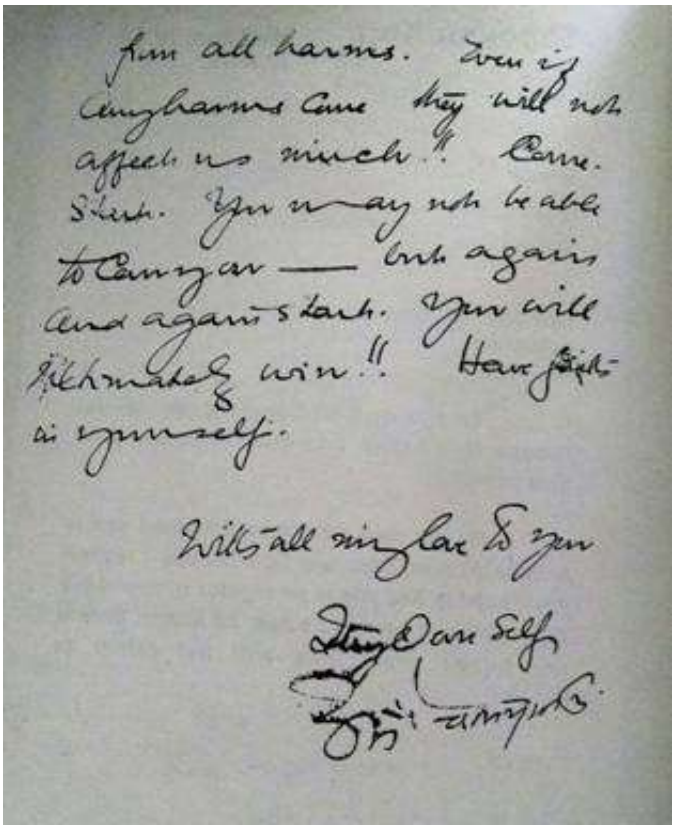
Dheena

Blessed One,
Haraom Haraom.
Shankaranis.

I pray and all
Sisters r Na Jai Jai Gangae.
Hav happy Ram hai Ram
able to hear from you all !!

Somjam Rd
letter prompted you to write
to me now. Even so I will
tell you — request you — humbly
beg you the regular in your
Ram Jaya. Guru will protect us

39



from all harms. Even if
any harms come they will not
affect us much !! Come.
Shah. You may not be able
to carry on —— but again
and again start. You will
definitely win !! Have faith
in yourself.

With all my love & yes

Yours Own self

Tapovan Kuti **Utter Kasi (U.P.)**
19.8.69.

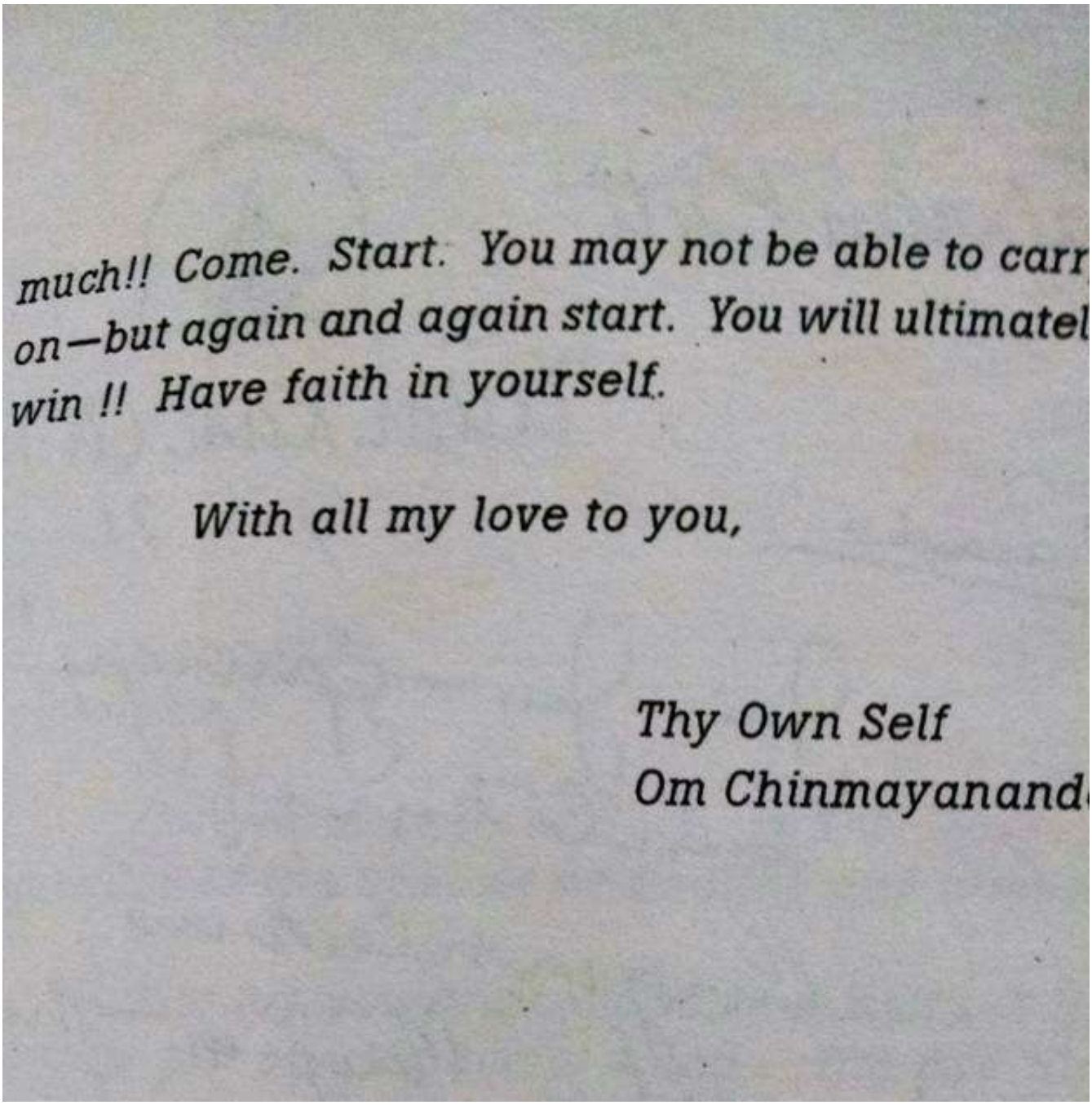
Meena

Blessed One,

Hari Om! Hari Om!
Salutation.

To you and all Sisters & Ma Jai Jai Gangae. How happy. I am that I am able to hear from you all !!

So my own old letters prompted you to write to me now. Even now I will tell you - request you - humbly beg you to be regular in your daily Japa. This will protect us from all harms. Even if any harms come they will not affect us



much!! Come. Start. You may not be able to carr
on—but again and again start. You will ultimatel
win !! Have faith in yourself.

With all my love to you,

Thy Own Self
Om Chinmayanand

Source: Vedanta Through Letters Vol. II CCMT Publication, pg 39-42

253. One Pilgrimage, Two Vehicles

15-01-2016

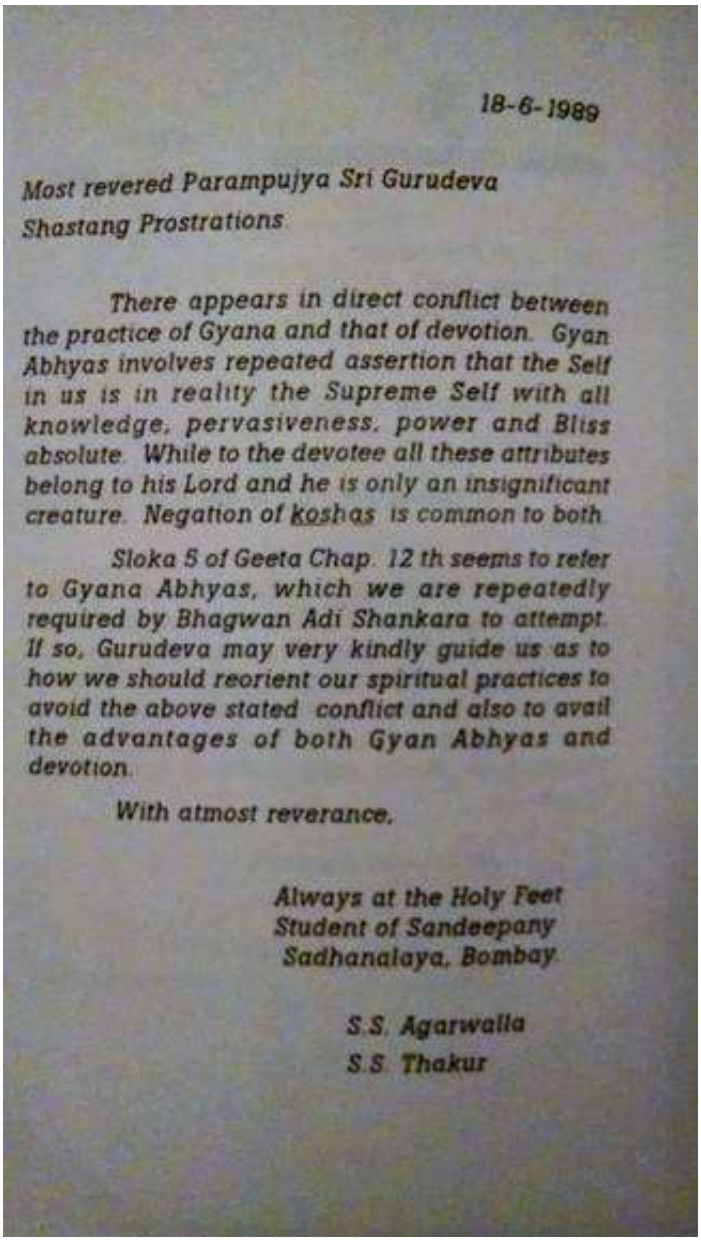
A devotee is trapped in an interpretation. And 2 paths. The Path of Knowledge asserts “I am Brahman.” The Path of devotion says, “You are Brahman.”

In a most beautifully worded letter he asks Gurudev, “Gurudeva may kindly guide us as to how we should reorient our spiritual practices to avoid the above stated conflict and also to avail the advantage of both GyanAbhyas and devotion.”

Gurudev’s reply comes with his characteristic metaphors. For example, “When I travel to Poona by road in a car and air by plane, I will have different experiences enroute. But I will reach Poona in both the cases. THINK.”

It is interesting to see how different life was just 25 years ago. A mail sent from Mumbai, reached Manila, where Gurudev was, in less than 3 days. But the Guru’s love is beyond comparison, in that he has replied almost as soon as he received the letter.

Sandeepany Student asks:



18-6-1989

Most revered Parampujya Sri Gurudeva
Shastang Prostrations

There appears in direct conflict between the practice of Gyana and that of devotion. Gyan Abhyas involves repeated assertion that the Self in us is in reality the Supreme Self with all knowledge, pervasiveness, power and Bliss absolute. While to the devotee all these attributes belong to his Lord and he is only an insignificant creature. Negation of koshas is common to both.

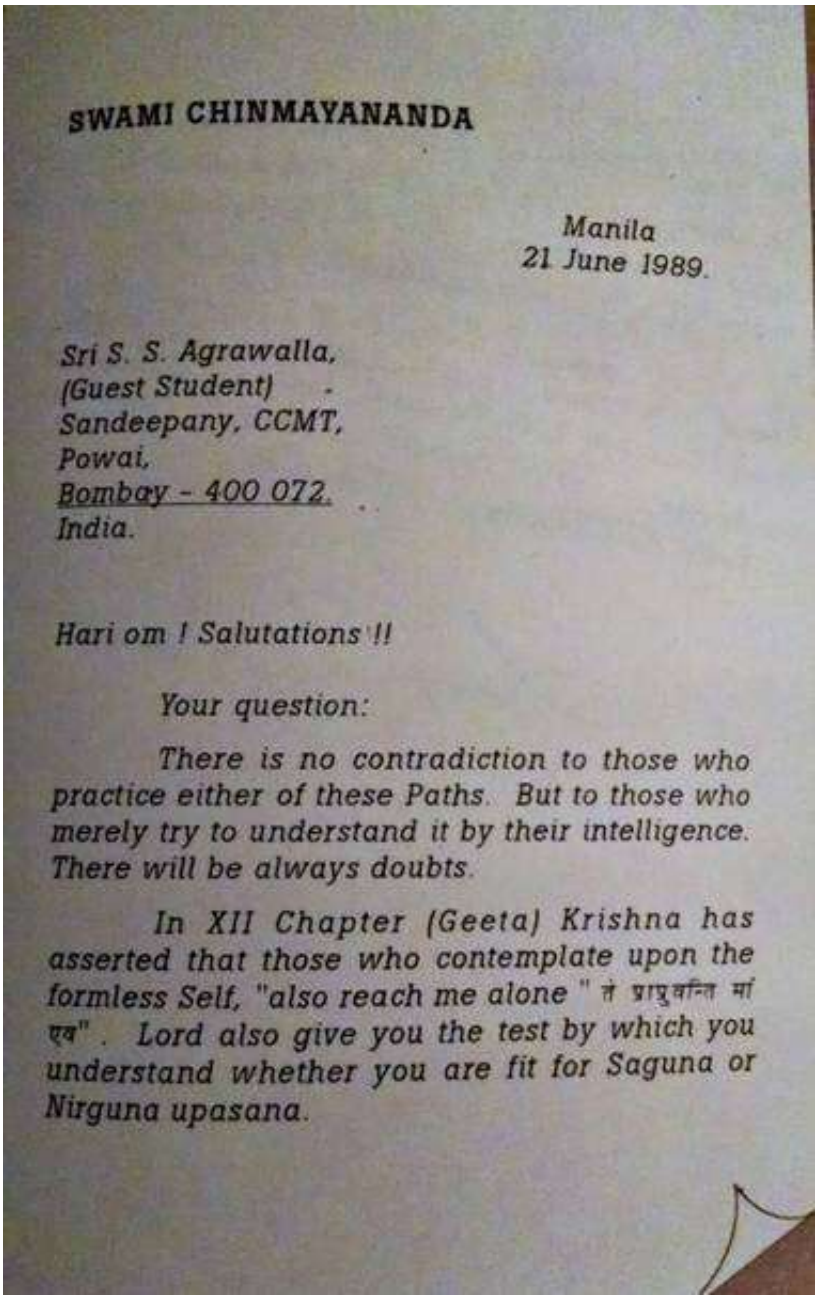
Sloka 5 of Geeta Chap. 12 th seems to refer to Gyana Abhyas, which we are repeatedly required by Bhagwan Adi Shankara to attempt. If so, Gurudeva may very kindly guide us as to how we should reorient our spiritual practices to avoid the above stated conflict and also to avail the advantages of both Gyan Abhyas and devotion.

With atmost reverance,

Always at the Holy Feet
Student of Sandeepany
Sadhanalaya, Bombay.

S.S. Agarwalla
S.S. Thakur

Gurudev replies:



SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

Manila
21 June 1989.

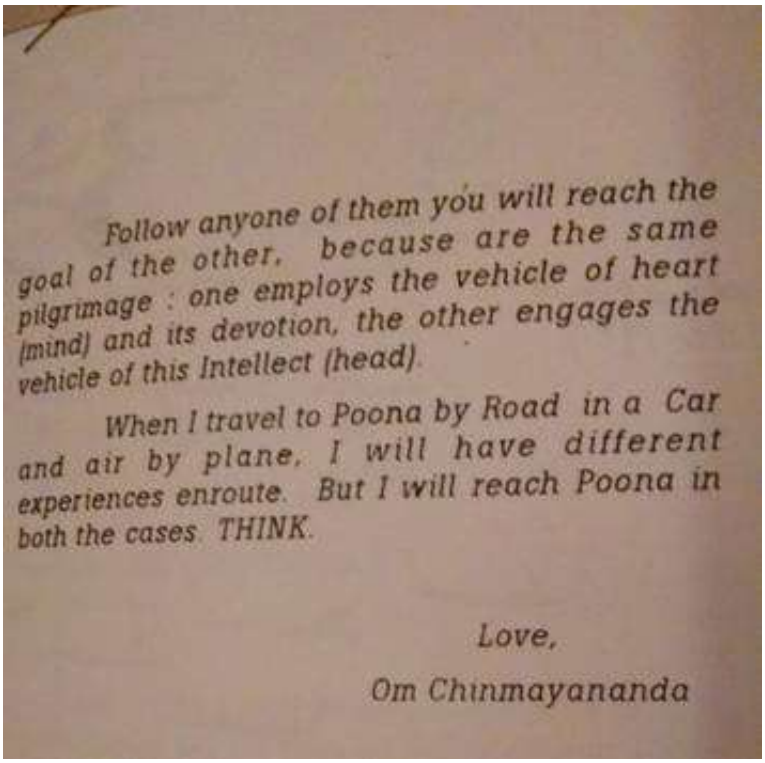
Sri S. S. Agrawalla,
(Guest Student)
Sandeepany, CCMT,
Powai,
Bombay - 400 072.
India.

Hari om ! Salutations !!

Your question:

There is no contradiction to those who practice either of these Paths. But to those who merely try to understand it by their intelligence. There will be always doubts.

In XII Chapter (Geeta) Krishna has asserted that those who contemplate upon the formless Self, "also reach me alone " ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मां एव" . Lord also give you the test by which you understand whether you are fit for Saguna or Nirguna upasana.



Follow anyone of them you will reach the goal of the other, because are the same pilgrimage : one employs the vehicle of heart (mind) and its devotion, the other engages the vehicle of this Intellect (head).

When I travel to Poona by Road in a Car and air by plane, I will have different experiences enroute. But I will reach Poona in both the cases. THINK.

Love,

Om Chinmayananda

The operative message is at the start of his letter: To those who practise either path, there is no contradiction. But to those who merely try to understand it by their intelligence, there will always be doubts.

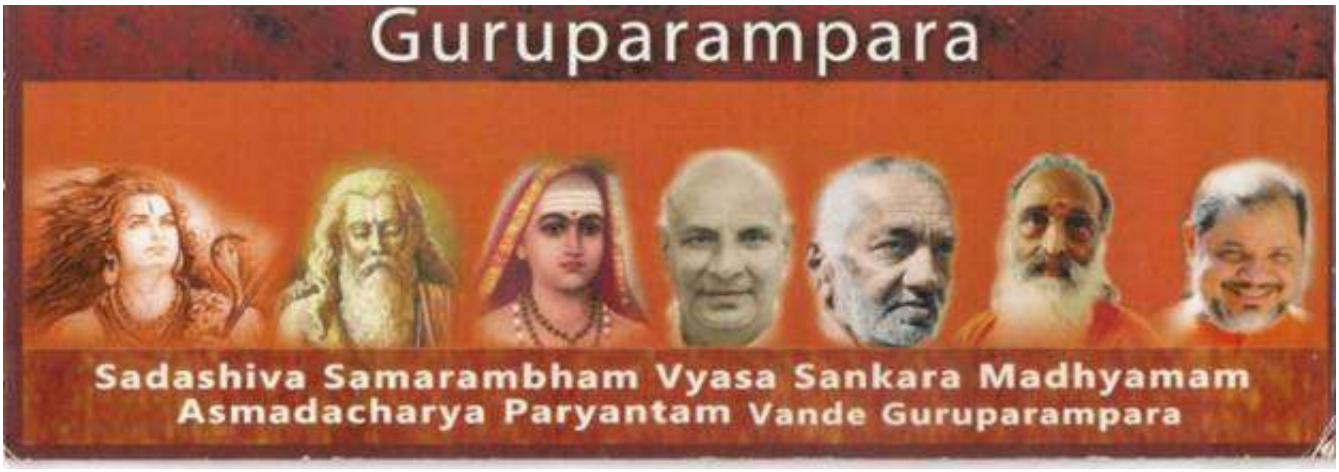
Source: Vedanta Through Letters (Sadhana) Vol. II, CCMT Mumbai, 1996

254. "SWAMI TAPOVANAM – MY GURUDEV"

16-01-2016

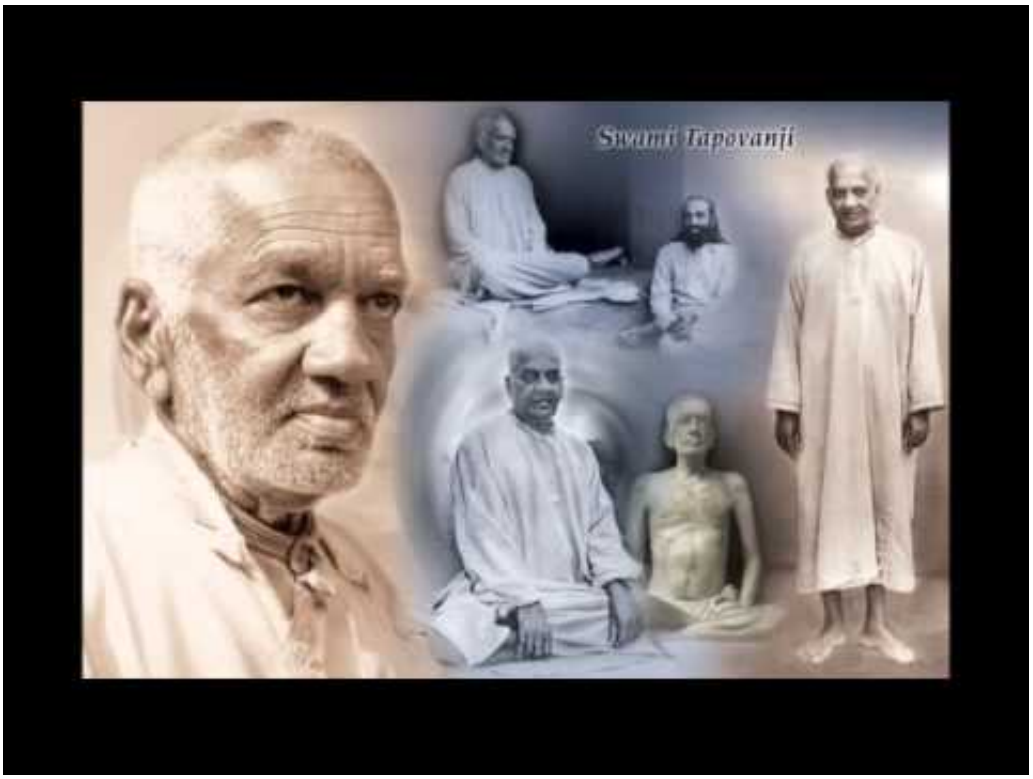
By Swami Chinmayananda

Today is the Mahasamadhi Day of Gurudev's Guru, Swami TapovanaMaharaj. Writing a tribute to Swami Tapovanam, Gurudev gives us a lesson in the guru-shishyaparampara as well as in Guru Mahima. One sentence that stands out: "And if I happened to forget what had been already taught, I would have to go away - he would no more teach such a forgetful and insincere student. By the blessings of Mother Ganges and my fatherly Gurudev, I remembered everything always. Daily prayers and sincere devotion for the Lord, with an innocent loving heart, make us achieve everything in Life."



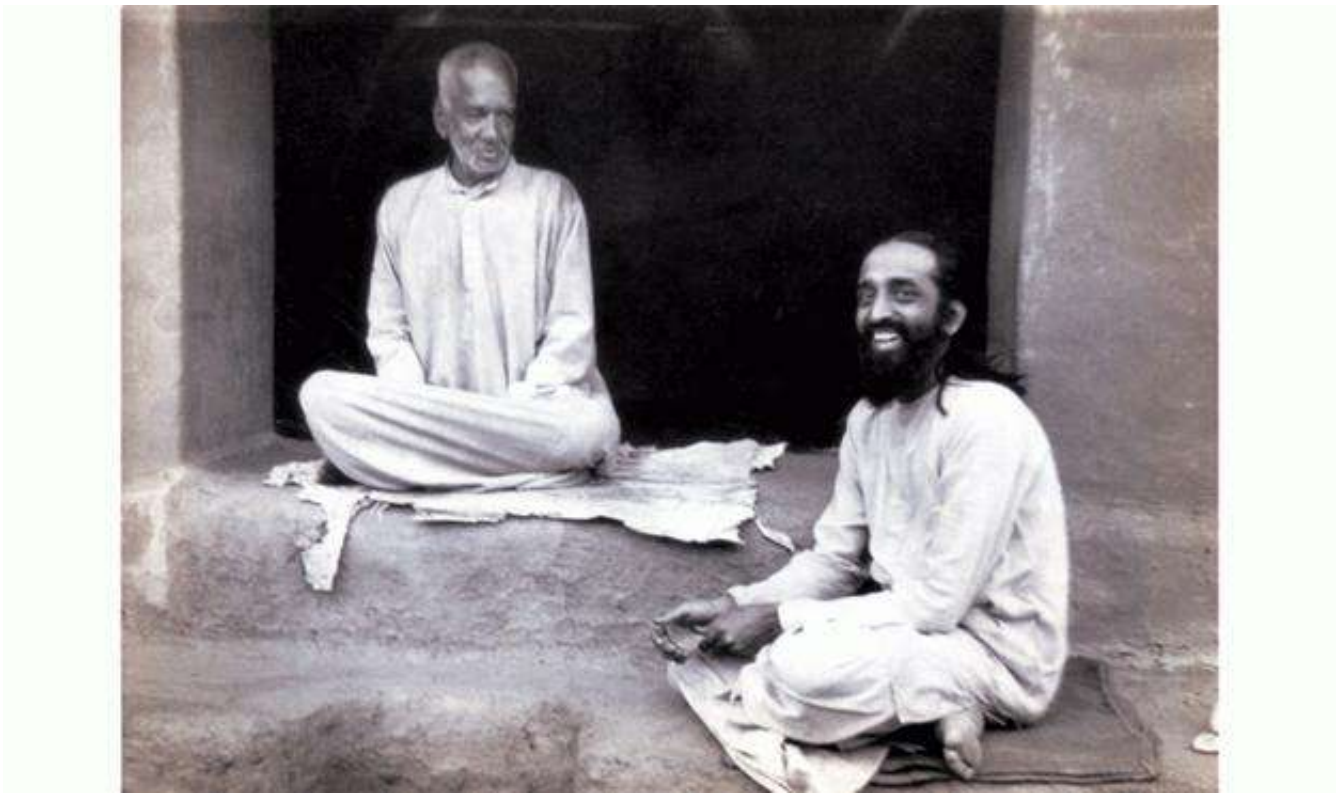
Just as the biography of a man starts with his birth, and will go behind it to trace the biological growth and development of the seed in the womb, so too, to write the life of a realized soul, of the stature of Sri Swami Tapovanam, it is to trace sincerely the adventures of His soul in its onward flights to God-Realization, A Mahatma starts his career, in a new world, with a new personality, and maintains absolutely a new set of relationship. Once a Sanyasi, he becomes dead to his entire past. And yet, ordinarily we have almost an unhealthy curiosity to trace the life of the Mahatma, before he reached the Gate of the Temple to ring the bell in adoration to the Infinite. Sri Swamiji Maharaj was no tame individual to whom, even after ten years of intimate service and total surrender could I discover the necessary courage to ask of His personal life before He took Sanyas. Whom all Sree Swami Tapovanam met, and from what sources he gathered inspiration and instructions are not very well known, since by the time I had the good fortune to surrender myself at His feet, He

had soared so high in His realization that to Him to look back upon the past was a meaningless and purposeless preoccupation. Some scrapy material is certainly available in His own words.



A boy was born in Palghat taluka of Kerala in a house called ''PuthanVeedu'' (New House) in 1889 to SmtBalamba and Sri Achutan Nair. The child was named Subramaniam. His early education was in Schools at Koduvayur, Kollengode and Alattur. The educational system and the subjects were not to his taste and so he stopped going to school and chose to do self- study in Sanskrit and a little English. He composed a poem ''Vibhakar'' in Malayalam at the age of 18, which drew the attention of all the literary Scholars of that time. Even by this time he had started feeling an urge for the study of philosophy and scriptures. Solitude and books were his companions. When he was 21, his father died and he was extremely shaken up by it. This shock in his life awakened the spirit of renunciation which was sleeping in his bosom.

As the head of the family, he fulfilled all his obligatory duties. All along this period of external activities his personal Sadhana was never given up. Pleased with the young man's spiritual unfoldment, Sri Sankaracharya of DwarakaPeetam gave him the title Chidvilasa. After his younger brother had finished his education and started practice as lawyer in Palghat, Chidvilasa left on Krishnashtami day - never again to return to the plains.



On the banks of Thungabhadra, obeying the great call within him, this born yogi accepted Sanyas from himself. Thereafter, for seven years, he lived in severe tapas. It was at this time he was given the regular initiation by Sri Swami Janardhangiri of Kailasashram, Rishikesh and was named as Swami Tapovanam.

Throughout, Swamiji had been teaching the students who voluntarily reached Him; with a request to teach them the Prastantreya. However, it must be said that being a very Strict disciplinarian very rarely His students could remain for long with Him to complete their studies. I myself, belong to the last batch that Swamiji taught, and even during my ten years of study and practice I can count some thirty to thirty five people, who came with divine enthusing but, alas none could keep it up for more than a couple of years. The 'climate, the non-availability of any living convenience, lack of nutritive food, the chilly bath in the Ganges, the hard study and the unrelenting discipline, each made life uncomfortable anti together: they became a suffocating tyranny for those of us who could not get any glimpse of the yonder.

Indeed, it must be admitted that had they, instead of merely reading, spent abreast a part of their time in reflection and meditation they could have discovered a secret courage to face the life of Tapas there, thus discover an endless source of joy that would have made it worthwhile for them to brave the discomfort of Uttarkashi. Their failure was certainly of their own making.

Every year, during the beginning of the summer, Swamiji would come to Rishikesh. By about July we used to go up to Gangotri and by November first week we used to return each year to Uttarkashi. There we remained till about the following Shivaratri when we would again reach Rishikesh. Our programme of study continued both at Uttarkashi and Gangotri. Swamiji would take daily lessons in the morning for one and half hours, except in winter, when He will take the lessons in the afternoon from two to three- thirty daily. Gurudev was a very grave and strict teacher, and what he taught once he would no more explain. That was his condition; and I accepted it. And if I happened to forget what had been already taught, I would have to go away - he would no more teach such a forgetful and insincere student. By the blessings of Mother Ganges and my fatherly Gurudev, I remembered everything always. Daily prayers and sincere devotion for the Lord, with an innocent loving heart, make us achieve everything in Life.

Sri Gurudev, essentially a poet, he had a mad passion for witnessing the canvas of Nature's beauty unrolling itself in the unfrequented peaks and valleys of the Himalayas. Moving from place to place and roaming from peak to peak, he visited almost all the areas from Kashmir to Almora. As he roamed about, his pen was constantly scribbling down the beauties that he discovered and the thoughts that passed his sacred bosom. Swamiji had on foot visited almost all the important peaks of the Himalayas - including Amarnath and Kailas. He had reported his travels in two splendid volumes 'HimagiriViharam'' and ''Kailas Yatra". Swamiji has also written a few other books, namely, Ishwar Darshan, Sri SoumyakasisaStotram, GangotriKshetraMahatmyam, Ganga Stotram and Sri BadrisaStotram. Each of his books - seemingly an objective glorification of some beauty spot of divine association where he had lived and spent his glorious life of perfection, such as Uttarkashi, Gangotri, Gomukhi and Badrinath - in essence is a beautiful summary of the difficult Vedantic text books and the Upanishads.

Thus, Swamiji lived most of the time in Uttarkashi or Gangotri, a life of seclusion - in solitude and contemplation. He lived a life of his own, chaste and pure, far and high. His gates were never closed, though he never came out of the pates. He was ever ready to give satsang. While He was planning to take the BhagawadGeeta, he developed an attack of cough, and whenver he made efforts to talk and explain the attack would become severe. ''You Study for yourself; if there are doubts come to me. I do not think there will be any difficulties for you, so said Sri Gurudev one day and my studies at His feet with text book in hand ended.

Late in 1955, Swamiji took ill. That year He came from Gangotri early because He felt attacks of frequent giddiness coming to Him. Various medicines reached us there. Swamiji would give each one a three-days chance. He would say, ''We must give chance to others in the queue also" and Smile! Steadily His health deteriorated;

digestion became nil. During 1955-56, I ran up to Uttarkashi 3 or 4 times, in between my Yagnas. All requests to come down upto Delhi for a general checkup and diagnosis were angrily turned down. Each tgime I saw His body getting more and more emaciated. I took with me others, His own old bhaktas; but none could persuade Him to come down for treatment.

During my last visit in early December 1956, I broke down suddenly and burst out. He saw the tears and softly said, 'chinmaya' It is easy to learn Vedanta, easier to preach Vedanta, hard indeed to live the knowledge. When we are born, death is born with us. He gave me so long a chance to live and experience. Now He, who was waiting So long: is coming to meet me. You say I must now run to escape Him? How mean? Here how quietly I lived; now cannot I quietly die, hearing the Eternal Music of My Mother Ganga. What is strange in death? Death is only one of the experiences which the Atman illumines. Don't weep. You go and continue the work,.....!'' I had no words to say no thoughts to think, no feeling to entertain. I must confess that the few days that I had spent at his feet during this time, were much more educative to me than the years that I had spent in his presence, enjoying every day, hours and hours of his satsang.



1957, January- Last days of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj

I returned to my Yagashala. While I was holdings session in Palghat came the news. The manifested Light Divine was re-absorbed into the Transcendental Infinitude. The last representative of the ancient institution of traditional Gurus disappeared from the spiritual life if India, when on 16th of January 1957, on the full moon day, at 4.30 A.M. the Brahmamahurtha, the Great Master Swami TapovanjiMaharaj choose to withdraw his personal manifestation and merge-back into Mahasamadhi. It was on a Thaipoosam day, that the spirit of Tapovanam was unsheathed. A God without a temple, a Veda without language? was this master mind. He lived for 68 years, as a monumental expression of an ideal Vedantic Teacher. Swami Tapovanam was an institution uncaused and he too caused no cause. He came from nowhere; existed everywhere and ultimately went to be everywhere. Whenever we find the glow of divine compassion, love, purity and brilliance, there we see Sree Gurudev with his ever smiling face.




Ours is a great responsibility'. We, his sishya-family have to see that He finds an ample field in our individual bosoms to express Himself. It is not sufficient that we evolve ourselves - we must learn to release Him to visible here. It is a glorious chance now to take a sacred oath upon ourselves that we shall not rest contend until He is fulfilled. Hindu revival is the ThapovanaVratam.

At least we, who are his immediate disciples, must consider the full moon day of each month as a sacred day for fasting, study, prayer and deep meditation. Let us observe the Poornima day as a day for inspiration and self dedication till the TapovanaVratam of Hindu Revival is accomplished!

I shall consider myself fulfilled if my life and work become my message of adoration and gratitude to my Teacher. Words can never gather Him in their embrace. Love alone can. Let us all adore Him and work for His fulfillment which is the goal of Chinmaya Mission.

(Courtesy - Bangalore Yagna Souvenir - Our Parama Gurudev 1988)

http://chinmayayuvakendra.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=276&Itemid=993



Brahmanishtha bhayahaaraka bhavamochakaroopa

Chinmayaguru hamein dekar mahati keenhi kripaa!

Om Jaya Guru Tapovana ...



255. Gurudev & Me

17-01-2016

Sent by Dr. Ramesh

I want to share with everyone some of my personal experiences with Gurudev, which helped me to understand his vision!

32 years back, December 1983:
It was only after my marriage to DrSuhasini, who had known Gurudev personally since 1979, I had an opportunity to meet him. My first meeting with Gurudev was in December 1983 in Anantapur, AP. In the morning he was conducting a session on meditation; in the evening SadanaPanchkam.

We went to Anantapur from Kurnool; checked into a hotel; went to meet Gurudev at the place where he was staying. Gurudev was surrounded by twenty or more devotees. Gurudev greeted us affectionately, as he already knew Suhasini! I told Gurudev that we had missed the morning class on meditation, perhaps I would find it difficult to follow the subsequent sessions! To my great surprise, Gurudev started repeating to me everything that he had explained in the morning meditation session!! I was amazed and was slightly self-conscious that he was focusing all his attention on me, when there were so many other people awaiting his attention (actually this explanation is for everyone there)! This was one event which influenced me very much and stayed in my subconscious always!



This is one of the methods adopted by Gurudev to spread the message of the Scriptures – through informal question and answer sessions and satsangs!! This Gurudev did for 43 years! Imagine: 3 to 4 informal satsangs every day!!! Through these informal satsangs, Gurudev touched the heads and hearts of hundreds of thousand people all over the world! I think this is unique to Gurudev and probably a world record of all times!

Now I will write about another unique aspect of Gurudev - his letters, most of them hand written, to thousands of people, which changed their lives!

April 1984:

My wife,DrSuhasini and I, were doing our post-graduation studies at the Kurnool Medical college. My wife alreadyhad many letters from Gurudev! After seeing them and after my pleasant experience in my first encounter with Gurudev at Anantapur, I got courage to write to Gurudev!

I wrote: " Swamiji, I am a sevak with a Hindu organization. I became a member, impressed by their ideology of Hindu unity, national pride, and character development. I tried to understand Hinduism/Sanatana Dharma by reading a few books including some written by Swami Vivekananda. They only gave me vague understanding! My confusion about the Hindu Dharma and Philosophy continued! Being a Hindu and also working with a Hindu organisation, it is shameful not to have proper understanding of our own religion! Swamiji, kindly suggest me the reading material for proper understanding of Hinduism"!

To my great surprise, Gurudev wrote back to me within a week! (Scanned letter sent as attachment)
" If you have not done it, first take the postal tuition course from Bombay. Write for the preview to
Hamri Bhai Vissanji,
Postal lessons (CCMT),
9, Wallace Street,
Bombay - 400001.
Then start the studies - in small doses every time. Reflect upon the ideas. You must be able to express these ideas logically to another - then you have surely mastered.
Live without selfish personal desires. Have desires to help others.
Love to parents and dear wife.
Love,
Chinmayananda,
30th April 1984"

In this small letter Gurudev told me everything I needed and yet so effectively:

a)the course for Study; b)how/where to apply; c)how to Study; d) how to master it; Simultaneously he adviced me e) little steps towards Karma yoga!

I immediately applied and got the lessons. Those days they were called, "Chinmaya

Lessons". Now called as " Foundation Vedanta Course " conducted by CIF!

The year in which I started studying these lessons was one of the most wonderful ones in my life, because the lessons opened up before me a whole new vista of spiritual knowledge. I had been under the impression that my lack of Sanskrit knowledge and my inability to read the Slokas would prove to be hurdle to my learning! But when I read the “Chinmaya Lessons”, I found my fears to be baseless! Gurudev had made the Scriptures so easy to understand, that too in English, that even a lay person like me had absolutely no problem in grasping the essence and logic of spirituality! I developed immense regard and respect for Gurudev! I used to share the contents of the lessons with many others (as advised by Gurudev), which actually helped in deepening my understanding!!

Chinmayananda

Dr. Ramesh.
Kurnool.

Namaste!! Namaste!

Salutations!!

If you have not done it
finish take the Postal Tuition Course
from Bombay. Wait for the Previous
to Hanuman Bhai Visharji,
Postal Lessons, (CCMT),
9. Wallace Street,
Bombay 400 001.

Then start the Shastras. In small
doses every time. Reflect upon the
ideas. Then you will be able to
express those ideas logically to
others — then your hard earned
mastered. This will help to fulfil
personal desires. Have desires
to help others. Love to Parents and
dear ones.

Love,

Swami Chinmayananda

377th GEETHA GYANA YAGNA
APRIL 22nd to 30th 1984
CHINMAYA MISSION CALICUT 673 016

30. April 1984.

During those days, Saradamma (SwaminiSaradapriyananda) translated these lessons into Telugu and conducted the ‘postal course’! These lessons are now published as a book in Telugu, "Chinmaya Vedanta Sarali"!

In 1984-85, whenever Saradamma came to Kurnool, she would enquire how I wasfaring in the Chinmaya Lessons and what grade I was getting!

In the early years of Chinmaya Mission, Gurudev advised these lessons as study group material!

Now this same Chinmaya Lessons is being offered and conducted by CIF as‘Foundation Vedanta Course’, Advanced Vedanta Course (based on PrakaranaGranthas) and Bhagavad- gita Course - both postal and e-Vedanta!

In my view, every Sevak should do Foundation Vedanta Course, for their own proper understanding and also to know how Gurudev took Vedanta even to many sceptics and confused/doubting intellectuals!

I wish this Foundation Vedanta Course is brought out in all regional languages, for primary understanding of Vedanta!

256. Non-Apprehension Misapprehension

18-01-2016

Sent by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Sri Gurudev often uses the two terms non- apprehension and mis-apprehension very effortlessly and effectively while explaining the concept of the world or ego emerging from Brahman, a world whichin reality is not real.
We shall try to understand their import.

One of the main doubts in Vedanta is how can the Nondual infinite Brahman which is all pervading beyond time and space, be the cause for the finite world of names and forms that are products of time and space.
You need space to create, you need raw products to create. There is no place where Brahman is not and there is nothing other than Him. How then is creation possible!

Our Sri Gurudev tries to explain these concepts using two all-inclusive, comprehensive yet simple terms: non-apprehension and mis-apprehension in texts like AtmaBodha,VivekaChudamani, MandukyaUpanishad and so on.

To state them briefly to begin with, Avarana is the anvil for non-apprehension and Vikshepa the anvil formis-apprehension. Avarana is karanaavidya and Vikshepa is karyaavidya. The latter is close to Adhyasa or super-imposition.

Atma Bodh 27

In the non-apprehension of the Self,the misapprehension of gross physical body, mind, etc are perceived as real, and in this misunderstanding the confused ego is born to suffer its own illusory sorrows.

How this happens we shall see in the chapter ‘Superimposition’, written by our Parama Pujya Sri TapovanMaharaj’sHymn to Badrinathwith commentaries by our Gurudev. Though this extract has been quoted in Story # 241, this present topic needs to quote this again.

Hymn 21

In the introductory discourses given by Acharya Sankara to his commentary upon the Brahma Sutra, there is an exhaustive thesis upon this phenomena of delusory superimposition. In his analysis he had brought outthat there is in fact a kind of mutual symbiosis-process between the delusory vision and the real substratum. He says the sliminess,the spots,the hood,the tapering tail,the crawling movement etc,which are the nature of (Sarpatwam), are offered to the smooth,round,twisted rope lying in dim light. But at the same time in return,the roundness,the linear length and the very existence of rope are presented in turn to the delusory serpent

vision. As a result of the mutual processes, we find the non-existent qualities of the serpent conceal the essential qualities of the rope and the existent rope becomes non-existent,while the non -existent serpent becomes an existent factor to be reckoned with. This is almost a summary of the entire process of "mutual superimposition"(AnyonyaAdhyasa).

VivekaChudamani

Verse 231
"Brahman alone is the universe" (Brahma Eva idamviswam) This is the declaration we find in the Mundakopanishad which belongs to the Atharva Veda. The entire world of names and forms we perceive is nothing but Brahman.
Verse 229
A mud pot can never be proved as made up of anything else. A mud pot is mud. Whatever be its content, the mud alone is the pot. The pot has no independent existence apart from the mud. So the pot is the "imagination" of a form and function in the mud. Similarly the world has no independent existence from Brahman.
Verse 227
The world of plurality with its manifold forms which we see all around,is perceived because of non-apprehension of Brahman,the Reality. Due to the non-apprehension of Reality, all misapprehensions of the pluralistic phenomenal world has risen.

All that we see is Brahman and Brahman alone do we see everywhere as objects and things. When the evil of "imagination" of the mind is destroyed,without an iota of it remaining to defile the Truth,then you shall realise that what you are perceiving is Brahman only.

257. Surrendering Will to the Architect of Time

19-01-2016

(Or, how Narendra could not have done all that Vivekananda did)

Dr. Ramesh shares a candid insight into his own shift from 'social worker' to 'Guru-Mission-sevak', with precious prompting from Gurudev.

During my medical college days and later, 1976 to 1993, I was more involved in socio-cultural activities! Not much into spirituality, as I know very little about it, at least till 1984! To considerable degree political bent was also there! Only after starting "Chinmaya Lessons postal course" in 1984 I started getting clarity about our Sanaatana Dharma! But till 1992, when Gurudev stayed with us from 23rd to 30th of October, my activities were socio-cultural and political! Only from 1993, I was into Mission activities/study groups and also later as Trustee, Member of mission committee etc.

Related to these activities, I wrote many letters to Gurudev. In those letter I enumerated what all I was doing and planning to do! Probably, subconsciously expecting appreciation and also guidance from Gurudev!? Gurudev's replies to those letters are of lot of practical value and can be of use to many sevakas, including many young Brahmacharis of the Mission!

Some extracts:

My letter- September, 1985:

"I wrote to Gurudev that I am involved in many activities leading to stress on time and energy"!

GURUDEV'S REPLY:

397TH GEETHA GNANA YAGNA 1985
BY
H. H. SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA
AT
ERNAKULAM

Committee Office : Chinmaya Vignana Mandir, Nettepadam Road, Cochin - 682016 Phone : * 31866

18 Sept 1985

Dr. Ramesh,
B-11. M.S. Nagar,
Kurnool (AP)
518002.

Hareas! Hareas! Hareas!

Balakrishna!!

Organising our days hourly is the secret of getting more and more out of life. And the available time. Develop the minicles the same time to say "No" when we have Else our efficiency will get impaired.

I understand why Srikanth is not writing to me as he used to before. Ask her to write after he reached there professionally. She must.

I am glad you have started waking up to see the depths beauty and grandeur inherent in God Religion when lived with understanding

“Organizing our day’s hourly is the secret of getting more out of life and the available time. Develop the muscles of the tongue to say NO when we have no more time to spare for any new project. Else our efficiency will get impaired!”

In December, 1986 I wrote, what all the activities I am contemplating for the cultural revival.

GURUDEV’S REPLY to Suhasini (my wife):

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

Camp Bombay

Date 10 Dec 1986.

(Dr. Sahasini)

Dr Ramesh
Civil Asst Surgeon, G.G.H. Hospital, 520005.
Gunadala, Jusdan Vijayawada

Hariom! Hariom!
Balakrishna!

Try to live this purity
and Compose always.
Be an ideal couple, and
bring up the child with Divine
and Other graces.

To be finish yourself
well entrenched in our
Culture is a prerequisite to
Start-working for its revival.
(Remind) Remind Ramesh of this
idea. What Vivekananda
did, Narendra could never
have accomplished.

"To be first yourself well entrenched in our culture is a prerequisite to start working for it's revival. Remind Ramesh of this idea. What Vivekananda did, Narendra could never have accomplished"

In the last week of December, 1989, I again wrote to Gurudev about all activities I am doing at that time and also my future plans.

GURUDEV'S REPLY:

Swami Chinmayananda

460th Geeta Gnana Yagna · Bombay

January 9, 1989

Dr. M. Ramesh
22, P.G. Quarters
Government General Hospital
Kakinada 533 008

Blessed Self :

Hari Om ! Hari Om !! Hari Om !!!
Salutations !

Your letter of 26th December was waiting here for my arrival and inauguration of this Yagna was on the 5th.

Your magnanimous vision we need dedicated workers to lift this country from the ruts into which it seems to have bogged down.

Such enormous programme cannot be undertaken by insufficient abilities of an individualised entity. Learn to surrender your will to Him who is the Architect of the times and destinies of nations of the world.

Let Him work through us and allow His blessings to flow through us to the world around.

With Prem and Om,
Thy Own Self,

CHINMAYANANDA

“Your magnanimous vision - we need dedicated workers to lift this country from the ruts into which it seems to have bogged down.

Such enormous programme cannot be undertaken by insufficient abilities of an individualized entity. Learn to surrender your will to Him who is the architect of the times and destinies of nations of the world.

Let Him work through us and allow His blessings to flow through us to the world around.”



Dr. Ramesh and Dr. Suhasini and parents at Gurudev's feet

****

NOTE: None of the activities about which I write to Gurudev were related to Chinmaya Mission activities. Though I used to ask many questions regarding

Vedanta, in satsangs and through letters, I never asked Gurudev about Mission and Mission work!! (Till 1990 I lived in places where Mission activity was minimal.) But one noteworthy point, Gurudev always used to discourage me from politics. In a very subtle manner he would say, “That is not for us.”

I came closer to the Mission only after 1992, when Gurudev came to stay at our home for a week

(0ctober 23rd to 30th 1992) during the yagna at Hyderabad. (See FAMILY PHOTO WITH GURUDEV) Surprisingly, only after Gurudev’s mahasamadhi my involvement gradually increased. By 1998, I gravitated to Gurudev’s Mission, impressed by his vision and moved away from all other activities.

Now my only inspiration is Gurudev’s work, spreading the knowledge through study groups and CHYK study groups.

Hari Om

258. Mahavaakyas

20-01-2016

From complex to simple- from the greatest teacher

Sent by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

The pithy aphoristic style of communicating great learnings in crisp sentences also requires a great teacher to open it out to help students learn

'I was frantically searching for my keys everywhere, not knowing they are in my pocket. My friend suggested I must check my pocket. I followed his suggestion and found them there.'

Though the keys were there with me, without the knowledge that they are with me, they are as good as not being there with me, since I could not use them. With the knowledge that they are with me, I could use them; the knowledge that they are with me afterall, is as though I got back what I missed.

This gaining of that which is already there, through knowledge,is praaptasyapraaptihi. In contrast, gaining something that we do not have, through effortis apraaptasyapraaptihi. Since I am searching for happiness and security, not limited by time and space, such happiness should be there at all times and places including in me. Naturally such happiness should be in me, only needing me to know its existence and claim ownership to it.

This being subtle the senses cannot know and has to be known through the guidance of a teacher. This is the greatest sentence (Mahavakya)through which he guides me by making me realise that what I am searching for is not different from me and gives me eternity and total bliss. These Mahavakyas are the quintessence of Vedas.

Let us read a few elaborate but lucid explanations from Sri Gurudev on Mahavakyas from Atma Bodh verse 30.

"The Vedic aphorisms (Mahavakyas) are:

1.That thou art

2.This Atman is Brahman

3. Consciousness is Brahman

4. I am Brahman."



All these point out the Non-dual identity between the individual soul (Jiva) and the Supreme Soul (Atma) since the Reality behind them both is the One Brahman,the Absolute.
The Mahavakyas are no mere aphorisms,but they are the golden keys which open the gateways to a richer experience which is beyond words and equally beyond the comprehension by our intellect. By a process of negation of the false and the assertion of the positive Truth,one reaches the holy land of the full and pregnant spiritual experience:'I am Brahman'.

'This is that Gupta.' 'This' and 'that', they indicate one and the same Gupta. The differences are in the conditionings around Mr.Gupta.

"That Gupta whom you met inBenaras, in 1950, as a petty shop-keeper,is this Mr.Gupta we met in Delhiin 1960,as a multi- millionaire".

Benaras is not Delhi,1950 is not 1960,a petty shop keeper is not a multi-millionaire. But when the conditionings are removed, the individual whom we met in the past in Benaras under certain conditions is the very same individual whom we are meeting today in a different period of time and in different conditions.

Similarly,this Jiva conditioned by the body, mind and intellect,bound by its Vasanas,tempted by an endless array of objects,going through a thousand sorrows and despairs, is the same Unconditional Infinite Immutable Sacchidananda Truth.The Jiva in its limitations and sorrows can never be the All Blissful unlimited Brahman; but all the same,when the Jiva disassociates itself from all its matter embellishments it gets relieved from its ego centric individuality and comes to experience the Truth Divine."

This phrase that uses negation and assertion is called Jaha-ajahaLakshna or bhagatyagalakshna etc. This approach includes lots of technical terms and explanations. Sri Gurudev through the example of Mr. Gupta and using the method of negation and assertion, avoided voluminous explanation and use of technical presentation, that will not be easy for all to comprehend.

This is Gurudev's prowess and finesse. The way He shaped the explanation with a

limited English language is unique to Him!

259. Hasten Slowly

21-01-2016

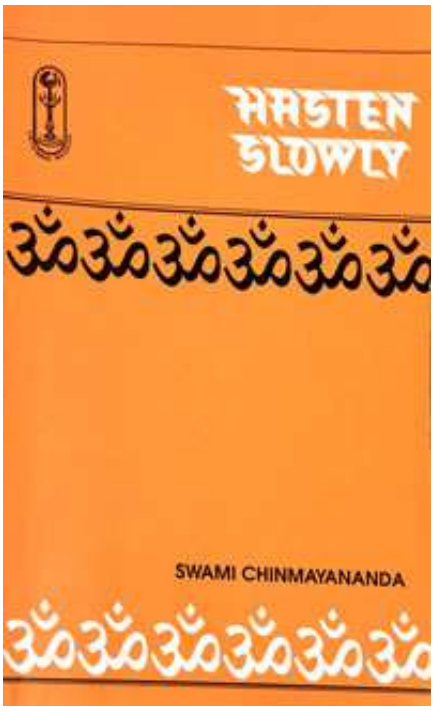
Sent by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Many of the Vedantic statements in all books areconfusing if not self-contradicting terms like subtler than the subtlest grosser than the grossest and soon. Naturally Gurudev too has to use such phrases for us to grasp, such as: relation-less relationship, contactless contact, and ‘hasten slowly’to name a few.

The main topics in Vedanta are Karma,Bhakthi,Gnana,Dhyana etc. The available literature on them is vast, and difficult for a layman to grasp their exact import. Sri Gurudev in "Secret of Action"has summarised Karma Yoga in a lucid manner with appealing examples. Similarly essence of love(devotion) in "I Love You," is the essence of NaradaBhakthi Sutras. Here in "Hasten Slowly", a book based on Yoga Vasishta, Sri Gurudev gives the quintessence of Meditation. Before we go into them we shall see a very accurate definition of Meditation from Gurudev’s commentary of BG 13:25 25.

By meditation some behold the Self. Meditation consists in 'withdrawing,by concentration,all the sense organs away from their respective sense objects, into the mind, into the inner intelligenc,e and then contemplating on the Highest.

In a recent article in Tapovan Prasad on "How to go Beyond", Gurudev has given 7-8 techniques of meditation starting with the fundamental "Seer and Seen" going uptoto simple gazing of IstaDevata.



Now we shall see some extracts from Hasten Slowly:

HS2

The capacity of the mind to entertain consistently one idea, to the exclusion of all dissimilar thought,is called concentration.

HS3

A conquered mind is called 'pure mind' in Vedanta(shuddhaantahkarana),and it is a mental equipment which is not agitated by every passing mood of passion or is disturbed by every fascinating object that comes across it.

The nature of the mind is that it's thoughts will readily flow towards any object of love. Where our prema is,there our mind reaches and lingers lovingly. This creative altar provided for the mind to hold on to, away from the storms of worldly temptations,is called the point-of-contemplation(Alambanam). With devotion when we thus worship,adore,and meditate upon the chosen Lord-of-our-heart (IstaDevata),we have given the mind a refreshing altar of contemplation upon which we may dry dock the mind, away from the stormy confusions of sense-enchantments,and repair it.

HS4

The content of the present moment,divorced from all relationship with past and future,is the absolute fullness of the Infinite. Eternity is experienced at the sacred depths of the present moment.

Not to identify ourselves with our rising tides of thoughts (sankalpa),but to remain as a witness of them all, is a definite stage in the efforts of meditation.,

As a witness we remain in the present, without being conditioned by the past associations,or being enchanted away by future expectations.

HS6

Study of the scriptures,in a spirit of total participation directly through books--augmented,with at least frequent listening to the learned exponents and a few direct contacts withthe authoritative masters--is found to be very helpful in the beginning. This regular study of the Upanishads, Gita and other spiritual literature is called svadhyaya.

To repeat − with or without the help of a Mala − a mantra,continuously fixing our mind on the divine imports and suggestions of the mystic word thus repeated is called Japa.

When the thoughts have thus been nourished by 'study'(svadhyaya) and rendered quiet and peaceful by Japa,to rest the hushed mind at the altar of the Self in a thrilled mood of choiceless contemplation is 'meditation'(dhyanam).

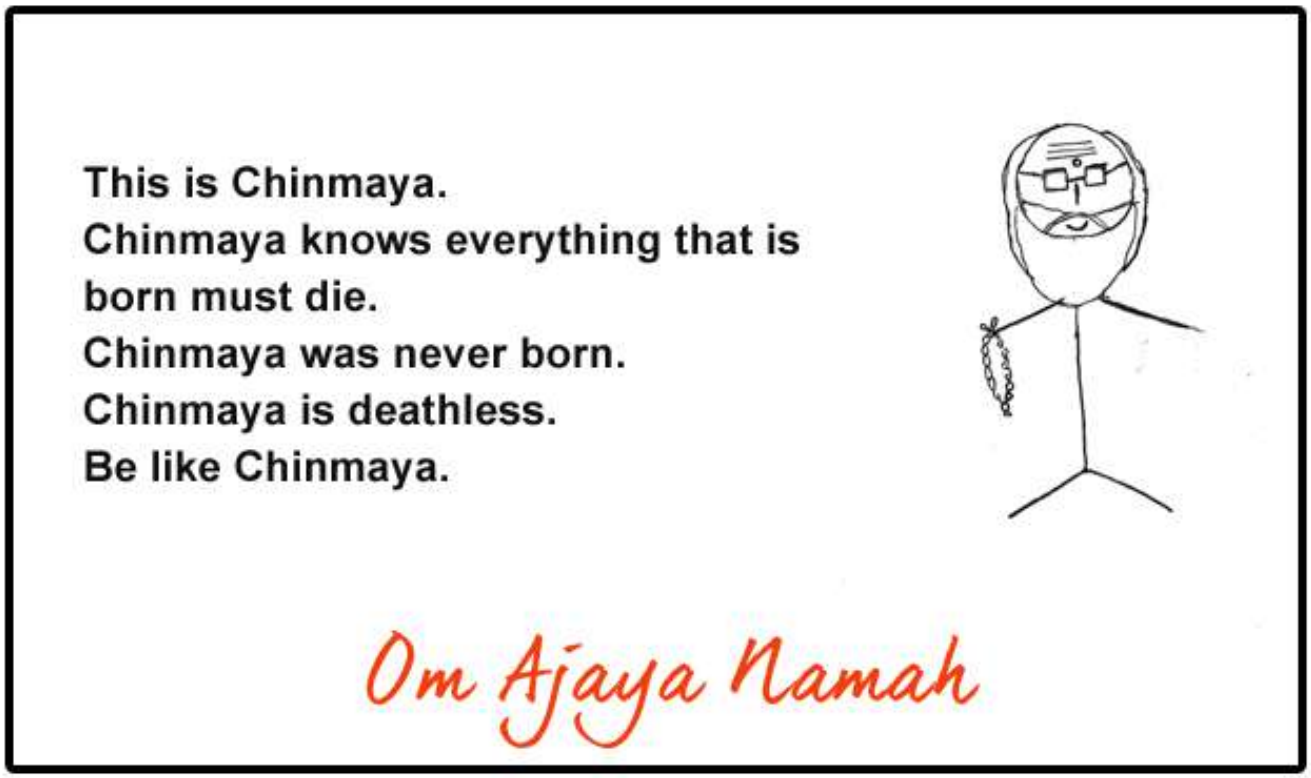
HS 7 Sravana Manana Nidhidhyasana

To quieten the mind,the seeker initiates in himself the steady contemplation of the nature of the Self,which he had 'heard'' reflected upon',and, in his own reasoning,had got fully convinced about. By so employing the mind,it's rush towards the objects is curbed,halted,and redirected towards the Immutable Light Within-the Self.

With this story, the third phase of this celebrations ends, making way for the 4th phase. Starting tomorrow we begin offering naam archana to Pujya Gurudev....Kindly come back to join in the chant as we glorify Him with every naam.

260. Naam 1: Om Ajaaya Namah

22-01-2016



Om Ajaaya Namah: Salutations to the Unborn

Offered by Swamini Vimalananda

On Pujya Gurudev's 70th birthday at the SandeepanySadhanalaya, Mumbai there was

a large gathering at the Jagadeeshwara Temple. There was no place to sit and people were standing to listen to Pujya Gurudev. He said, “I wonder why people have gathered. For the last so many years, from every platform I have been saying that I am unborn, yet people gather to celebrate the birthday of the unborn Swami. See the play of Maya!”

Only that which is not there before, can be created or is born. But can that which is always there, be born? The Eternal Truth is therefore Unborn and Deathless. Also can I ever experience my own absence? I will always be there to experience the presence and absence of others, and so I am Eternal. One who has realised that ‘I am the Eternal Truth (aham brahmaasmi)’ is naturally Unborn. Pujya Gurudev was one such Master who revelled in this Realisation and guided each of us towards the same Truth.

As BrniSmriti Chaitanya, I was attending a camp of Pujya Gurudev at Siddhabari. My father too was attending the camp. It happened to be my birthday. I would go each day to his kutia after the morning class to offer prostrations. Feeling too shy to tell Pujya Gurudev, but still to seek his special blessings for the day, I went with special feelings in my heart to his kutia. As I was prostrating, someone told him that it was my birthday. Immediately he said, “You are unborn. Don’t even let your parents convince you that you were ever born.” That became a mahavakya for me. From that day all birthdays, including Pujya Gurudev’s and my own, have a different meaning for me.



Swamini Vimalananda

Interestingly just the day before my birthday, a child of one of a camp delegates was celebrating her birthday. Pujya Gurudev made such a big thing of it and sang the birthday song, gave her gifts and all the campers in turn gave her lots of gifts and attention. For that child and her parents too it was an unforgettable birthday!!

The above two incidents show that Pujya Gurudev was like a kalpa vriksha – the wish fulfilling tree. Remaining in his Unborn Nature he gives to each of us what we seek.

Om AjaayaNamah: Salutations to the Unborn!

Om Ajaaya Namah

Offered by Acharya Sharada Kumar, Michigan, USA

In the early 1970s, since we used to live near the Kennedy airport in New York, many people would just come from India and stay in our house finding some connection through distant relatives.

One such time a lady was staying with us and we did not know much about her.

During that time Gurudev was visiting New York and we were going for a satsang in Ram Kripalani's house where Gurudev was staying. We asked this lady if she would want to come with us and she said yes.

After Gurudev's Satsang, He asked me to sing some bhajans and while I was singing, I saw Gurudev

looking in one direction intently and when I turned to see what it was, I was shocked to see our guest distributing some pamphlets to everyone in the audience. Since we all were looking at her, she felt a little uneasy and turned to Gurudev and said, "I am a famous astrologer from India, Swamiji! I can predict anyone's future and these are my pamphlets!" and she paused to see if Gurudev looked impressed!

As for Gurudev, He was listening without any expression. So she proudly continued, "Swamiji, if you tell me your birth date, I can predict your future too!". I was

totally stunned at her ignorance about Gurudev's greatness and was wondering how Gurudev would respond to her silly comment!

Gurudev paused for a while and smilingly replied to her, "Amma, what to do, I was never born"!!!

OM AJAAYA NAMAHA!!

About Acharya Sharada:

Sharada Kumar is Acharya and President, Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

I first heard Gurudev in Shivaji Park, Mumbai in 1963 during my college years,

Had the opportunity to chant for Him for the first time in Bhopal in 1969 at Heavy Electricals Geeta Jnana Yagna. (Interestingly, that was the first time Pujya Guruji met Pujya Gurudev during the same yagna, it seems!)



This picture was taken during a Radio Interview in New York in 1972 or 73. He asked me sit next to Him and start the interview off with a PratahSmaranaShlokam as it was morning!

Salutations to the Unborn

Offered by Brni.Anupama Chaitanya

Om is the connector, just like when we dial a number and say Hello to check whether we are connected or not. Om represents the Absolute Truth/Lord without attributes. Thus in the beginning of any Mantra we say Om to get connected / attuned to the Lord.

अजाय: means unborn. What does it mean? How do we understand this?

Everything which comes under the range of perception cannot be called unborn as everything has got birth. Even the elements have beginning and end.



Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

Vedanta gives the answer to this question and Pujya Gurudev lived and shared this great knowledge with everyone who came in contact with Him.

We can classify the entire world in three categories i.e. Experiencer, experienced and experience.

That which is experienced (an object of experience) has birth and death.

An experience also begins and ends.

Also the experience and the experienced (Object) both are dependent on experiencer.

It is only the Experiencer who remains there independent of experience or experienced.

Birth is an experience therefore there has to be someone who experiences it. And experiencer is independent hence it has to be birth less. That Experiencer who silently experiences all the events starting from the birth and remains untouched, is Unborn – absolute Truth - our true nature.

To comprehend this subtle truth is difficult, as we always try to grasp the things through our intellect; but here the intellect itself is experienced and is not the experiencer. Who is that who experiences the intellect?

That subtler then the subtlest, beyond all pairs of opposites, concepts or ideas, is our true nature. Abiding in this True Self when one works, it crosses all the limits of perfection.

Gurudev worked throughout His life abiding in this Truth and made us also fit to abide in our true nature.

To experience the pure self (experiencer) is only possible in the absolute Presence which is devoid of past regrets or memories, future worries or plans and present excitements.

Gurudev taught a very simple technique to reach this state. “Keep your mind where your heart is”. This was His teaching which He lived throughout the life. He lived every moment. Every work He did, He did with 100% attention and therefore we have to say He did it…

Be the experiencer who is beyond the experienced and experience.

The most hindering identity of an individual is with the body. As long as I feel I am this limited body, I have all limitations. The body’s nature becomes my nature. Therefore we celebrate birthday-s every year. Gurudev’s approach towards the celebration of birthdays was so different. He did not identify with the body at all. Body was an instrument to work for Lord.

Once a Brahmachari noticed Gurudev greeting a little child on his birthday. It was Vijayadashami day. Gurudev accepted the chocolate and said “Oh, today is your birthday? You are born on Vijayadashami day! Do you know ‘Vijaya’ means success? You will be an ever successful person.“

Obviously this was so enchanting to the brahmachari and he decided to go and receive blessings from Gurudev. He waited for two years and on His last year of Vedanta course Gurudev was available at Sandeepany. He went with all enthusiasm and prostrated early in the morning at 5:30 before class began. Gurudev smiled at Him and looked at him in wonder. Brahmachari said today is my birthday. Suddenly Gurudev’s face changed. “Birthday! What birthday? He shouted at him. The Brahmachari gave further explanation, “I am 28 today”. Gurudev retorted, 28! So what? Next year you will be 29, then 30! It will go on. What is so great about that?

All the scenario that he had imagined, flopped. He had imagined, it is also a day of Gurupoornima and Gurudev will say, “You are born on Gurupoornima day? You will become a great Guru!” On the contrary, he got a firing which he understood only later. (Swami Sachchidananda shares this incident with PrarthanaChaitanyaji, Tapovan Prasad, April 2014)

Sometimes Gurudev would even tell little children “You are unborn, don’t even let your parent convince you that you are born”.

Devotees used to celebrate Gurudev’s birthday three times a year, as no one knew the correct birth date. So in one letter Gurudev writes “A sanyaasin does not have birthday, that too you celebrate three birthdays in a year. It is ridiculous. If it helps people to take resolutions etc. then continue on 8th May.

Never was He born, and therefore ever He is.

Salutations to that One Unborn!

Om Ajaaya Namah

Brni. Anupama Chaitanya - Chinmaya Mission Jamnagar, student of 15th Batch Sandeepany, completed her Vedanta course under the guidance of Pujya Swami Advayanandaji and Swami Sharadanandaji.

Om Ajaaya Namah!

Offered by Sri. L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

I had a very close friend who was interested in seeing Gurudev. I therefore took him to meet Gurudev at Mrs Nambiars house. I casually introduced him as an astrologer. Gurudev’s reaction was, what will a man without date of birth do with an astrologer!

Then again those who established Gurudev’s correct date of birth through school certificate, passport etc., know that Gurudev’s birthday is not May 8th. It is also reasonable since Gurudev was born on Sri Rama Navami which does not extend upto May.



Hemuji and his study group

Some were celebrating his tithi, some his nakshatra and so on. Once some people who were celebrating on May 8th suggested why not we standardise this. Gurudev, true to His being beyond the body, left it to their choice, neither contradicting them nor giving the real date of birth of his body.

Thus May 8th came to be recorded as the 'birthday' of the Birthless One.

Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Brahman being the very origin of time and space is beyond time and space that is "Infinite". Infinite cannot be limited by time and space hence cannot have birth.

OmAjayaNamh

Om Ajaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Chinmaya Mission Mumbai

Brahman is Unborn! Swami Chinmayanada was "born" on the 25th February 1949- MahaShivarathri day!

But Balakrishna Menon- Balan, who metamorphosed into Swami Chinmayananda was born on 8th May 1916, under PushyaNakshathra—Guru Star -- on a Monday - according to the Malayalam almanac.

However the date of birth mentioned in His passport is 21stApril.

Also, the Tithi on the day He was born was Navami -- Rama Navami! This day is also celebrated as His birthday!

So many birthdays the Swami Has!

In 1993, these were the days on which Gurudev's "birthday" was celebrated! The PushyaNakshathram that year, fell on 1st April. That day, Gurudev was travelling to Surat by Paschim Express. He boarded at Bombay Central station. The lunch bhiksha was brought to Borivilistation (some 30 minutes after Bombay Central, where the train begins to leave Mumbai) and handed over to me.

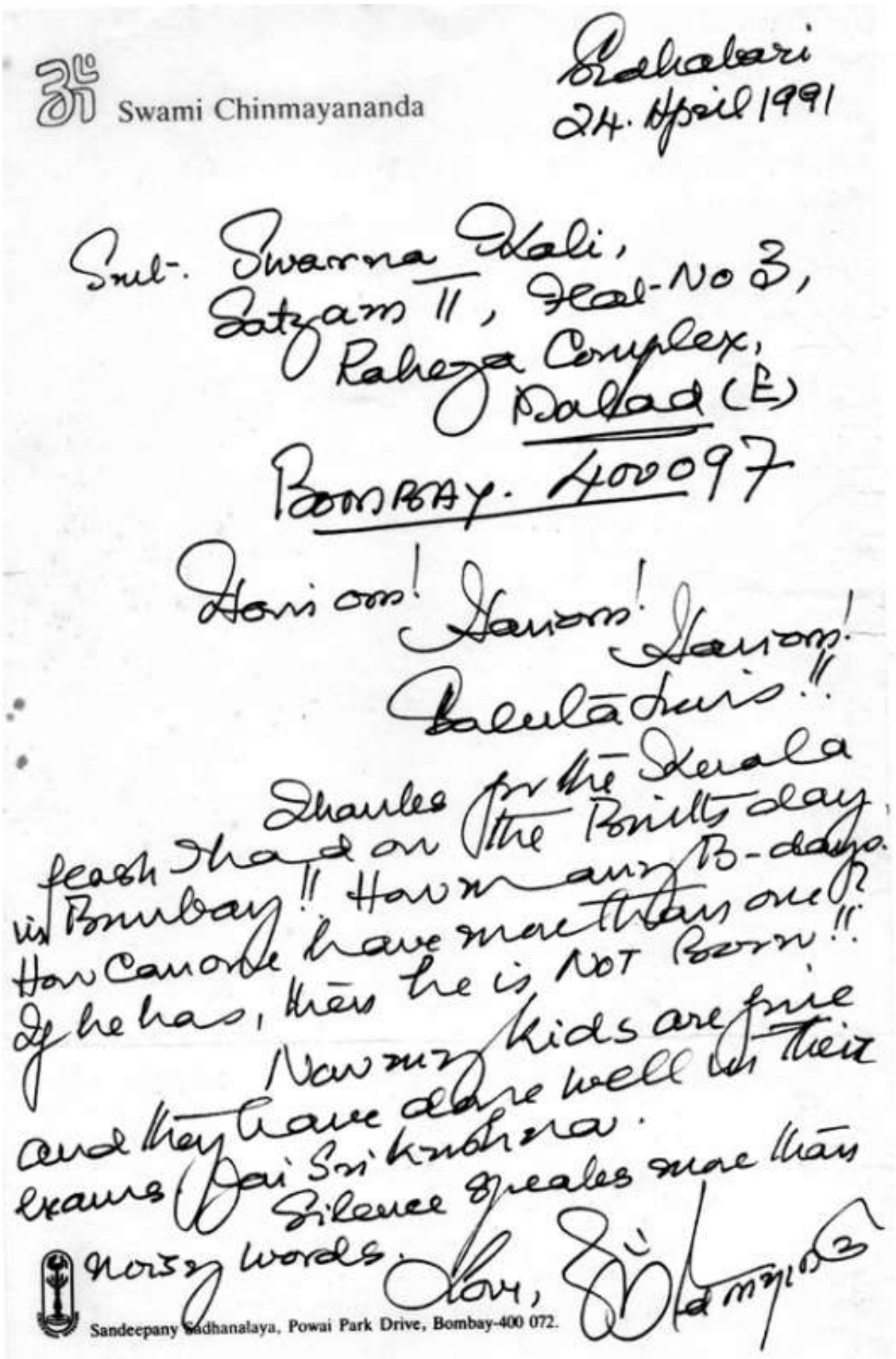
After the train left Borivili, before serving the bhiksha, we performed a Paada-pooja, in a running train, between Borivili and Vapi – a two and a half hour ride before we enter Gujarat!

Next day was Rama Navami! This day, 2nd April, was again celebrated, in a moving train returning to Mumbai --- between Surat and Borivili, again with a Paada-pooja and bhiksha!

The same evening, we had a 'cake cutting' ceremony at the Satsang hall of Gurudev's Kutia at Powai Ashram, organised by NayanaDaswani, an old devotee. One candle was placed on the cake and lit. Gurudev puffed at it twice, but the flame still continued burning! He, then, plucked the candle from the cake, held it aloft, with an incandescent smile plunged it back in to the cake! Just before cutting the cake, Gurudev said, "April 1st, April 2nd, April 21st, May 8th! How many birthdays can a Swami have? This itself shows that HE is UNBORN!"

Om Ajaaya Namaha!

Here is one of Gurudev's letters, in which He has expressed this truth in black and white!



Swami Chinmayananda

Sahakari
24. April 1991

Smt. Swarna Kali,
Satyam II, Flat-No 3,
Raheja Complex,
Dalad (E)
BOMBAY. 400097

Hari om! Hari om! Hari om!
Balatāhari!!

Thanks for the Kerala feast I had on the Pooja day in Bombay!! How many B-days. How can one have more than one?? If he has, then he is NOT Born!!

Now my kids are fine and they have done well in their exams. Jai Sri Krishna.

Silence speaks more than noisy words.

Love,

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai Park Drive, Bombay-400 072.



On a running train on board the Paschim Express, between Surat and Borivli, Anjali Singh shot this picture after we conducted the Paada Pooja on 2nd April!

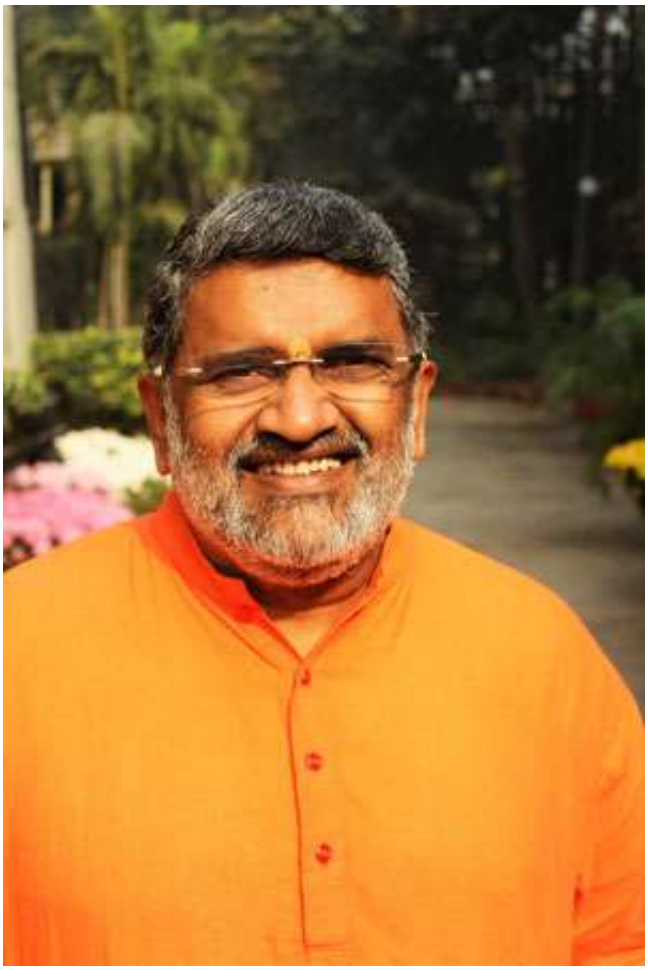
Om Ajāya Namaḥ

Salutations to the Unborn

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional head, Chinmaya mission, Delhi & NCR

Each of the 108 names of Gurudev is prefaced with Om, which indicates the Supreme Reality. The Supreme Reality is beyond birth. Only that which was not there at one point can take birth. There was never a time when the Supreme was not there, therefore it cannot be born. The Teacher, having become one with that Supreme Truth, has transcended birth. The form comes into being and then

disappears or dies, but the Supreme Reality is always present. The act of taking birth is only the Lord's lélä or game.



Swami Nikhilananda

Om is a meditation on the Supreme Reality. Ajāya is the birthless. There is no cause for it. It is changeless, beyond and unaffected by time. Gurudev used to laugh hearing this name. He would say, "If we are ajāya (birthless), how can we want to celebrate birthdays?" On one hand we venerate the Guru as one without other hand we plan to celebrate his day of birth.

Though eternal, the Supreme Reality assumes various forms, or takes birth depending on the needs of people. Gurudev assumed various roles in accordance with the situation – each was like a different birth. With small children, he would become a child, laughing and giggling. His identification with them would be so complete, that they would consider him a child like themselves. With the youth, he was dynamic and powerful. With intellectuals, he was an intellectual. With simple folk, he became very simple. He talked the language of science with scientists, and with managers he spoke in their management jargon.

So though unborn, according to the need, time and place, the teacher takes on various roles. The same teacher took birth as AdiShankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda and as Gurudev, according to the need of the hour. Although the forms were different, each remained established in the same Supreme Self, formless and birthless.

Guruji gives the example of wet wood. Suppose we want to light up the wet logs, we put them into the fire. Automatically the logs dry up, they start smoking and suddenly when completely dry they catch fire. The wood is then as bright and brilliant as the fire. Where was the fire? It was in the wood itself. As soon as the conditions were right, it manifested or took birth.

Similarly, knowledge and greatness lies dormant within each one of us, hidden amidst all our desires and attachments. For it to manifest, we need the constant company of those who have attained it. This purifies us and finally gives us the same experience. This is not at the physical level…it is at the mental level and is most subtle. Constant meditation on the form of the Teacher helps purify the mind and the attainment of the Supreme state. Of the various upäsanäs, the most powerful, potent and fascinating is Guru upäsanä.

Om Ajaaya Namaha!

261. Naam 2: OM AVYAYAAY NAMAH

23-01-2016

ॐ अव्ययाय नमः

Salutation to the Imperishable

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar, Gujarat

From the highest standpoint, I am immortal (अजः); but then what about the practical world, where I do feel, experience the ups and downs of life? In spite of being unborn, nothing stops the feeling of pains and sorrows at different levels. What about that, then?

Lord Krishna also says in the Bhagvad Geeta (तान्स्ततितिक्षस्व भारत) ‘ bear them without any worries or complaints, knowing that you are imperishable.’



Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

That which is born has changes, undergoes changes. The BMI undergoes changes with every experience. But Experiencer remains changeless. For example, the body which has got birth, goes on changing constantly but beyond it all, there is an entity who 'knows' all the changes. If the knower also starts changing, then we would not remember anything. We remember the experiences that the body, mind and intellect have gone through. To that higher in everyone, who is the changeless substratum for all changes to take place, I prostrate.

This knowledge alone can make one fearless, trouble-less. All our fears are of changes. Although we constantly look for changes, we are scared of unwanted changes. We want certain things to be changed and certain things to remain the way they are. However, the law of changing world is not in our hands, but when I know

that I am the substratum for all changes to take place, all troubles end. The experience passes as it came, but I tend to jump and give it a name or label – 'good' or 'bad', 'joyful' or 'sorrowful' and so on. Hence that which is so-called good experience I want to store it and want to get rid of the bad one. However, they come in a package. If we store the good one, the bad one also will be there. Only way to get out of this constant flux of changes and pairs of opposite is to find the higher, holding which one can drop duality.

Gurudev imparted a very touching experience which follows this teaching. Once Poojya Gurudev had to climb a flight of wooden stairs leading to the platform. One step had a nail protruding from it, but nobody had noticed it. Gurudev walked up onto the platform and sat down cross legged and gave His talk for an hour and a half.

At the end of the lecture everyone dispersed as Gurudev requested so. The remaining few people were surprised to see that Gurudev was not getting up and they went near Him to inquire. Gurudev said "I want to get up but I cannot." The side of His left leg was fully covered with blood from the wound under his foot. It was from the nail on the stairs.

Supported by others He got up from His seat, saying, "I don't know what it is. It's paining."

No one had been aware of any sign of pain or change in Gurudev during the talk. When the mind is soaring into the higher reality, the lower automatically drops.He allowed the pain to pass through Him, instead of He passing through the pain.

Likewise, despite having a lot of physical ailments, He remained untouched by all the changes on the surface, and deep within He rested ever peaceful.

Om Avyayaaya Namah!

OM AVYAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Unborn (Ajaaya) being beyond time and space, is imperishable. Since finite only can perish, and He is infinite, He is avyayaa.

For any change to happen there should be unoccupied space. But since He is infinite and all pervading, there is no space that He does not occupy.

Truly, even today everyone feels His presence in their lives in one manner or

another. And when they talk, they claim:

*He is looking after our lives; He watches over us; He takes care of me...

*When we teach in study classes we are clear He alone is talking, as all thoughts come from nowhere

*If you see His Gita DVDs, which were shot before His Samadhi, we also know that His doctor had told Him you cannot speak for more than one hour a day. Yet He spoke four ‘one hours’ a day and nobody could see that it affected His body in anyway. For He was energetic, enthusiastic and humorous throughout. Truly He is imperoshable, avyayaaya, that was how He remained beyond the body.

Om AvyayaayaNamah!

Om Avyayaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Inexhaustible! That is Him Poojya Gurudev! Never ending because He is available in The Infinite, Unlimited --Brahman!

United Flight 237 dated 27th July 1993; Gurudev’s last non-stop flight from Wash/Dulles to San Die Go was delayed for an hour and He was waiting at the lounge for departure. A little child approached Gurudev and asked Him” We love you so much Swamiji, when do we meet you next?”



Shri Kalidas ji

Gurudev hugged that child and said" You close your eyes and look into your heart I will be there!"

Thus He pronounced where exactly He is available when He withdraws His mortal form! The Ideal behind the Idol, Swami Chinmayananda, can be perceived and experienced by this technique!

Poojya Gurudev just continues! Gurudev is eternal and everlasting, available any time, any place! Om AvyayaayaNamaha!

"Come! I am waiting!" This is an eternal promise from Gurudev! Once He concluded Kaivalyopanishad thus: - KaivalyamPadamAshnute—KaivalyamPadamAshnuthaIthi! Kaivalya means "mere", therefore, mereliness, meaning homogeneous oneness! This "KaivalyaPadavi" is the status Gurudev constantly abides in!

Gurudev once said: - "Meditation is the status one arrives at through contemplation-

contemplating on forms to arrive at the 'Formless!' This is the KaivalyaPadavi!

Om Avyayaaya Namaha!

I received a photograph, signed by Poojya Gurudev, in Feb 1993-- The sole of His right Foot—The Paada- Moolam, with a message "Head Here! "

This is the meeting Point!

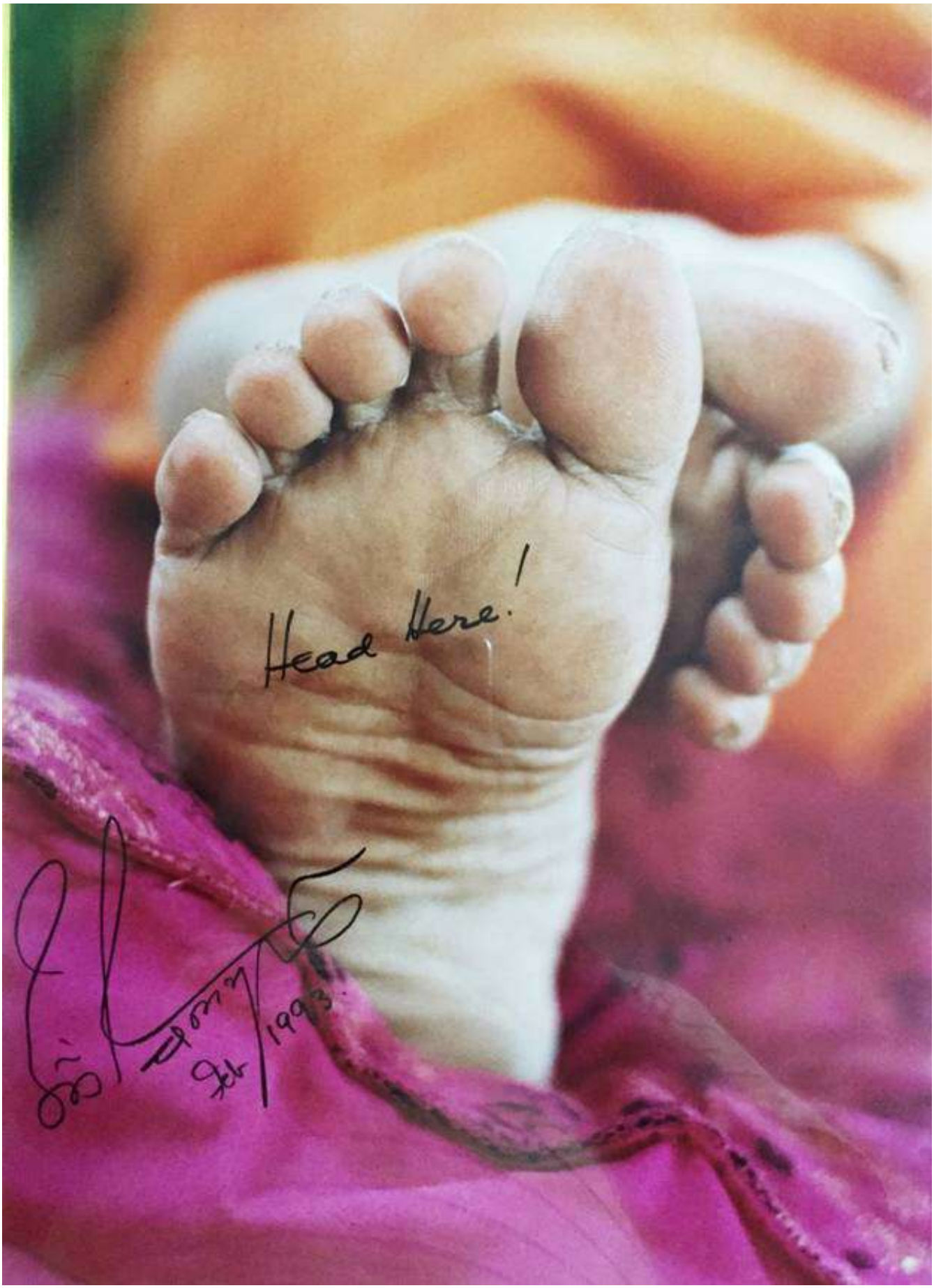
I am tempted to quote the Narayaneeyam (100:10) – a favorite of Gurudev's, where Bhattatiri says:

योगीन्द्राणांत्वदङ्गेष्वधिकसुमधुरंमुक्तभाजांनिवासो
भक्तानांकामवर्षद्युतरुकिसलयंनाथतेपादमूलम्।
नित्यंचित्तस्थितंमेपवनपुरपतेकृष्णकारुण्यसिन्धो
हृत्वानश्शेषतापान्प्रदिशतुपरमानन्दसन्दोहलक्ष्मीम्॥१०॥

May the soles of Thy feet,which are the most beloved among all Thy limbs for the great yogis,which is the place of residence of the liberated ones,which is the sprout of the divine wish-yielding tree which fulfills all the desires of the devotees,always rest in my heart. Oh! Lord of Guruvayur! Oh! Protector of the world! Oh! Krishna! Ocean of Compassion! Removing all my sorrows,may Thy Feet bestow on me the fullness of the flow of Supreme Bliss!

(Source: Narayaneeyam Of Melpathur Narayana Bhatttiri Commentary by S.N. Shastri)

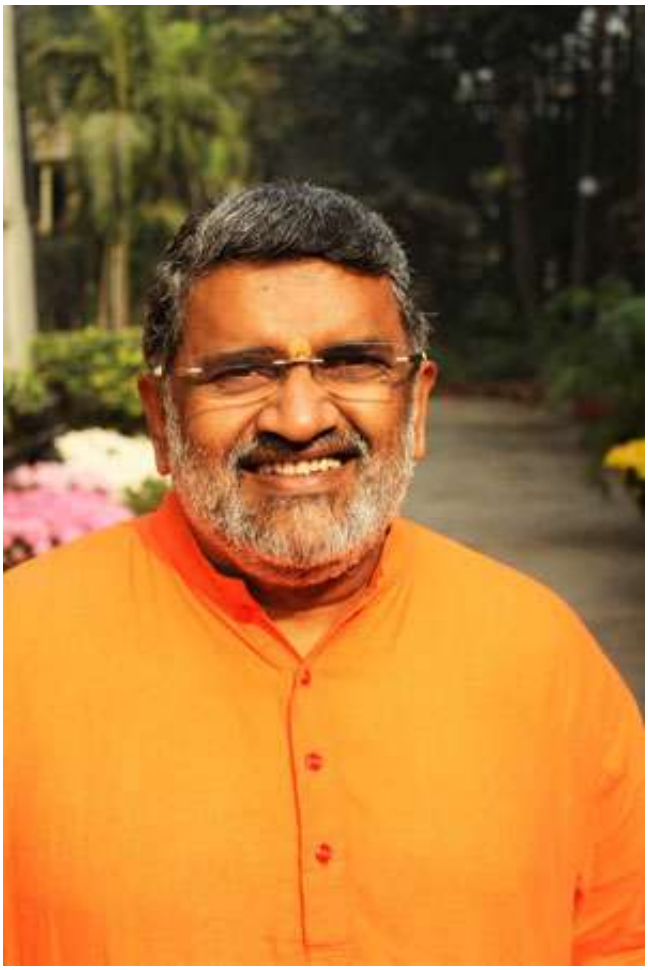
To Those Holy Feet our prostrations : Om Avyayaay Namah!


Head Here!

Om Avyayāya Namaḥ
Salutations to the Imperishable

Offered by Pujya Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, Chinmaya Mission Delhi & NCR

Vyaya means to spend and avyaya is that which cannot be spent or is imperishable. It remains fresh and new all the time. It is undecaying. Though the mind and body decay, the Supreme Reality remains imperishable. In our intrinsic nature, we are the same as the Guru. éçvaragururätmetimürtibhedavibhägine (éçvara, Guru and ätman are one and the same).



Swami Nikhilananda

In the beginning of our spiritual journey, éçvara seems to be very far. As we progress, he comes nearer and becomes the Guru. At a still higher stage, theGuru comes even closer and becomes the ätman. According to Ramana Maharishi, first the Guru instructs through an outer form and then later becomes the inner guide. Beginning from an outside source, he enters the system and starts guiding from within. He becomes the inner Self. This has been the experience of many devotees who have steadfastly stayed available to the guidance of Gurudev. To them even today he remains undiminished in their lives.

The characteristics of the Guru, éçvara and the Self are the same. The Self is imperishable. It does not undergo any modification or change. Time cannot touch it. It is not made up of any substance and so remains unchanged. It is beyond all guëas or attributes. If it were made from any substance, it would slowly change and eventually dissolve.

The Reality is fascinating. It is beyond our thinking. Even the nature of a greatMahätmä is avyayāya and difficult to grasp. Gurudev used to say that the

greatness of a Mahätmä is understood as much as 50 or 100 years, after dropping his body. Now, when we talk about Gautam Buddha, we say, “Oh what a great Mahätmä, if only I was there at that time.” Yet, even if we had been there at that time, we may not have appreciated his greatness. We appreciate the greatness of a Mahätmä by reading a book, on his life or by seeing his popularity. Just as today we stay charged by Gurudev, through his writings, teachings and words. The Mahima of his Naam outlives his physical presence in the world

Swami Vivekananda was criticised during his life time, now he is considered a great Master. Ramana Maharishi became popular through the books written about him. Lord Krishna was with Arjuna long before the Mahabharata war took place, but did not appreciate his greatness. He treated Krishna as a friend and so took Him to be an ordinary person. It was only when he saw bhagavän’sviräöarüpa that he understood His greatness. He then prostrated to Him and asked to be forgiven.

THE GLORY OF GURUDEV TOO HAS GROWN IN THE HEARTS OF MANY THROUGH THE YEARS AND IN MANY CASES EVEN AFTER HIS MAHASAMADHI, AND STAYS NEW AND FRESH EVERYDAY.

To such an imperishable Guru, our prostrations.

OM AVYAYAAYA NAMAH!

262. Naam 3: OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

24-01-2016

ॐ अविनाशिने नमः

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

Offered by Brni Anupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar, Gujarat

Salutations to the one who is indestructible

Gurudev who is beyond birth (Ajaaya) also cannot have death. His presence is felt whenever we remember Him from the bottom of our heart.

It reminds me of an incident. A young journalist was going from one place to another in the night. She had to pass through a platform which was lonely and dark. Only a person with a scary look was sitting on the stairs. She felt scared, she remembered her dearest Gurudev and passed through the platform safely. A few days later she saw the picture of this man in the newspaper. He was a criminal and never left a chance to harass girls. She was surprised! Her curiosity led her to the police station to meet him and she asked him the reason. The man replied “How could I do anything to you when there was an old man with beard walking with you. He was looking at me and I just could not do anything.”



Brni Anupama Chaitanya

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

She was surprised to hear the description of an old man he ‘saw’ with her, and that

description matched Gurudev's! (From the narrations of Sw. Mitrananda)

Mere remembrance of His name brings inspiration, courage, joy and all virtues to once heart. The knowledge He lived, continues to live in His devotees' hearts.

Gurudev's physical body went through many ups and downs but Gurudev never gave much importance to it. A letter written to a devotee in Singapore in spring 1992 shows how he viewed the role of the body within the large scheme of things:

"Made up of the five elements, the body is the nest of diseases and pains. To cater to its demands can be twelve month twenty-four-hour-job – and yet it will suffer. Use it as an instrument for seva of others. Trees give fruits to others; the tree eats none. The river never drinks, but its waters are meant for plants, animals and humans. The Sun, the wind – look around. In nature, man alone wants to live for himself and perpetuate! Leave it alone. Let the body run its course. Let us live our life peacefully in Him, the Bliss. Look after the body as a workman tends to his instruments." (SOURCE: At Every Breath A Teaching, Rudite Emir)

To That Glorious Gurudev who ever remains in our hearts and lives, guiding us, guarding us, coaching us, who taught us the difference between perishable body and imperishable spirit, our prostrations.

Salutation to the one Who lived abiding in His true nature, every moment.

OM AVINASHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

That which is not finite, not limited by time and space, no thing or person can destroy it. Because who will destroy whom?

Because He alone is there. AvinasineNamah.

We really do not need to elaborate, for it is all around us to see. In the Mission, in Study Groups, in lecture halls, at camps, at poojas, at workshops held at the Mission….. it is all being done UNTO Him. That in itself points to HIS indestructible presence at all times.

The love Sri Gurudev has generated, from children to the ripe aged; his intellectual

range which has sunk into millions – have both become immortal. The effect of this love-generated-understanding, assimilated, will live for ever.

A devotee I know in Trichy, lost two sons and a son in law in a span of six months. Even while one of the bodies was still upstairs awaiting modalities, he was discussing Gurudev's NaradaBhakthi Sutra with those who had come to condole the death.

If this is His devotee, then what about the One devotion to Whom made him so? He cannot be other than Brahman the Immortal.

Or that little three-year-old child who taught a huge lesson. Pointing to Sri Gurudev, the child's father asked who is this? The child instantly said, "Guruvayurappan achan" -- meaning, father of Guruvayurappan. The child saw God in Gurudev (as only a little child can, effortlessly). Guruvayurappan being a child deity, Gurudev looked older, and by association of ideas the child said Gurudev is Guruvayurappan achan.

From the mouth of babes.....Intuitive knowledge seldom errs.

To that Indestructible achan, our prostrations!

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

Sent by Sri. Somesh Bhargava, Jaipur

Salutation to indestructible

Destructions is possible only to the born.Sadguru is not destructible. He is one without a second, a very kind expression of universal consciousness.

He is available to every sincere seeker immediately as he or she matures in their Sadhana. Today after so many years of His mahasamadhi, devotees continue to find His Grace in their sadhana.

Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda is one form of that Reality readily available to us whenever and wherever we need him. His gracious smile and commanding voice follows us even now, to uproot our weakness and bestow the highest experience of supreme reality on us. This is owing to His undiminishing, indestructible, changeless presence.

Gurudev is the flow of knowledge and devotion satisfying so many thirsty intellectual and sinking hearts even today, even to those who have never seen Him. He may accomplish this through his extended swaroop and army of acharyas – devotee students who agreed to adopt His conduct, His methods and to walk as He did.

For me His presence is unquestionably eternal; his smile has no match and his unique expression of body language explains the inexplicable.

Gurudev is the light without heat a dance without motion and a melodious song of love and liberation.

Salutations to that Imperishable One!

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

OM AVINAASHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri. M. Keshav, CM- Chennai

THE TRUTH is INDESTRUCTIBLE and those who stand for it, like Pujya Gurudev, become one with it and Lo! They symbolize in their Manifest and Un-Manifest that they are indeed “AVINASHINE NAMAHAH”

As young people working UNTO HIM, we often used as a Naam, a term in the ‘80s, which even became a sticker during a Yagna in Chennai “OM SRI CHINMAYA KRISHNA” – denoting for us this invincible, indomitable and indestructible Consciousness aspect in every possible test of time and space!

Only a SELF REALISED Master could transform so totally (like all the Spiritual Masters we have known), in just a few years from a brilliant, sharp, intelligent student to an Omniscient, Omnipotent Teacher, albeit at the Holy Feet of two of the greatest self-effacing Vedantins ever in the forms of Swami Tapovanam and Swami Sivananda! From HIS mid-thirties, when HIS QUEST took HIM to THEIR HOLY FEET, how did HE go on to create a Socio-Cultural Renaissance for a little over the next four decades?

How did PUJYA GURUDEV, effortlessly just “BE” THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TRUTH, when others are struggling to just ‘see’ the Truth? HE strode through the most difficult phase of India’s social development and use disarming charm and sharp strategy of LORD KRISHNA to build an institution that stands the test of time, without yielding to political power-struggles and silently started a social revolution in education that catered to the Inner and Outer Development of every human being across the globe.

The Chinmaya Vidyalaya network of schools crisscrossing our country are a testimony of value education that no modern educationist could have "planned" without being an "Avatar" of Super-Consciousness. His manner of influencing the best and the highest the world over, about Vedanta as a Science of Life and the Art of Man Making, symbolised HIS Indestructible Spirit as the body became a mere tool for attracting people and creating new standards of excellence across the globe. The podiums from where HE thundered HIS message with unforgettable words, were countless. The books HE wrote were impeccable in appeal and accuracy. The programmes went on and on while HE wielded the Magic Flute playing the melodies of THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TRUTH – OM AVINASHINE NAMAHAH!

Another example of Gurudev's Super-Consciousness is the test of Hindu Faith posed in the late '80s when The Pope visited India and Gurudev was invited to inaugurate the "Pope Reception Committee Secretariat" for Kerala in Trissur. Amidst a sharp outcry of protest from some radical sections of local Hindu society HE went on to blaze the occasion with HIS glorious and equally gracious call of reinforcing HINDU sentiments and reminding the organisers of their responsibility to respect social sentiments of all communities. After it was done, HE lovingly addressed all the concerns of the protesting members with Krishna-like charm: "If I refused the invitation, they would be embarrassed. If I accepted, you all would be angry. I can always come back to you and explain this dilemma but how would I explain things to them, unless I accepted and used the opportunity to clarify our social values?"

"Besides," HE added with a twinkle in HIS eyes, "When will I ever get an opportunity to address a fully high-powered audience of the Christian Faith that probably only The Pope himself will get to address after this!"

The "CHANGELESS ONE in the many" saw the march of the Mission go on as people came and went, making the right contributions and doing what was needed and not always what they wanted! Trapped in our own worlds of whims and fancies, we all worked on, guided by HIS Mastery to develop faith that we have all come to accept as our SELF-UNFOLDMENT. HE created in us answers for which there were no questions! Faith in WHOM we became silent!

Many of the motley people as family and friends who "branded" – and thereby "blessed" us youth as HIS -- had a familiar question on HIS MAHASAMADHI. "How will the Chinmaya Mission manage after HIM?" Natural for any missionary after 42 years of tireless social reconstruction to be asked and indeed, even a few of the devotees may be condoned for having a few doubts in their anxiety. The way that HE chose to execute HIS succession and continue the silent march towards perfection for almost a quarter century after leaving the world in 1993 can be seen in it's resplendent glory now in the Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations this year!

Our beloved Pujya Guruji often likes to remind us that "Those who don't stand for SOMETHING, will fall for anything!" The Chinmaya Mission stands today as an Institution for THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TRUTH created by a HUMAN MANIFESTATION of THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TRUTH!

OM AVINASHINE NAMAHAH! SHRI CHINMAYA SADHGURUVE NAMAHAH!

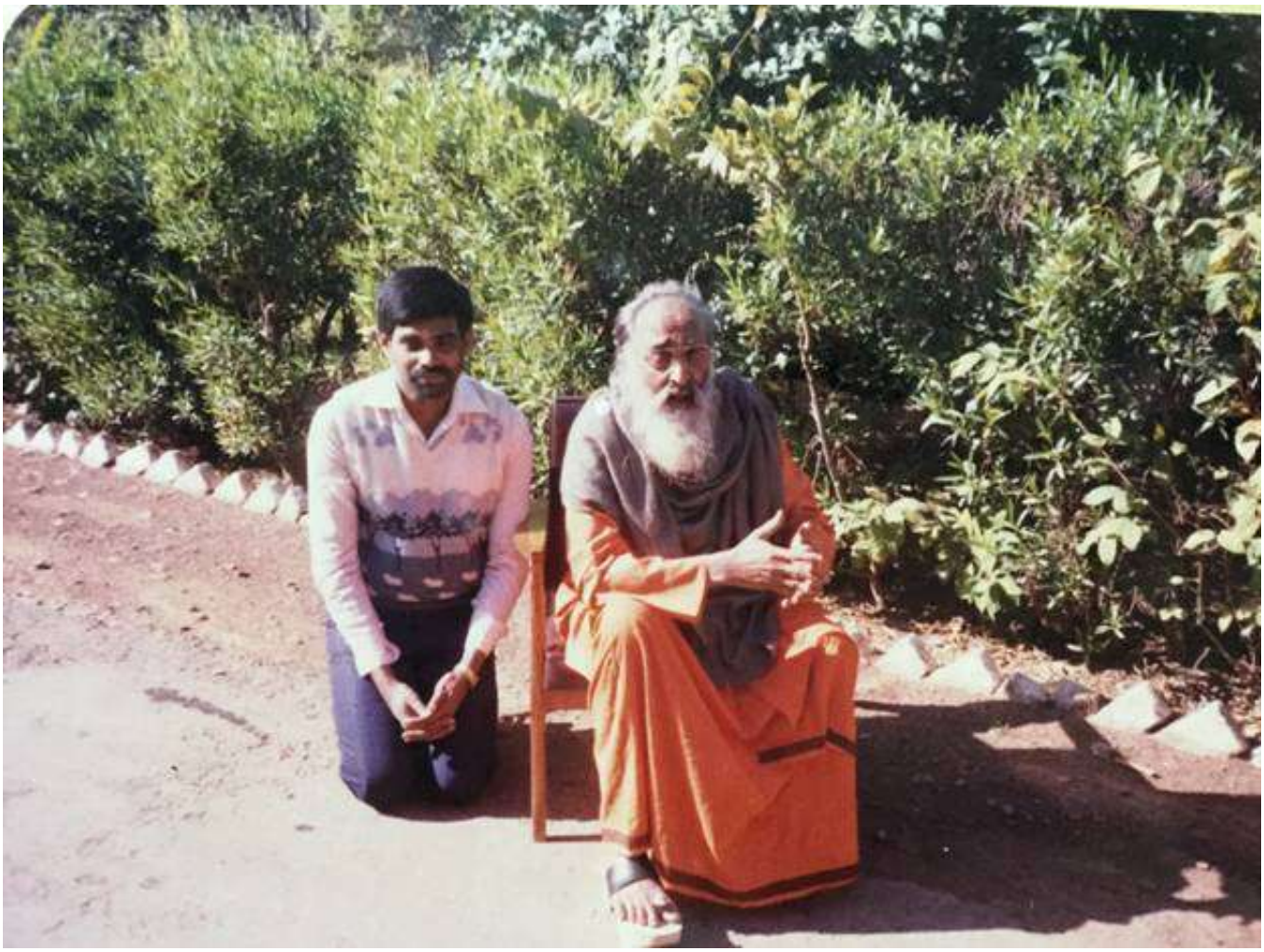
Om AvinaashineNamaha!

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Know THAT to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of THAT – The Imperishable! Thus commented Gurudev, reference Chapter 2, Verse 17 of The Bhagavad Gita! THAT is Him Our Poojya Gurudev! Om AvinaashineNamaha!

I was in London, in the New Year of 1986, during my flying days on duty Air India and was put up at The Heathrow Penta Hotel close to the airport. I woke up after my horizontal rest dreaming Poojya Gurudev. It was 3.30 AM! Brahma Muhoortham! I had a room facing the runway and I was watching the aircrafts from far-East, landing at Heathrow airport early in the morning! The airport was fully covered with a blanket of snow. It was a fantastic sight, reminded me of the Himalayas!

The snow can do wonders on human minds! My mind took the form of Gurudev! There were no thoughts other than a thought-- Gurudev! Swamiji was at Trissur-Kerala, conducting a Gita Jnana Yajna at that time. I planned to visit Gurudev at Trissur, on my arrival at Mumbai, after my duty. I tried to imagine what would be Gurudev's words on my arrival at Trissur on seeing me. Some thought-churning took place in my mind and questions as well as answers arose. The first question, Gurudev would probably ask "Hi Kali, where are you coming from?" The answer "London Swamiji".



Kalidas ji with the Indestructible One – en route Khajuraho airport - 1985

The next question: “How was London?” “Blissfully cold Gurudev!” My mind became the manufacturer of these questions and answers!

I arrived Trissur, as planned, and as I walked in to see Gurudev, He shot the first question at me “Hi Kali, where are you coming from?” I answered “London Swamiji” and as I prostrated, the next question “How was London? The answer was ready; “Blissfully cold Gurudev!” Poojya Gurudev, with one gracious glance of His eyes said “So you have come well prepared with the answers!”

When I looked at Him with wonder He explained: “This is how The Total Mind pervades and permeates the individual Mind- resulting in a total synergy with the Indestructible, the Imperishable, and the Immutable - Brahman!”

When I mentioned to Gurudev that I dreamt of Him in London, He expounded the

idea involved in a dream and a VISION, with reference to the unreal and the REAL! Gurudev said that we give a name ‘dream’ for anything we perceive in the dream state of Consciousness. The perception of the unreal is called a dream while the same dream becomes Vision with respect to the perception of the Real! The substratum of both unreal and real is Brahman!

How can He who pervaded the dream and the real and the dreamlike real, be anything but indestructible? He who is the very idea that constructs our experiences, to Him our prostrations!

Om AvinaashineNamaha!

? ????????? ???

Om AVINASHINE NAMAH

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM -Delhi & NCR

Om avināśinenamaḥ has a meaning similar to the earlier name. The same sentiment is indicated here as well. The Reality is indicated as indestructible or imperishable. In his commentary on the Bhagavad-gitā Adi Shankaracharya says,
that Bhagavän is all-powerful. He can destroy the whole world, but even He cannot destroy Himself. He cannot commit suicide. The five elements akasha, vayu, agni, jala and prithvi cannot be destroyed. Their forms can be changed but they cannot be annihilated and Bhagavän is even subtler than the five elements.

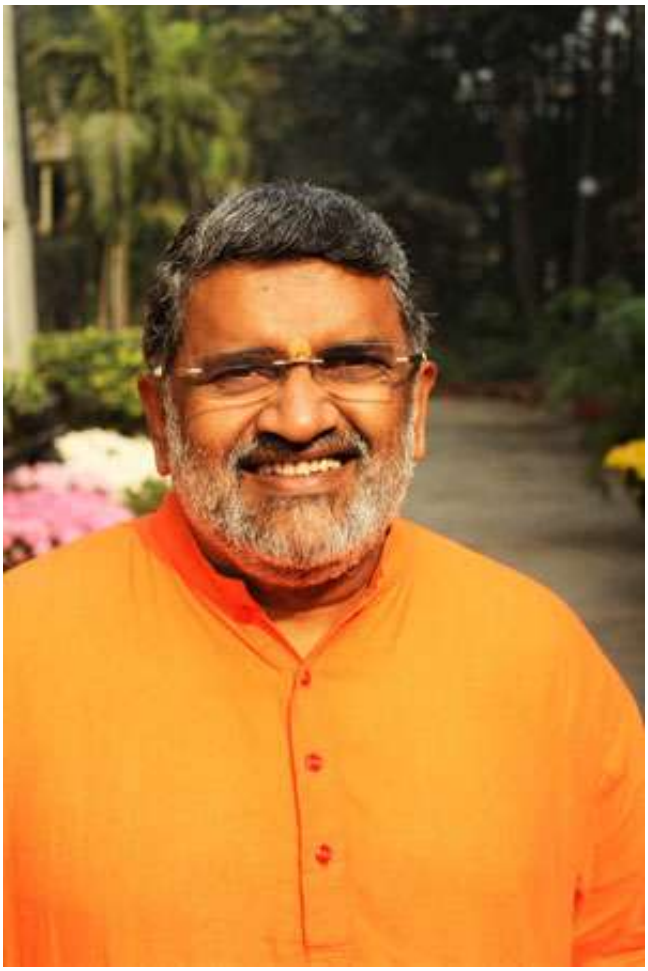
The Supreme Reality is changeless. The changes we see, take place against a

changeless substratum. Change can only be perceived against something which is changeless. In the case of a river, the water flows but the river bed remains intact. Life flows while 'I' the substratum remains the unchanging witness.

Lord Shiva in his dancing posture as Nataraj is a symbol of this indestructible Reality. He displays all its five features or main activities – creation, sustenance, destruction, Self-delusion and removal of delusion. The pose displays the one Reality which alone expresses as everything:

In one hand, he holds the damaru, which depicts sound. It is through sound or the subtle vibration of Om, that creation has emerged.

One hand of Lord Shiva faces the world, holding out a promise of protection. This is the abhayamudrä and represents sustenance. In one hand he holds fire, which is the symbol of dissolution. The world emerges from the Supreme, remains in the Supreme and merges back in to the Supreme.



Swami Nikhilananda

The analogy of the dream makes this concept more explicit. The dream world created by the mind, is sustained by the mind and on waking up dissolves into the mind.

The power of delusion is another of the great powers of the Supreme. Though being that Supreme, we are not aware of our true nature. The Nataraj posture depicts Lord Shiva standing with one foot on a human form. This symbolises the illusion under which we are living.

Lord Shiva also shows the way out of this delusion as with another hand He points to his feet, in a gesture of anugraha or blessing. This indicates that through surrender to the Lord one can become free of all confusion and realize one's true Self.

Bhagavän as though creates this bondage and takes the form of a teacher to release us from this bondage.Gurudev is that teacher-form of the Lord! By surrendering to the teacher with love, devotion and respect, we come to understand our indestructible nature and are freed from this delusion. In Gurudev's indestructible work and presence pervading our lives we come to see the indestructible Reality, the teacher.

To that changeless, indestructible Reality, Gurudev, our prostrations.

Om AVINASHINE NAMAH!

263. Naam 4: OM ACHINTYAAY NAMAH

25-01-2016

ॐ अचिन्त्याय नमः
Salutations to the one who is unthinkable

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

Most unpredictable were His ways of teachings. Sometimes it is just outside of our understanding. Gurudev Himself says about this : “I was born in Kerala, brought up in the North, hardened in Punjab, softened in Uttarkaashi; criticised everywhere, applauded in some places but accepted and worshipped by everyone. I am a riddle to myself!”



Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

We can think of something which belongs to this world. That which does not belong to world but the substratum of the world how can we ever think of Him? The very tool, 'intellect' with which we think is part of this changing world and perishable. How can a limited intellect think of the Unlimited? It is like illumining the Sun with a tiny lamp.

Gurudev's response would be also unpredictable. His transactions were from a different level altogether.

Once Gurudev was unwell (In Chennai). One of His classes got cancelled too. The host fixed an appointment with one of the best doctors there.

Knowing His approach towards the body people were scared to tell Him about the doctor's visit. Someone with great courage told Him "Swamiji Doctor is coming at 9:00 am". Gurudev asked "For what?" he replied "To examine you." Gurudev with His stick drew a line near the door and said,'If the doctor crosses this line, he would have to pay the consultation fees.' (Gurudev was 75 yr. old)

Completely unthinkable even at a transactional level !

OM ACHINTYAAY NAMAH!

Om Achinthyaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji, CM-Mumbai

Chinmaya means Chit-Concentrate, a mass of Pure Consciousness. The pure Awareness in us,that is Achintyam—Incomprehensible and Inconceivable! The Infinite Life, One without a second, that functions as the soul, indweller of every name and form in the universe can only be understood as a Great Power, experienceableonly on transcending the intellect. Intellect cannot think of It because It is the very Power in the intellect which expresses as Intelligence in the intellect. How can the light of the torch see the battery inside the torch? How can the eyes see itself? Even the ideas in the intellect are illumined by the Consciousness. Whatever arises at the intellect-mind level is illumined by Consciousness! Consciousness is the Absolute Subject! Chit is Knowledge Pure without any object for it to illumine other than Itself. This Immutable Knowledge Absolute is Sat-Chit-Ananda, the true nature of Brahman, and our Swami Chinmayananda! Om Achinthyaaya Namaha!

Poojya Gurudev concluded His last camp at Sidhabhaari on the 31st May 1993. Next morning, I was with Him in His Kutia, discussing His (last) travel plans abroad, beginning 10th Jun 1993. Gurudev had decided to take rest at Sidhabhari till 5thJun and fly to Mumbai only on the 6th Jun.

Now here is what happened. I was sitting at His Feet. The next minute Gurudev called out, "Sivarama!!"—so loudly that I just jumped up! Sivaramji—His personal assistant flew in like an arrow and asked Gurudev what He wanted. Gurudev pointed out to some teen-agers who were peering at him through the glass panel, and asked Sivaramji why they were looking through the glass panel.

Sivaramji said, 'To see you Swamiji."

Gurudev said pointing towards Himself, "Tell them I am not an object to be seen!" During all this, something else was going on. Here are the elements: A Shiva idol on Gurudev's table, had been placed there by Anjali Singh. She had meant it to be a gift for a friend's wedding, but that wedding did not take place and Shiva came to

sit on Gurudev's table. Did I say 'last visit to Sidhabari'? Only He knew that. But his moves were also in a manner of wrapping up operations. He had asked that the Shiva idol be removed and placed in the Ram Mandir. Around the time he was 'complaining' about the kids peering through the glass, the temple priest had come in and carried this Shiva idol to take to the temple. Keep reading...

The Roudra-bhavam or the mood Gurudev was in, made me withdraw quietly and walk out of His Kutia. But the very next instant, I found Him right behind me, walking, instead of using his wheel chair! I dared not say a word after having witnessed his fury, but suddenly there before us on the walkway came a little child. From nowhere. Like Narasimha melted before the child Prahlada, Rudra behind me melted and sang out a melodious "Hari Ommmmm!" and so saying he gathered up the little girl in his arms. By now Sivaram ji had rushed out with the wheelchair. Gurudev did not even look back or see the wheelchair. He simply sat as if he knew the wheel chair was there! Om achintyaayanamah! How do you explain Him and His actions?

Gurudev on wheelchair, me alongside in my most silent avatar, and Shivaram ji: Our destination was the Shree Ram Mandir. Shiva visits Sri Rama ....That was His last visit to that Temple! Om Achinthyaaya Namaha! To my mind, He had engineered all this drama as he wanted to walk with the Shiva idol to the temple, he would have it no other way. For the temple priest was right before him, carrying the Shiva idol to the Ram Mandir! Thus priest and Shiva, Gurudev, Sivram ji and I reached the Temple. Gurudev removed a sphatikalingam from its place and gave it to Sw. Purushottamananda who had been waiting to prostrate but Gurudev had dodged him to pick up the child. And in its place, he placed the idol.

Incidentally, that temple has been renamed: Sivarama Temple. Who knows why! How is it possible to think? He is beyond thought.

Poojya Gurudev was in Washington during His winter tour of United States in 1992. Gurudev had to undergo a cataract surgery around 20th Jun 1993 and we were planning the venue and procedures. Sreedevi, a devotee from Washington, while serving breakfast for us, asked Gurudev in Malayalam,
"Swamiji,kanninuvedanay-undo?" meaning, 'are the eyes in pain?'

Swamiji replied "Kannan- enthu vedana?" Now see His play. He had asked, "What pain/discomfort for Kannan (Lord Krishna)?" Kannan is the Eye of the eye - the innermost eye! That is why His name is Kannan (in some south-indian languages, kann means eyes!) He peeps through all the eyes! He is the subject!

Now, is Gurudev not the Absolute Subject? If the Eye of eyes has no pain, how can this little mind think of the Mind of the mind? I only narrate to you what is inexplicable, for it is beyond the ken of the mind....



Kalidasji With Pujya Gurudev in Sidhbari

Om Achinthyaaya Namaha!

Achintyaya Namah

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

One who cannot be comprehended.

Gurudev cannot be comprehended if one tries to comprehend him. Why should we try to comprehend him? We try because we are confused by his innumerable facets. So then why try to understand all that?

We want to hold on to Him and make Him our anchor. And once we are focussed on Him, we want all other noise to stop. This is where we struggle.

As we approach Him, we try to understand Him with our intellect. He cannot be understood thus.
To completely understand him we have to meet Him in His Swaroopa, not through intellect. Gurudev says you cannot see Him through the intellect, or try to objectify

Him,because there is no subject to see. This is entire Kenopanishad. Yad manana namanute etc.

As I walk towards Gurudev, I am thinking of just two statements He said to me, in different contexts of course. Understanding itself has a different connotation. Understanding itself is a slow unravelling of the non-understanding. The two sentences Gurudev spoke to me in my life, are slowly opening up to my comprehension. I used to be all the time preoccupied with the thoughts of overcoming my liabilities. Once, as if reading my mind, even though I stood so far away from Him, but focussed on Him, He made a statement as if to me: Looking at the roof, He said, "God and Security do not go together". This may mean your security comes when you surrender to Him --Yoga kshemam Vahamyaham-- not through your preoccupations. I now see that preoccupations have obstructed any understanding. Just staying in His orbit was enough for me to find solutions.

On another occasion, I asked Him if I can do Japa with two different mantras. He said crisply,'these are all means'. Meaning they are all ways to tune ourselves to the Lord. As such whatever appeals to one and what one is comfortable with, one can take up. I accepted. I chose to accept. I did not even think of any thing else.

Point is – only, repeat, onlywhen we walk towards Him we can comprehend Him.

OM ACHINTYAAY NAMAH

A person who knows the Truth about himself is different from one who does not know the Truth. Because Truth itself is beyond thought. Because Truth is not a food of thought. Truth is not knowable, it is only experienced and once experienced, the Knower is very different from the un-knower.

Swami Mitrananda says in his talks, "If the Truth cannot be reached through thoughts, the reverse is also true in this case: thoughts cannot know the Truth; the limited can never understand the unlimited. Gurudev's work cannot be grasped or understood."

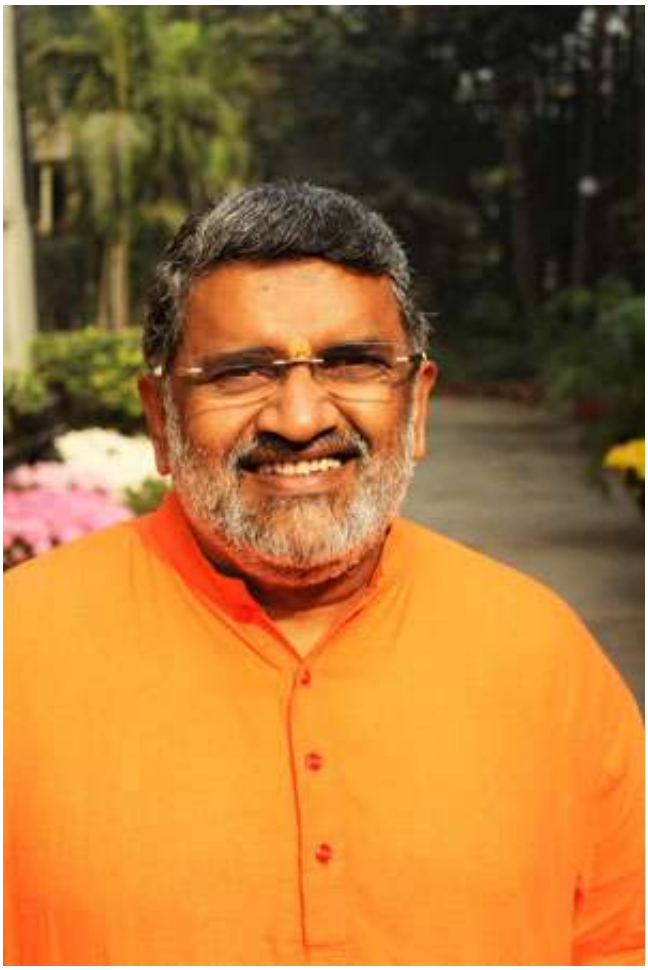
Yet, Swami Mitrananda says, "That which cannot be described through thoughts, Gurudev laid it out before us in such an easy manner. How well he could articulate the truth! [...] Gurudev had the finesse and ability to say the most difficult things with the simplicity and support of day to day examples! It always stunned the listener. For instance, the concept that 'Truth is far away': Gurudev's delivery broke that distance, and you always left with a feeling, 'Yes! I can also attempt, I can also try!'

Om Achintyaay Namah

ॐ अचिन्त्याय नमः
Om acintyāya Namaḥ
Salutations to the Unthinkable

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM -Delhi & NCR

Chintya is that which can be thought of. It can be grasped either by thinking or directly through the senses. Like a flower can be seen, smelt and touched. We can experience it through the senses and even think about it with closed eyes. A feeling for the flower can be created in the mind by remembering its fragrance, touch, colour and texture. Put simply, this means that a flower is within the power of thinking. Some technical subjects like Atomic Physics may be difficult to comprehend, due to lack of required qualifications and knowledge. But even matters beyond our comprehension, can be grasped with intelligence and proper qualifications.



Swami Nikhilananda

The Supreme Reality falls into a different category. It cannot be grasped by the mind because the mind can think of only that which can be reached by the senses. Things beyond the ambit of our senses can also be imagined but the Supreme Reality is beyond even all this. The Supreme Reality is the substratum of the mind. It is not possible for the mind to go to its very source and think about itself. Space being extremely subtle in comparison to the hands, cannot be grasped by them. With respect to the Reality, the mind is gross and hence not capable of grasping It. The one who is trying to know or see the Reality is himself made up of the essence of that Reality.

The teacher being of the nature of Truth is also acintyā. Gurudev was once asked to speak about TapovanjiMaharaj. His reply was most profound. He said that to know him we must read the Upaniçads. It was not possible for him to say anything about his Teacher. His birth date or educational qualifications are mere details about the body but his nature cannot be spoken of because it is beyond thought.

So too, Gurudev is beyond thought for us. We can define him by his work, the Mission's grassroot activities, His books, His DVDs, His schools, but they will all be just that – activities, books, talks and schools. Would we have derived a definition for Gurudev?

In the state of meditation, when we drop the thinking and go beyond, we get established in that Reality. Gurudev used the example of the pole vault to explain this. Pole-vaulters dig the pole into the ground and rise with its help. At the top a point comes, when they leave the pole and jump over. Similarly in meditation, thinking takes us to a certain height, to a level at which we realise the futility of even thinking. Thought then drops away and we float into territory beyond thought.

Zen Masters have developed meditation techniques, known as koan, wherein the Master poses impossible questions. Contemplating on these, one is frustrated. In this frustration, thinking stops and one goes into a state of meditation. An example of a koan is - first think of two hands clapping, then think of one hand clapping! In the process of thinking on this, the mind suddenly stops thinking and goes beyond.

Another example is to think of one's face as it was before being born. Actually, even to think of one's face as it is now is very difficult because one has not seen it. One may have seen its reflection or a photograph but certainly not the original. Even to think of one's face as a child is difficult, but to think of one's face before being born is impossible. The intellect likes to solve puzzles and after trying very hard, out of exhaustion it just drops. It only then comes to comprehend that which is beyond thought.

At ground level we are enveloped by the atmosphere and can breathe normally. At a certain height the air is rarefied and still higher there is no air. At this level one can be suffocated. Our thinking is like the atmosphere that we have created around ourselves. Beyond these self-created boundaries is a far vaster space. We have never ventured there, because we are trapped in our own limited thinking. We are trapped by our personality, desires, anger, hatred, fears and sadness; all mere thoughts.

Without thought, there is nothing - no sorrow or pain. We are habituated to thinking but to gain freedom from sorrow we have to drop our thoughts. Though difficult to achieve, like other habits, these can be transcended. We can go beyond thought, comprehend that Reality and become established in It.

OM ACHINTYAAYA NAMAH!

264. Naam 5: OM APRAMEYAAY NAMAH

26-01-2016

ॐ अप्रमेयाय नमः

OM APRAMEYAAYA NAMAH

Sent by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya, Jamnagar

Salutations to the one who is immeasurable

It is only infinitude which cannot be measured...



Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

A person is not measured by his height but by his character. How long did he live is not the measurement, but how many hearts he ruled is the real measurement.
In the tenth chapter of ShreemadBhagwadGeetaBhagavan says 'There is no bound to my extent'. Such immeasurable is the Glory of the true self within each one of us. One who realizes His true nature also gains infinitude. Not only Gurudev realized His true nature but He encouraged each one to realize it in this very life.

So many people Poojya Gurudev would have met, many personally and many through His books and talks. He captured each one's heart. It is just impossible to know how many hearts He resides in. And the journey does not stop here it just goes on and

on. He is still creating place in the hearts of new comers who have just set foot on the Path. And has done so much more which we cannot unravel in one or several lifetimes.

For example, recently during the Birth centenary celebration, as part of JyotiYatra we visited Swaminarayana Temple at Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Here we came to know about Gurudev's meeting with YogijiMaharaj of Swaminarayana Temple!!

The manner in which the Yatra was received and welcomed by the various Swamijis of the Swaminarayan Temple itself was indicative of a bonding that ran deeper than the eyes could see. Swami Ishwarcharandas ji talked at length about how Gurudev had come to the Swaminarayan Temple, how He met with Swami Yogi ji Maharaj and Pramukh Swamiji. Swami Ishwarcharandas ji himself had a one-to-one meeting with Gurudev!

Swami sadhuBrahmaviharidas ji too recounted his meeting with Gurudev and how he had delivered the address to the audience of Chinmaya Mission members and Gurudev. He recounted that Gurudev had teased him with, "You are after my job!" Then, Brahmaviharidas ji was all of 19 years of age!

Gurudev's meeting with Yogi Maharaj ji is remembered by everyone there. Great recognition of souls took place and although neither spoke the other's earth language, they communicated in the wordless language of souls!

How many such unknown, unrecorded wonders there are out there? How will we calculate?

Many we met who had heard Poojya Gurudev once and continue to follow His path even today. Poojya Gurudev's quotes are there on their walls to inspire them. Even if they are not the Mission members they are living the values given by Poojya Gurudev.

There is no count to how many hearts He had captured and still capturing through His talks, books, letters and His ardent Disciples.

He may not be present physically, yet He is there in everyone's heart. Search and you shall meet HIM, right 'there in the secret cave of your heart. The tool to search are many – His life, His books, letters, disciples, name and many more. CHOOSE ONE and find HIM hiding in your heart.

OM APRAMEYAAYA NAMAH!

Salutations to the Unknowable, Immeasurable

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Apramyeya that which cannot be measured --that which cannot be known as an object.

"Infinite alone is there." There being none other than that, who can know whom?

Upanishad says, "yenasarvamidamvijanathi tam kenavijaniyatham." That by which all this is known, through what can IT be known?

The seer the subject, cannot become the seen or the object. Senses and mind can only know finite things or beings with qualities. Brahman is Ananta (infinite) and Nirguna(without qualities). It being infinite cannot also be measured, known. How do we describe One without attendant qualities with which to describe It?

Sri Gurudev's Commentary on 'Aprameya' in the VishnuSahasra Nama 46, alone helps us explain Gurudev as Aprameya! How wonderful this is:

"He who cannot be defined and explained in terms of any logical terms of reference with other things, should necessarily be inexpressible. A thing that can be directly perceived (pratyaksha) can be described, certain other things, which we may not directly perceive, but can infer them (anumaana) from data available. And there are yet things which can be brought home to the listener by describing them in terms of similar other objects (upamaa). Since the Infinite has no 'properties', It cannot be perceived, nor can It be "understood through inference, nor even explained in terms of similar or dissimilar things". We can experience Him only by ending all sense of "separativeness" and becoming one with Him.

Gurudev lived among us as an embodied soul for so many years. In 1993, He left that body, and continued/continues to live among us without a body. When he was with body, we knew him as tall, bearded and cheerful. Then we knew Him through His knowledge, His teachings, His work, His talks, His grassroot activities. All these we would have seen as per our capacity only.Today, these same aspects keep us anchored in Him but He presents Himself in our life as so much Grace and blessing that we cannot know or measure.

How far does His energy go? Can we track it? One book we gift to one person, he leaves it on his desk, someone else picks it up, reads it on the bus, the man sitting next to him reads it from the corner of his eyes and is transformed. Immeasurable. Om AprameyaayaNamah. Even today so many many new comers to the Misson, to the Sandeepany Courses, to His books all carry away an overwhelming desire to know Him!

Also Many of us could have known about Sri Gurudev, gotten to know him through books and talks. But to know Him (as I remember Him saying in some context), "Meet me where I am!"

What comes close to this is Kalidasji's commentary a few days ago, where Gurudev told a little child in the airport, "Look for me in your heart, I will be there..."

Om Aprameyaaya Namah!

Om Aprameyaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji

AprameyaayaNamaha! Prostrations to Him, who is Brahman, who is Immeasurable, Unbounded and Boundless!

Brahman derives from the Sanskrit root "brh", meaning "to swell, expand, grow, and enlarge"! Attempting to measure Brahman is like trying to search darkness with a head- light or trying to Measure Ocean with a salt foot ruler! Purusha, in PurushaSooktham, is described as a being that pervades everything, conscious and unconscious, universally. He is poetically depicted as a being with thousand heads, eyes and legs, enveloping the earth from all sides and transcending it by ten fingers length or transcending in all ten directions!
The UttamaPurusha –The Supreme Being- is beyond Perishable and Imperishable and is called Paramaatma-The Highest Self, the indestructible Lord, who pervading the three worlds (waking, dream and deep-sleep), sustains them (BG 15:17)!

Therefore, Guru SakshaatParahbrahmahaTasmai Shree GuraveNamaha! Nothing can contain Poojya Gurudev who is Brahman; therefore, He is Immeasurable, Unbounded, and Boundless! Om AprameyaayaNamaha!

This was in 1988.Gurudev was in London conducting a jnana yajna from Aug 31-Sept 7th! I was in London to fly Gurudev home on a London-Bombay Air India flight on the 8th! When I met Gurudev at His residence, He gave me a crystal tube and asked me to carry that to Mumbai, along with Him and keep it in His Kutia. It was a cylindrical tube made to order at Paris, approximately two feet long and nine inches in diameter with a proportionate gauge! I carried that in a tote as a hand baggage, on Gurudev's Flight to Mumbai that I operated on the 8th!

Seat 1A in the First Class, was blocked for Gurudev, while the tote containing the 'cylindrical tube', occupied 1B, next to Him! We arrived Bombay and I kept the tote next to His bed in Gurudev's Kutia as per His instructions. Simultaneously Gurudev had ordered for some crystal beads from Calcutta and that had alsoarrived and in His Kutia.
One day, while in Mumbai, Gurudev asked me to get that crystal tube and those

beads from His room to the Satsang hall. He asked me to place the tube upright on His lap, and while He held the tube with His hands, He asked me to pour the beads into it, like how paddy is poured into the measure- Nirappara! It resembled a spiritual ceremony! Actually He was measuring the beads to find out how much the tube can contain! When the tube was filled up to the brim, He remarked “This can contain a lot, isn’t it? Anyway we will try and measure the Immeasurable!” He then made me empty the measured beads into another container and asked me to shift the tube and those beads to Chennai (Madras). The crystal tube was filled up again with those measured beads, during the Pratishta ceremony of The Sarveswara Temple at Tamaraippakkam and the same was installed as the Shiva Linga-(SpatikaLinga) at the Sanctum-Sanctorum of The Sarveswara Temple at Tamaraippakkam! This is the SpatikaLinga of Sarveswara, who occupied Seat 1B next to Poojya Gurudev on Air India!

After performing the praanaprathishta, Gurudev said, this SpatikaLinga is a’ reactor’ in which ‘measured’ material is made to undergo controlled reaction, releasing energy that is capable of catapulting mortals to the Immeasurable, Unbounded state of Immortality!



Praana pratishtha of Sarveshwara! Immeasurable wonder, Immeasurable joy!

And the tote bag. It was not empty (even after the crystal tube was removed)! I found a Favre-Leuba wrist watch- a 1947 model – inside. When I returned that to Gurudev, He said 'I kept this for you only, for the favours received (punning on the name Favre)! This was the watch I was using on my trek to Uttarakhand during 1948 and during my stay in the Himalayas!"

A 68-year old watch! I am also 68! Both of ‘us’ are still working! To such a Lord of immeasurable Compassion, my deergha-danda-namaskaaram!



On Board the AI-102, Sept 8th 1988 with Kalidas ji

Om Shree Sarveswaraaya Namaha!

Om Aprameyaaya Namaha!
Om Shree Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha!

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his sanction:

OM APRAMEYAAYA NAMAH



* As Acintyaya we could not conceive how he was able to excel time after time after time; we could, only if his actions and work were measurable! Because this Man of Realisation is beyond thought, for he is verily Truth. He is immeasurable!

*Can Gurudev be measured? The number of people he has reached, who knows? And the number of people he is yet reaching, how can it be measured! Devotees, mission members, and his silent 'unregistered' devotees!

*We still do not know how many letters Gurudev wrote. We can guess -- an average of 70-80 letters a day. Cannot be accurately estimated, the reach cannot be measured. Each letter laid out a new thread of connection, of love; His love? Impossible to measure! How do you measure that? Everyone felt he or she was extremely dear to him! Even if he gave you just 30-40 seconds, during those seconds nothing else existed other than you! So complete was his attention and love. That is why people are known to cherish those 30-40 seconds for life, because it was a uniquely complete experience. And that 40 seconds holds them up for life!

*Because the love which he had for each one, cannot be measured; The work which he did cannot be measured. The reach of his glory and goodness and love among various people, cannot be measured. The vision that Gurudev had and what he rolled out, cannot be measured. It's snowballing effect is felt even today! Immeasurable!

*If we assimilate this learning, understand the immeasurability of infinity, yet know our own infinite nature, we will perceive the world and every little obstacle as a pebble, never as a boulder.

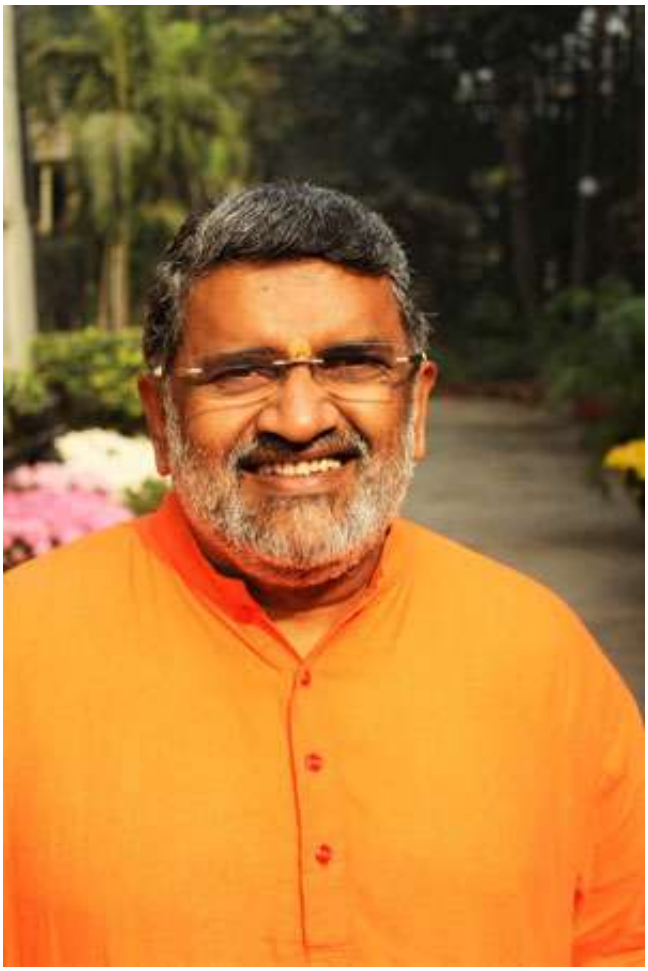
OM APRAMEYAAYA NAMAH

ॐअप्रमेयायनमः
Om aprameyāya Namaḥ

Salutations to the Unknowable

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM-New Delhi & NCR

Aprameyāya is a technical term. Prameyā is that which can be known through valid means of knowledge. Aprameyā is that which cannot be known through any means of knowledge. It is beyond all faculties of knowing and cannot be known through any means of knowledge. The knower can know many things but cannot know itself /himself/herself as an object. One can only know an object, by remaining separate from it.



Swami Nikhilananda

Prameyā refers to knowledge gained through proper pramana or valid means of knowledge. Suppose we want to reach a particular place, we may ask a policeman for directions. Then believing in his words, we follow his guidance and reach the destination. But suppose we found an inebriated individual, we would not have any faith in his words. His answer is not a valid means of knowledge. There are various valid means of knowledge for understanding science, the world or medicine. In order to know God, the scriptures are the valid means of Knowledge.

Take the sentence, "I know this flower." Here I am the knower and the flower is the known. I cannot know myself like this because I cannot be an object of myself. I cannot remain separate from myself and know myself. I am unknowable. Certain things are known; others though unknown can be known. There are yet others which cannot be known. The Supreme Reality belongs to the last category.

Aprameya is similar to the earlier word – acintya, unthinkable. It is unknowable. To know something we have to grasp it by the intellect but this is not valid for knowing the Truth. It cannot be known as an object nor can it be known by any means of knowledge. The Supreme cannot know itself completely like an object. Even God does not know His own greatness.

As an experiment stand in front of a mirror and close your eyes. Your face will disappear and when the eyes are opened the reflection will appear. You cannot see yourself with eyes closed because, to see you require the eyes. Similarly, the Supreme Reality cannot be seen or known through any of our faculties of perception.

Bhagavān's world, the nature of a Mahātmā, the Teacher or the Supreme Reality are all aprameya. The more we think about this, we realize Its sublime nature. It is beyond all thought. Everything about it is a mystery. Even meeting with a Mahātmā is a wonder. The Bhagavad-gétā (2.29)declares,

äçcaryavatpaçyatikaçcidenamäçcaryavatvadatitathaivacänyaù,

äçcaryavatcainamanyaçruëotiçrutväpyenaàvedanacaivakaçcit.

Everything about this is a wonder. The one who speaks about It is a wonder. The one who experiences It is a wonder. The one who does not understand It after listening to it is a wonder. The one who understands It is a wonder. The one who listens to It is a wonder. The one who does not listen to It is a wonder. After contemplating on It, one can only conclude that everything about It is a mystery.BG 2:29

Aprameya beautifully and aptly indicates the Supreme. Since it is unknowable we should not be bound by words. Instead we should spend time without thinking. We try solving issues by thinking; in fact we should drop everything and just relax. We can think about, analyze and find solutions to certain issues but we must accept that some things are incomprehensible!

OM APRAMEYAAY NAMAH!

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

265. Naam 6: OM ADVITEEYAAYA NAMAH

27-01-2016

Om advitīyāya Namaḥ

Offered by Brni. Shruti Chaitanya, CM-Puduchery, India

Salutations to the One without a second.

Dviteeya means second and adviteeya is one without a second. (Ref:gita 7.7 matta: parataram na anyat kinchid asti; Rig Veda, Ekam Sat,ViprahBahudhaVadanti.

In Bhagavat, Brahmaji wanting to test Little Krishna, hid all the calves, cows and Gopi friends with whom Krishna was having a great time. Krishna photocopies himself to be all the cows, calves and friends and the gamecontinued for one whole year. Mothers and cows (of the replaced boys and calves) felt extra love for their little ones, since they were allthe Lord alone.Brahmaji was confused to see everything as usual going on. Brahmaji saw the cows and calves and gopabalas and not Krishna. He wanted to see the Truth behind the whole game and with the grace of the Guru (Krishnam vandejagatgurum) his confusion was removed, and he started seeing all of them as Krishna Himself.

World is a great play of the Lord. Lord alone is anyone and everyone and we might not recognize, we might not know it.

Once a devotee approached Pujya Gurudev.Seeing that people were swarming around Him like bees, he asked ‘Don’t you ever get tired of having these people around you? Gurudev said, ‘I cannot be tired of my own arms and legs’. There is none other than Himself anywhere at any time. Love (attraction) and hate (repulsion) are like two poles of a magnet. They are possible only in the presence of otherness - magnetic force.

Gurudev saw the Lord alone in you, me and in every being. In Bangalore, soon after a yagna, the host drove Pujya Gurudev through the crowd of devotees, instead of taking the usual route behind the yagna saala. He explained that a truck load of sand has been dumped on the usual road.

Gurudev pulls down the windshield to tell with folded hands to the devotees making their way out, sorry, Krishna, beg pardon for interfering in your ways.

From Gurudev’s voice, came out the melody of Lord Krishna’s divine music of gita. From his eyes, His vision! And Krishna alone is the listener too!

In one yagna when Gurudev was speaking on the 11th chapter – Viswarupadharshana

yoga, there was a little commotion among the audience since they spotted a snake amidst them. One of the members ran to find a stick and Pujya Gurudev's voice thundered, "We may not know which form among the 1000's of forms, the Lord chooses to show Himself." The reptile was also seen as Lord alone. There is only the Lord. No other. Adviteeya!

Adviteeya also means incomparable. Salutations to the One who cannot be compared with anyone.

Vyasa for the first time compiled and put the Vedas into written form, since he saw that over the years the capacity to learn and retain will become lesser and lesser. Sankaracharya ji wrote commentaries on the prasthanathraya (BUG) Brahma sutra, Upanishads and the Gita and took this knowledge to the length and breadth of the country. Vivekanandaji for the first time crossed the seas to take this knowledge across. All three broke barriers and worked forward.

Pujya Gurudev was allthree in one. He composed own works, wrote commentaries, literally travelled all over the world for 4 decades. He started a research institution to further the Knowledge tradition an keep it contemporary;he set up Sandeepanys to carry this knowledge forward; he began postal and home study courses to take knowledge where it was yearned for. He is a beautiful congregation (sangamam) of gnana, karma and bhakti. There was no barrier between the guru and the devotee of the Lord. We could /can sit with ease and get clarifications. There cannot be one more Swami Chinmayananda. He is incomparable indeed.

If he is one without a second, what made him be like the one he is?

In Mundakopanishad, there is a mantra 'Atmakreeda: Atma Rati: Kriyaavaan'. When he opens his eyes, he sees himself in the entire world and starts playing with himself (atmakreeda); When he closes his eyes, he revels in himself (atmarati).

A young man, say 19 years old, is walking on the road; he finds that people look at him a little longer than they normally do including young girls. He is delighted and feels that he is the most handsome. He adjusts his hair, puts on his cooling glassesand walks feeling even more handsome. To look much more stylish, he walks up to a paan shop (a little kiosk that sells betel leaves) to get a cigarette, where, in the mirror he sees that there is an ugly ink mark on his face. His hands rush to remove the ugly mark instantly.He now realizes why people were looking at him a little longer!

Like the man rushed to remove the ink stain, so too this mahatma, the non-dual self, instantly and spontaneously came to remove the scars that he saw in the society.

Om advitīyāya Namaḥ

ॐअद्वतियिायनम:

Salutation to the one who is One without a second

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

The Theory of Vedanta says it is only self which exists and none other. However how do we practically understand and apply, as in the present we see the differences.

Gurudev displayed this in every act of His by identifying with each and everything may it be material or the mortal. He loved each thing and being as Himself. When you do not see the other there is only love for everyone.



Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

Gurudev mentions that just as we love all the parts of our body equally,so too we shall love each one. In His unique way he describes this in one of His lectures (Service above self). I express a gist of it, not His exact words, but they express His point accurately.)

“From top the crown to the tip of your toe you love you. Even though the hands are not the legs, the legs are not the toes,the finger is not like the nose, the nose is not like the ears. Every part is different in shape in name and in function. What the eyes can do ears cannot do; what the nose can do the tongue cannot do. They have got different functions. What the hands can do legs can never do. Within me myself there are so many different shapes, forms, purposes or functions and yet am I not one? From the tip of the toe to the top of my crown am I not One? How do I feel this oneness? I pervade every cell in me. You may be 250 pound, six foot with sixty [inches] chest, and if I bring a pin and say for what wrong you have done, we have decided that this pin must be put in your body (as a punishment). I say, ‘you choose where I should put this, it is your choice, because this is a democracy. You choose where should we put it!' In that huge body this little pin! [But] You cannot choose any place! You are reluctant, unable! You start selecting one place by one, and every place yousay No, No, No, No...! (Because we love ourselves so much!To love myself

no condition applies.).

This is exactly how He loved each one as Himself. There was no ‘other’ than Him. Love alone flew through Him for everyone.

I remember one time in northern California, a large group of us had gathered for satsang with Swamiji and were in the midst of lively question and answer when a stranger walked through the door, unkempt, dressed in dirty jeans and a jacket, and with an open beer can in his hand. We gave each other uncomfortable glances, wondering what to do to prevent such a disgraceful entry of the ill-fitting guest. The young man was already beginning to sit down at the back of the room when Swamiji called forth in delightful way he had of welcoming a new visitor to a satang :A loud sing-song “Hi-!!!!” and “Come on in!“ boomed across the length of the room. This time though His greeting did not stop at that; He insisted the beer drinking stranger come closer to the front and sit next to him so He could hear everything that was being said at the satang.

(At Every Breath A Teaching, Rudite Emir)

Unconditional love! Such was His love free of any bias of caste, gender, creed, age or any other thing. Total Oneness means Love for All, means: To see only one and no otherness. He alone existed He alone exists, He alone shall exist.

Gurudev is Brahmavid and the scriptures say

Brahmavidbrahmaivabhavati (Mundaka Upanishad). He is Brahman and hence adviteeya. It showed in His love! In His vision... everything was Himself, everything was Brahmamayam for Him. If we have seen His love for us, no other explanation is needed to explain His adviteeya nature!

And therefore there IS nothing other than Him. He is One without a second.

OM ADVITEEYAAYA NAMAH!

OM ADVITEEYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu

Since we have accepted Gurudev as Brahmagnani and therefore Brahman, Brahman being Non dual Gurudev is Non dual. Throughout the Guru stuti this aspect has been said as vyaptamenacharacharametc

Now let us see from transactional level.

In the very first Yagna when I heard Gurudev in 1962 somebody asked Gurudev are there others like Gurudev? Sri Gurudev said they are, in dozens in the Himalayas and they do not come down.

Therefore we are not trying to compare with other saints. But as a missionary though before Him there were saints like Swami Vivekananda etc, Sri Gurudev is unique in his methods. For example, though he reached millions the world over, he stuck to propagating through original texts and explained them word by word, no matter his audience. In magnitude we can say Gurudev started this. Again, not wanting the Indians abroad to lose touch with their roots, Gurudev started 'teaching centres', Balavihars and Ashrams, with Swamis and Brahmacharis catering to them as he did in India. With a vision to rejuvenate Sanatan Dharma, Gurudev started the SandeepanySadhanalayas in English and regional languages. Students from other Ashrams were sent to learn here for free. His complete vision materialised in his own life time. Vedas were opened to the underprivileged and marginalised section. Again, a full-fledged research centre named CIF was envisaged by Him, so that the dissemination of knowledge shall always be pure and contemporary. Thus in many ways He was unique and in this transactional sense too we can call Sri Gurudev Adviteeya.

There was a great Mahatma called Swami Gangeshananda who was blind. He was a great authority in the scriptures and highly revered by our Gurudev. Once Gurudev went to see him. Swami Gangeshananda asked, "Is that Chinmaya?"

When asked how He knew, Swami said, "Nobody else walks like that!" Small incident maybe, but anything that glorifies our Gurudev must be mentioned!

OM ADVITEEYAAYA NAMAH!

Om Advitheeyaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Awesome Gurudev! Peerless, Matchless, Without a second! Not even First! Just Beyond! My direct experiences and interactions with Poojya Gurudev had gifted me a firm conviction that He is the One Bhagavaan!

Many a time, Gurudev took detours to exhaust the punya of His devotees! His itinerary was directly proportional to His devotees'punyas(merits).Here is an experience that both struck me with awe and humbled me but also silenced me.

Poojya Gurudev decided once in Dec 1982 to visit my ancestral home where my parents lived, at Mankara, an interior remote place, 23 km from Palakkad- Kerala, that also for a dinner Bhiksha.

There was a Mankara Swami (please see IswaraDarshan- Page 35 Para3) – thatour TapovanMaharaj (Subhrahmanya-Chippukkutty Nair in his poorvaashram) used to visit very regularly to clarify his doubts prior to 1923! This Swami Ramaananda, a blind sage, was a great Siddha! In fact it was from this Ramanandashram, that Swami Tapovanam as Chippukkutty set out for the Himalayas.

Tapovanji had asked Gurudev to meet this Master whenever He visited Palakkad.During the three occasions he came to Palakkad, to my ancestral remote home, Gurudev visited this Ramanadashram. (My ancestral home is very close to this Ashram and our family has been associating with this Ashram for the past three generations. I am considered as a child of this Aashram. This is my roots.)

So on Dec. 21, 1982, Gurudev wrote to me: "We shall have, on Jan 3rd, bhiksha at your place, but I don't know how far it (the ashram) is. In case, I can -- after the night talk -- go to your place, have the bhiksha, and return and be in my bed by 11.30, I shall come!"

And the bhiksha was confirmed during a darshan of the Lord at the Guruvayoor Temple.

This was the first bhiksha ever—A New Year Gift! I was excited! I wanted the chief Priest of Sabarimala to receive Gurudev with the PoornaKumbam. Flowers were ordered from Coimbatore; Pooja items collected and I was planning everything for a grand bhiksha.

Since I was considered as a child of that neighbouring ashram, I thought it will be prudent to inform Swami Chidprakashananda, a 93 year old Swami, who was in-charge of that ashram those days, about the proposed Bhiksha and visit of Sri Gurudev.

Chidprakashanandaji said "Sukritam! Sukritam! Well done! Well done! Swami Chinmayananda is The Yogeswara! He is The Satguru! He is a very busy person! Still, inform Him that this ashram is in your neighbourhood; His Guru, Tapovanji frequented this ashram during his poorvaashram days and request Him to step into this ashram if time permits!"

I agreed.

On the 3rd morning, I proceeded to Palakkad to attend Gurudev's morning class- Kaivalyopanishad. It was the day of the bhiksha.

After the morning class, while having breakfast, Gurudev asked me whether all preparations are all complete for the bhiksha. I told Him I have to go to Coimbatore to get the flowers, and also the priests. Gurudev said 'Go, Go!'

A devotee of Gurudev had given me an Ambassador car with a driver, Venkatesh

I left for Coimbatore around 9am in a devotee's car, driven by one Venkatesh. Halfway through, I was caught in a traffic jam, withno way to exit. We stayed stuck for more than 4 hrs. All through this jam I was thinking, 'God! What would they do without me at home, who will make all the preparations for the Paada Pooja, what about the special food for Gurudev, which only I know how to make etc.'

Exhausted by my frustrations, I fell asleep. I woke up when I reached Coimbatore, Raja Mandiram- the residence of Warrier's at 2.30 pm. I was told that the flowers have already reached my home, that some devotees of Gurudev had collected and delivered them.

I then picked up the priests and I hurriedly returned to Palakkad. It was 6.30 PM. I was numbed and frozen. Gurudev's evening session had started. I would need to be at the yajnasala at 8.30 to take Swamiji home for the bhiksha. I didn't know what preparations have taken place at home without me.There was not even a land line phone at home those days!

I put the priests in a taxi-cab and sent them home. Venkatesh and I washed the car, decorated it and reached on time at the entrance of the yajnasala! Gurudev came out and when I prostrated, He gave me a thump on the back and said "So!" And with just that, He got into the front seat of the Ambassador! Vilasini and I sat on the back. Utter silence all the 23 kms home!

I kept thinking about His schedule; He wanted to get to bed by 11.30 pm, there was bhiksha, paada pooja, ... and I kept thinking, who cooked the food? Who made the preparations? I had told Gurudev that all was in control. I was bringing my God home without any preparations....

Just before reaching home I conveyed the request of Swami Chidprakashananda. Gurudev with His averted eyes said "Krishna Krishna".

We reached home. I was shocked to see the premises decorated like a temple, everything was in place and Gurudev was received with PoornaKumbham by the chief priest of Sabarimala as planned! Gurudev, with His Graceful glances as usual, entered, sat in the chair, looked around and asked me "Everything is ready, who prepared all these?

I answered with conviction "You Did It Gurudev! "

Gurudev made my parents do the Paada Pooja and the bhiksha also went on smoothly. I merely witnessed all that was going on, in control of Time.

When the bhiksha ended and Gurudev visited Ramanandashram, it was 11 in the night. Only Vilasini and I were there with Him. The Swamis were waiting to receive Him with the Poornakumbham -- this despite there being no communications between me and the ashram regarding Gurudev's visit!

Gurudev returned to Palakkad and got into His bed at 11.30. As mentioned in his letter to me.

Why! Everything had gone perfectly. I was overcome...

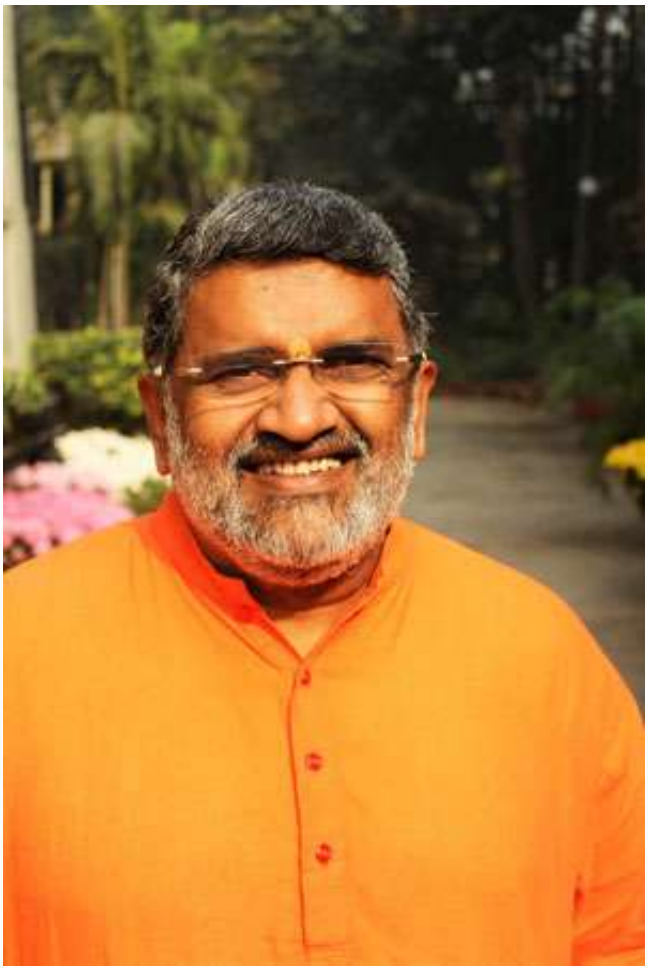
Later on, I was told that people from faraway places started pouring in from 10 amon the day of the bhiksha and prepared everything. A great SopaanaSangeetham artist from Guruvayur Temple had walked in and supervised all the preparations! This Bhiksha was a special vision-divine of His Vibhooti! Pashya Me Yoga-maiswaram! Behold My Lordly Yoga!

Om AdvitheeyaayaNamaha! To such a matchless Yogi, My Salutations!

Om advitīyāyanamaḥ
Salutations to the Non-Dual

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, Delhi & NCR

Dvitīya is two and advitīya is non-dual or 'without a second'. The Reality is only one. Its expressions are many but its essence is one. The Gitā declares, "There is nothing greater than me, nothing lower than me, nothing equal to me, nothing other than me; I alone am." (mattaùparataraànänyatkiïcidastidhanaïjaya - Gita 7.7). It is possible that Bhagavān was alone and a little bored. With His infinite power He created the world and all the beings in it and then started playing with them. The world is the great play of the Lord.



Swami Nikhilananda

The SrimadBhāgavat tells a story about Bhagavān Krishna playing happily in the forest with His friends and their cows. Brahmaji seeing this thought, “How can He be the Supreme Reality?” So he decided to test the Lord. He took the form of a huge creature and swallowed up all of Krishna’s friends and their cows. Krishna suddenly realized that he was alone and his friends had all disappeared. In an instance He knew what Brahmaji had done. In the blink of an eye, He created clones of all His friends, and even their cows and calves. Each one replaced the original and the play continued. As usual, in the evening they all returned to their homes. Their mothers were surprised because suddenly their children seemed more lovable! In this manner, this continued for a year before Brahmaji realized his folly and accepted it as Bhagavān’s līlā. It was now conclusively evident to Brahmaji that Krishna was the Supreme Reality, for no other could have gleaned what Brahmaji had done or replicate the original with clones with the perfection and ease of Krishna.

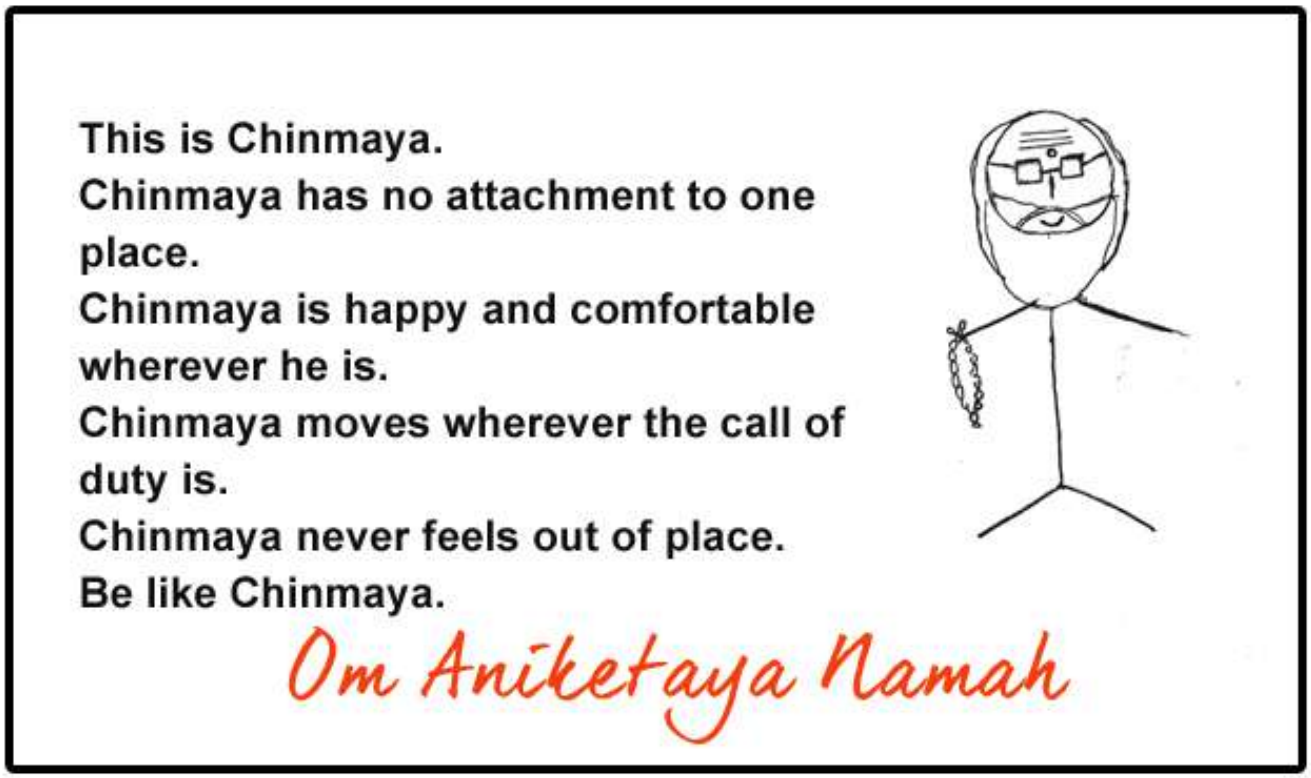
Life is a great drama and one who understands this becomes free. The Lord comes to us in the form of the Guru. By His will a wish arises, “I want to know this drama,” and through His grace alone the understanding dawns. This is the play of the One. Advitīya also means incomparable or that which cannot be compared with

anyone. There is nobody or nothing to compare with.

The greatest of all tattvas is the Guru. It is unmatched and Its uniqueness encompasses all those whose lives touch the Guru. Of the many relationships in the world, the Guru-çiñya bond is the most fascinating. The Ultimate Knowledge is revealed only when we develop a relationship with our Teacher. We may possess information but the depth is conveyed through the Teacher, who by simple words, gestures, actions and even silence, reveals this deep Knowledge. Divine virtues like compassion, humility and even knowledge manifest through our relationships and during the course of our experiences. Through tuning with the Master, these qualities begin to reveal themselves in the lives of the disciples. Verily, the Guru is Advitīya, unique is the relationship, unmatched is the sadhana. To that Advitīya, our prostrations!

266. Naam 7: OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

28-01-2016



ॐ अनकितायनम:
OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya

Salutations to the one who is without abode.

This is the general meaning, to imply Gurudev does not have any abode. So where

did He stay then?

The other meaning of this name says about His abode (Shared by Br. Atharvanaji).

'अ' means Lord (In BhagwadGeeta, Chapter 10 -- अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि - Lord tells Arjuna that among all the alphabets I am an alphabet 'अ') and निकेत: means an abode. Thus it means salutation to the one for whom the Lord Himself is His abode.

Wherever Gurudev went He was at ease and comfort, just like one is in his home. He revelled in the Lord alone.

OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai
Salutations to the One who has no abode

In his commentary of BG 12:19, Gurudev defines HOMELESS, thus: HOMELESS --- Home is generally that which provides shelter from the external inclemencies of weather, for the resident who is dwelling under its roof. The man of spiritual realisation is one who is trying to pull down all his conditionings and striving to free himself from all sense of possession and material shackles.
Living under a roof, in itself, does not make the place a home. To spend a night on a railway station, or in the retiring room at an aerodrome, does not make the place the traveller's own home. It is only along with a sense of possession, reinforced with a sense of happiness and comfort, that the place under a roof becomes a home. A true devotee has for himself a satisfactory shelter only at the feet of the All-Pervading, and therefore, his mental condition is indicated here by the simple pertinent word 'homeless.'

As we reads this, we see it applies to how Sri Gurudev lived.
Gurudev might have stayed for sometime in a house during his yagna. Till the moment he has to leave he is his normal self, joking, talking and at the right second he will say without any emotion let us go. Perfectly detached. He never stayed in any place including His ashrams, without necessity or for a very long period.

While he was talking on "ksinepunyemartya-lokamvisanti" (BG 9:21), he would say, 'on a holiday one will choose his place of stay according to his purse -- a three star, five star or a single star etc. And a sanyasi, in 'all-star'; meaning no place to stay stays open to the sky!

Where then does Gurudev live? What is His abode?

OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Brahman is the Substratum – Home for All- Resting place of The entire Universe- ViswasyaAayatanam-The Great Abode of The Universe! A person who is established in Brahman is anchored in Brahman! He moves around everywhere having no fixed abode. Because wherever He is, He is at Home! And so he is comfortable anywhere as one would be in a home. He is totally free from any conditioning.

NaraayanaSooktham, precisely guides one to the abode of Naraayana, like a GPS. It pinpoints the residence of Naraayana who is the Limitless, Imperishable, Omniscient, residing in the ocean of the heart, the Cause of the happiness of the universe, the Supreme End of all striving, (manifesting Himself) in the ether of the heart which is comparable to an inverted bud of the lotus flower! Do you remember Gurudev's words "You close your eyes and look into your heart I will be there!" If our heart is His Home, isn't He really 'Homeless' yet Home-everywhere?!

Gurudev was a vagrant ascetic! He seldom remained at one place. He was omnipresent then, He is omnipresent now. He was a perfect parivraajaka- a 20th century wandering monk. Every 8th day He was at a new place! 'New place' we say, conditioned by our own limited perception. We see Him only now and then and attribute that limitation to Him. Our prostrations to that vagrant, homeless, condition-less, bound less Master! Om AniketaayaNamaha!

Sri Sankara says in His "Dhanya –Ashtaka "TyaktvaGriheRatimAdhogatiHetubhootham; Atmecchaya Upanishad ArtharasamPibantaha; VeetahaSprihaaVishayaBhogapadeViraktaha; DhanyahacharanthiVijaneshuVimukthaSangaha!" Leaving off all love for one's own house, which is the cause for all our miserable downfall, induced by the thirst of Self-Knowledge, drinking the elixir of the Truth of the Upanishadic declarations, devoid of all desires at heart, with extreme dispassion for the host of the objects of enjoyment, fortunate souls wander in solitude giving up all company and attachment!"

Poojya Gurudev was in Thiruvanthapuram during May 1-9 in1987. He was taking Rama Gita in the morning. Sri Rama Navami coincided with His birthday that year. I told Gurudev: 'I wish to give you a Bhiksha on your birthday, Swamiji, but I don't

have a house in Thiruvananthapuram.'

He replied: 'Why you need a house? I too don't have one! I will sit under a tree and you can give me the Bhiksha! We will have it in All-Star Comfort!' A friend of mine offered me a palatial house and a Mercedes- Benz car for Gurudev's use, and thePaada Pooja and Bhiksha was offered to Him on His birthday! The Bhiksha took place in the open air, on the lawn, Swamiji sitting under a tree, in All-Star Comfort! This Bhiksha took place "From where one cannot see the roofs of the settlement" (Taittiriya Aaranyaka-2)! Our Humble Prostrations to that homeless ascetic whose Home is The Universe! Om AniketaayaNamaha!

I was having a rented accommodation before this and the owner wanted the flat vacated and I agreed. All of a sudden I became homeless- "Aniket"! I went to my employerfor an alternate accommodation in the company quarters. While I was with my Director-HRD, there was a call from HQ asking my boss to remove a certain member of a proposed housing society for some reason. The next moment my boss asked me whether I was interested in an ownership flat vacated as a result of this. The cost he said 'just Rs. 2.75 lakhs' – of which Rs 2 Lakhs would be given to me as a company loan and I would need to only give a cheque of Rs. 75001! In short, a two bedroom-hall-kitchen flat could be mine from the next day.

I didn't have that money in the bank. Gurudev gave me a bundle of 80000 (that I returned to Him later) and the cheque was issued and I got the possession of the flat next day! That is Gurudev, the vagrant ascetic! He creates by His sheer glance!

Swami Tejomayananda, our beloved Guruji, conducted the GrihaPravesh at 5 AM on 28th Aug 1985, Thiruvonam day, by installing SiddhabariHanumanji! We named this home Gurukripa and Gurudev came thrice to stay here. He used to take detours and walk into this place when He drove through the Western Express Highway! Once He wrote "Thank you for giving shelter to the Swami when there was nowhere for him to go! This visit you can consider as without Tithi... though you knew when I was coming!"

My Humble Prostrations to that vagrant Atithi! Om AniketaayaNamaha!

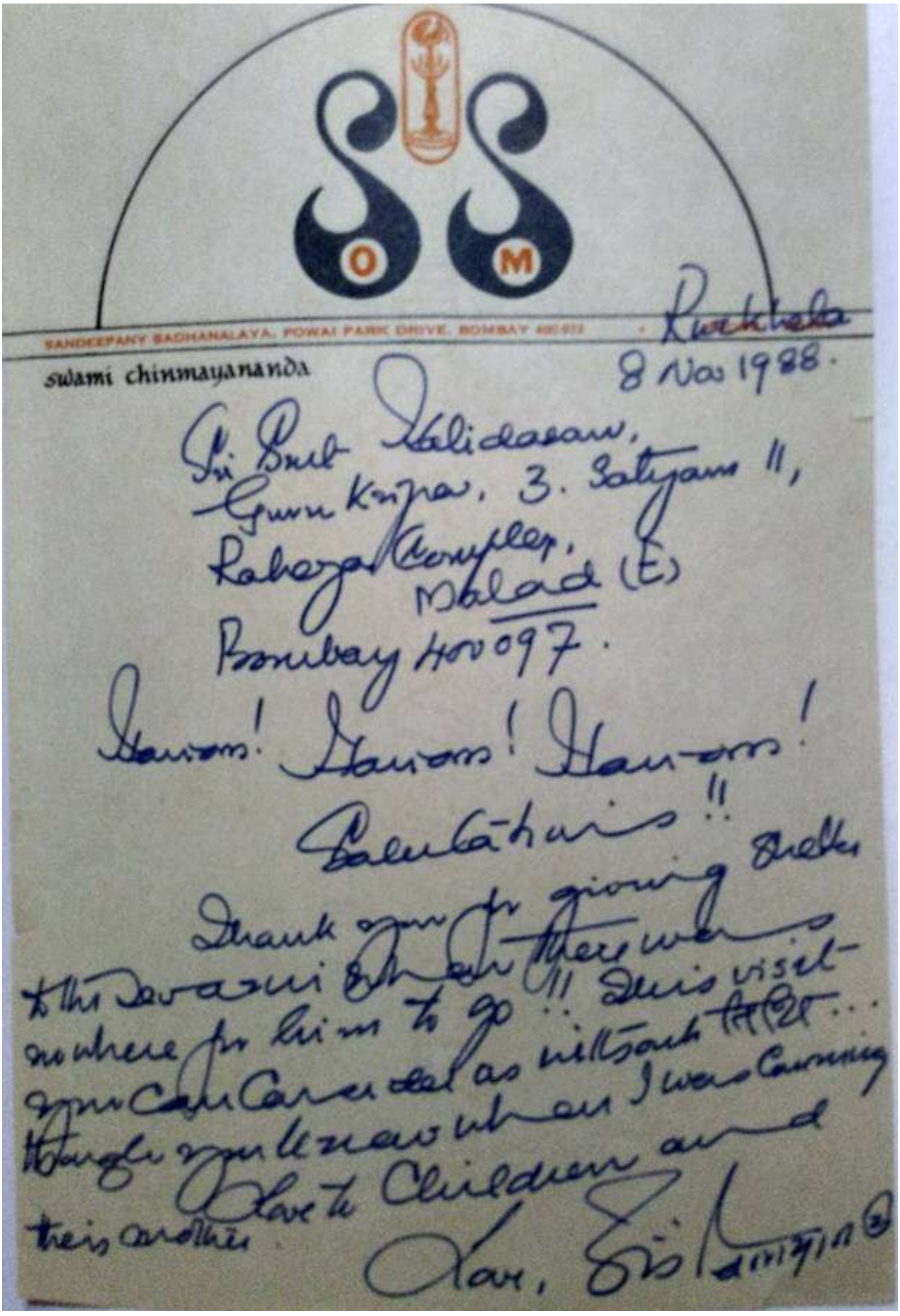
Siddhabari! 11th Oct 1992! Poojya Gurudev was to give a lecture at the Northern Army Command- Uddhampur on the 11th and to address the BSF at Jammu next day and fly Delhi. Just before departure from Siddhabari, Mrs Uma Shergill asked Gurudev, where He would like to have His breakfast. Gurudev looked at me and replied "Under a Tree "! I just asked Him "What time Swamiji? He said 'at 8.30!' I took Gurudev's folded wheelchair and kept in the Army Gypsy Jeep, in which I was escorting Him.

We started from Siddabhari early morning. While we were on Jammu-Srinagar highway, at exactly 8.25 am I asked the driver of our car to overtake Gurudev's car at a point, and park it on the side at 8.30. What we saw there, was a huge banyan tree, on the side, with a platform below, with clean mats spread! I removed the wheel chair from the jeep, unfolded and kept it there, and put the brake.

Gurudev arrived and when I opened the door, He kept His left foot out, looked at

the banyan tree and said “Exact spot!” Then He sat on the wheelchair and had His breakfast! He was feeding us, at the same time, some birds and dogs! Yet another bhiksha for the homeless Swami with all-star comfort, under a tree!!

Om AniketaayaNamaha!



SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA, POWAI PARK DRIVE, BOMBAY 400 072

swami chinmayananda

Ruckmela

8 Nov 1988.

Sri Prof Balidasan,
Guru Kripa, 3. Satyam II,
Rahaja Complex,
Malad (E)
Bombay 400 097.

Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!!

Balakrishna

Thank you for giving Sudha
the Swami Bhajan Tape where
to go!! This visit-
ing Card as well as Thank
you letter when I was coming
through your letter box and
their another

Love to Children and

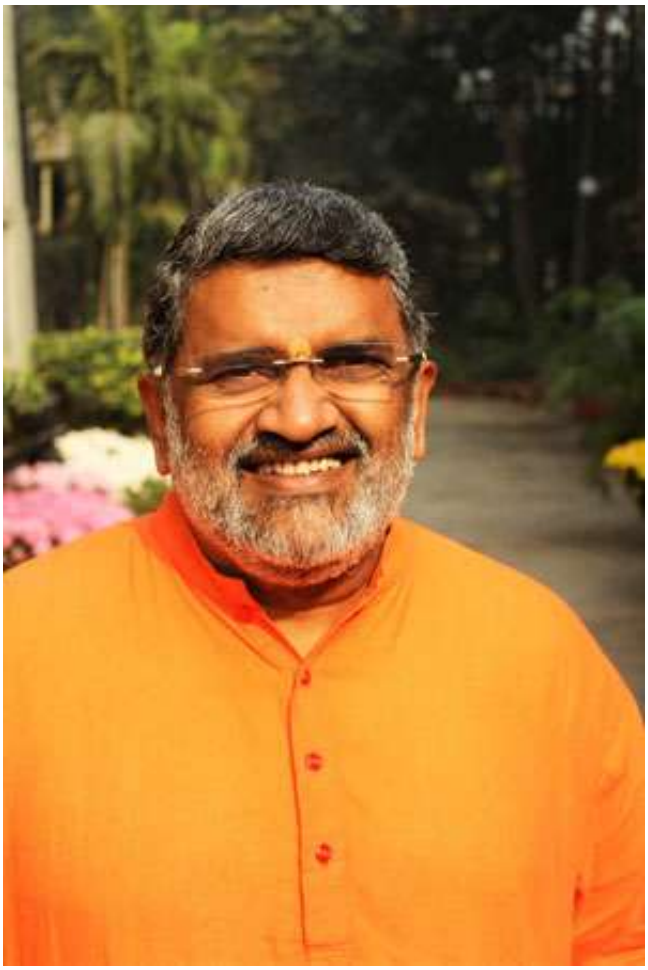
Love, Swamiji

Om aniketāya Namaḥ

Salutations to the One who has no Abode

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda, Regional Head, Chinmaya Mission Delhi & NCR

Niketa means home and aniketa is homeless. Abode would then mean a definite specific place, confined and defined. The Teacher gives up his home and wanders about in the world. SantJnaneshwaraMaharaj declared, “The whole world is my home.” (ye viçvä ci mäjheghara.) Most people have one confined home but the whole world becomes home to the one who gives up the home. Such a Mahātma lives in continuous joy. Gurudev did not own a car. Someone pointed this out to him. He promptly replied, “I have lots of cars. They are owner driven. The owners themselves are my chauffeurs!” What a wonderful feeling of freedom!



Swami Nikhilananda

We roam the world and then return home because there is no place like home. Here we are relaxed and can do exactly as we please. A realized Master looks on this whole world as his home. Anywhere and everywhere in the world, he is at home!

'Home' is something that conditions and confines us. The four walls of the house bind us. Aniketa is unconditioned or one who cannot be caged. The world cannot bind him. No place can accommodate such a person. To accommodate is to make room, or to make suitable. But the Aniketa is already at home with his environment. Everything, everywhere is as he needs it. The other expansion of this thought is found in Gurudev's words. Gurudev was questioned about the need for travelling to America to impart this Knowledge. Always forthright Gurudev replied that he was not bound to one place and he had children there as well. The whole world was his home.

The Teacher is always on the move. Gurudev used to, more or less live out of a suitcase. Every seven days, he was in another town - new place, new people, new text, and new environment. He would not carry anything with him. Guruji also

travels light. There is no clutter in his life - no computer, no mobile, no papers. Letters come; they are read, replied to, torn and disposed off. There is no storing anything. Everything around him is clean and minimal.

We should diligently practice the qualities of Gurudev being enumerated here: i) expand your perception of 'home' and see the whole world as home. ii) Everything you need is there in this home. It is suitable for you. Therefore reduce mine-ness, acquire less, keep life clutter-free. With practice, we will appreciate them more and more. To start with we can offer our home to the Lord and live there as guests. One house I visited, had a poster saying, 'This house belongs to God. We are guests in this house.' Our house belongs to God but where do we place him? In our large homes, we have one small room for the Lord, sometimes tucked away under the staircase!

OM ANIKETAAYA NAMAH

267. Naam 8: OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

29-01-2016

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P. Eswar, Mumbai

Mulund. Mumbai. Gurudev's yagna. The appointed minute for the commencement was at hand; the BMI chart was not on the stage; some brahmins were on the dais continuing their chanting of the 'PurusaSooktam' even after Gurudev had climbed onto the stage.



Shri H.P. Eswar

“Lord Krishna never ventures out without His shankh and chakra. I do not step on a dais without the BMI chart. Your chanting is good but you must stop when I arrive.”

He is clear about what He expects of us devotees, disciples, followers!!

One who subjects himself to discipline joyously is a disciple. He was disciplined, He exacted discipline.

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Extracts from Swami Mitrananda’s talks (with permission)

Discipline is a sign to know that the mind is under control. To master the mind, to go beyond mind, we must first have the mind under control, only then can we attempt to go beyond. And discipline only indicates the mastery of the mind. Gurudev therefore persisted with discipline, because he knew that is the only way we can improve ourselves and deliver perfection.



Swami Mitrananda

Gurudev was coming to vsist the Ganesha temple in Chennai's Chinmaya Gram. Knowing how high his standards were for us to get that compliment from him 'you did well' was a key goal, so we took up cleaning the temple, the garden, the compound, everything, otherwise we would usually leave it to the priest.

So, the kalasha on top was shining,the temple was painted, the door, the fan,the light, everything was cleaned and shined. Perfect. As Gurudev entered, all our eyes were on him; We were sure there was nothing for him to point to, because wehad done our best. He entered; his eyes took in the whole scene like a camera lens. Gurudev knew that everyone had worked this time.

On his way out, Gurudev called the secretary,an elderly person. "You have tamarind at home?" asked Gurudev. That secretary was confused; it was an odd request indeed! He did not know why Gurudev was asking for tamarind of all things. "Yes Swamiji, why?" he managed to say. Gurudev said, "Give it to the priest and ask him to keep that (aarti) plate clean. "

But why this persistence with quality? When our mind is focused on aiming at nothing short of best, our standards naturally improve.

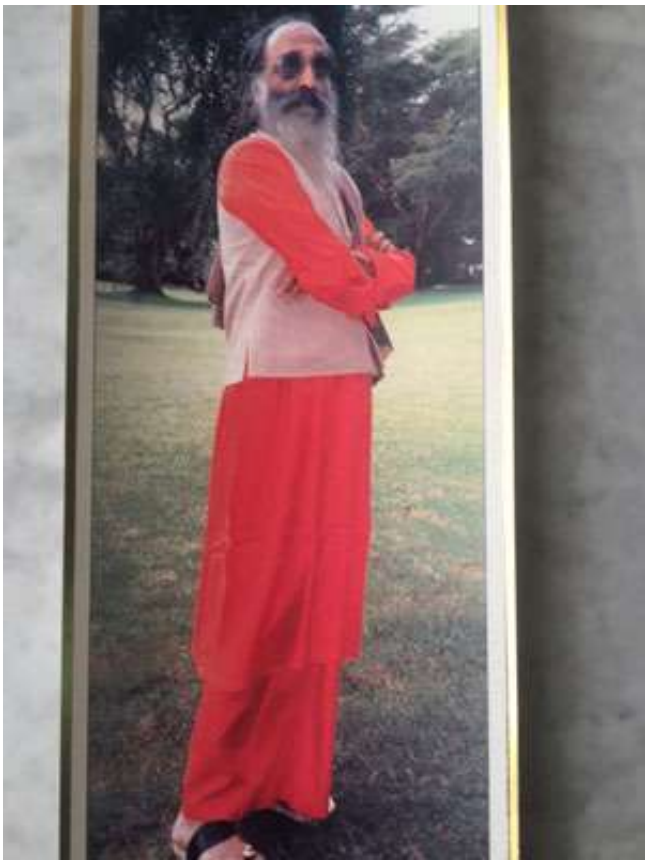
OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

GURUDEV LIVED "DISCIPLINE"

Offered by Shri Anil Sachdev

Gurudev often told us that when you become a "disciple", you observe listen, relate,think and act in rhythm with what you are striving to learn. "Shravana" required full "Presence" to what was both spoken, depicted and implied. "Manana" required both introspection and reflection to contemplate the deeper significance of the spiritual wisdom. "Nidhidhyasana" was the practice needed to be done every day to transcend all our fears and biases and low tendencies and false values within and without us (from the Chinmaya mission pledge). The daily practice of contemplation would enable us to experience the state of meditation. This was therefore the ultimate form of "discipline"!



There are many aspects we learnt by being with Gurudev and feeling "his Presence". Here are specific examples of how we found Poojya Gurudev to be living discipline

by being an ideal “disciple” of his teacher, Swami TapovanMahraj!

Gurudev was known throughout his life for being punctual. He who was the Controller of Time, was Himself so respectful of our time! He was never ever late for any talk, meeting or event. We could time our “watches” by his arrival! Even if the chief guest at one of the Chinmaya Mission Programs was late, he would ask us to start the Program to honour all those who had turned up on time.

Sometimes it feels like he made us aware of those qualities in Him that we sorely needed to add to ours! Like, he “finished” his “to do” list everyday and never postponed work that required his attention to another day. He would personally read every letter that came to him and replied to each one of them (for many decades, he replied in his own hand writing!) – sometimes 50-60 in one day!

Although he enjoyed food served by devotees, he never overate!

Till the end, he never had even a little bit of extra weight!!

He always went into details and was extremely meticulous in planning and in a compassionate and yet “strict” way, ensured that all of us gave off our best. In hindsight, it seems he planned our events to show us how to plan.

He listened with rapt attention and made each person feel and know that what he/she was sharing with him truly mattered.

He was full of love for all beings and preached the discipline of appreciating and thanking every one for the efforts – from officebearers of the Mission, to the staff who cleaned the premises.

He travelled non-stop for 42 years all over the world- with a new program, every week, in a new city! The way he mastered his body was very special. Even after multiple heart surgeries and severe diabetes (He used to inject himself with insulin twice a day!), his stamina was exceptional.

Let me share three incidents with you to exemplify what I have stated above.

1) In the late 80s, we were working on plans for the Center of World Understanding – the Lodi Road Centre of the Mission at New Delhi. The architect had developed a plan and Swami Jyothirmayananda, the Acharya based in Delhi (who was himself a civil engineer) had approved the same. However, when they presented the plan to Gurudev, I was personally present to hear the large number of incisive questions that Gurudev asked them. From aspects such as the “look and feel” of the building to seating in the auditorium to the height of ceilings, his questions enabled the entire team to make significant improvements in the plan. The art and discipline of planning was brought to life that day! The gaps that had shown up as deficits in the architectural plans were a function of inadequate planning.

2) In December 1992, we spent the last few days of the year with Poojya Gurudev in the Sidhbari Ashram. That year Gurudev asked the team to host thousands of villagers of the valley for a “bhandara” or community lunch. Gurudev

allotted duties to all of us – from cutting vegetables and cooking to cleaning and serving and decorating the ashram! He personally supervised all the arrangements and worked with great enthusiasm to ensure that all the "guests" were treated well. This was at a time when his health was failing and only a fraction of his heart was functioning! That day we learnt the discipline of "Sewa" in its best form. What has to be given, has to be given in the best manner possible! And atithi devo bhava, (guest is God) as well.

3) In the 80s, SwaminiGurupriyananda(then called Smt. SitaJuneja or Sita Amma) had started the unique series called " Bhakti Sandhyas" and invited the best artists to perform in the presence of Gurudev. On one such evening, the well-known Shri PurushottamDasJalota who was accompanied by his son, AnupJalota (as famous today, if not more) were featured. It was very moving to see Gurudev not only inspiring the artists to give one of their best performances of their lives but making everyone who was fortunate enough to be there to truly appreciate the essence of "devotion". The evening will remain in our memory as one of the best of our lives!! At the end, Gurudev thanked all the artists. Infact he was so moved by Shri Purushottamdasji's rendition that he gave him a big necklace with priceless gems, diamonds and rubies (that a devotee had gifted to Gurudev)!!

Gurudev then appreciated all the organizers and thanked Sita Amma for her selfless service and ended by thanking the audience in his own special way. That day we learnt the "discipline" of devotion – both to the Lord and to our duty.

In short, when he talk about Gurudev's name as "AnushanPriya", we mean the word Anushashan or "discipline" in a special way. What we mean is that a true disciplined individual is a gifted soul who practices discipline at all levels - physical, emotional and intellectual- to be a living embodiment of the ideal seeker, student and teacher- all combined in one!

The more one thinks about him in this light, one feels he had no other need to showcase his true nature, than to leave for us an ideal to emulate. Not for us to laud his attitude or write praise-filled journals; but for us to keep calling to mind the nature and manner of discipline. How blessed we are. How glorious that Disciplined Teacher.

Our salutations to him, Om AnushaasanapriyaayaNamah!

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Anyone who had seen Gurudev in action cannot fail to notice His high sense of discipline. Some industrialist seeing Gurudev's way of working and the results that manifested, commented he should have been the CEO of a corporate.



Hemuji and his study group

Which/ How many CEOs have achieved closeness to Brahman, Who crates maintains and withdraws this magnificent universe without effort.? Yet we take that comment in the spirit in which it was made. Pure admiration. What is special in this -- 300 centres, equal number of Swamis and Brahmacharis, countless talks and publications, all running smoothly without Sri Gurudev directly getting involved?

We cannot have a greater example for "karmani akarma" etc "tasyakartaramapi mam Vidhiakartaram"
There are innumerable instances of his discipline. I would like to mention three of them.

*In a National Yagna in Bangalore, Sri Gurudev wanted Brahmacharis to memorise certain verses in a stipulated time frame. When they did not accomplish that, Gurudev said – 'no lunch today'. That was the father. But the mother in him said give them hot upma at 4 pm. This was no punishment! It was a treat missing a meal for two hours and then getting hot upma with coffee at 4 pm!

*At a particular centre as is the discipline, one day before the conclusion of a yagna, a gurudakshina cover with all details printed on the envelope, (for devotees to fill) had to be kept on Sri Gurudev's desk, so that He could explain to everyone the concept of gurudakshina.

The organisers forgot to do that.

Gurudev said – 'no Gurudaksina for that yagna' (for that center).

For any center, the cost of holding a yagna is huge and not getting guru-dakshnia funding later, is a huge loss. For Gurudev discipline is more important.

*On another occasion, the souvenir for a yagna was brought to be released, at the last moment, and without having cleared it before printing with Sri Gurudev, as was His standing instruction. Sri Gurudev refused to release the souvenir. It had to be abandoned after hectic work of production and costs incurred on printing.

Which is not to say that He did not delegate. He gave everyone enough freedom and encouraged all endeavours. For example, the Trustees of CCMT are hugely empowered to take decisions and do acts necessary for the Mission. I personally never felt afraid to go and tell him any proposal. The feeling He left with us always was that of a loving father. Many people whom he had admonished only enjoyed the privilege to be admonished by an extremely loving father!

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM Anushasanapriyaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM-Mumbai

The 8 th bead of His Naamavali! 8 appears to be a significant number in connection with various important events in Gurudev's life.

Lord Krishna (the8th child of his parents), His birthday (May 8th) , His star (Pushya- the 8th), His tithi (Ashtami- the 8th), the date of Krishna's placement at

Krishnaalaya-Piercy (8th Jul 1990), His body placed at Siddhabari (8.8.1993)! These are a few 8s I can remember and connect!

Ashtaanga (8 limb) Yoga precepts, Yama (Self-control), Niyama (Restraint of the Mind) and Aasana (a steady sitting posture) , persuade one towards the 8th limb, the status of Samaadhi (Equipoised State) !

Anushaasanam means advice; instruction; persuasion; laying down rules or precepts. In every akshara, in every alphabet that came out of Him, you can see His nature, His love, His instructions, His intention. Together, all these are the instructions He conferred upon us, should we choose to call ourselves His disciple. Poojya Gurudev is one of the greatest Yogis, with 'Krishnaa-Krishnaa', at every breath, with the teaching of SrimadBhagavat Gita- The Yoga Sasthra. Gurudev advises us to set a goal that can never be achieved. And hasten slowly! He advises us to practice "Attachment-Detachment" Yoga, like a caterpillar, and nudges one to Metamorphosis!

Gurudev says: - The Gr8test Yoga is putting the Mind where the hands are working! In fact this is an excellent discipline : keeping the mind on the task at hand.
His BMI chart is a 'cut-out' in Brahman, chiselled by this inimitable Master-Pointer Himself, to 'point the pointed'!

"Kindle Life" with a prescription in the last page, with measured doses of Scripture, kindles our life! If we follow the instructions of this 'Applied Vedantin' we can achieve efficiency in any field of work!

Poojya Gurudev was a disciplinarian who disciplined His disciples! A disciple, according to Him, is the one who follows discipline! The laid down rules or precepts of Chinmaya Mission and His trusts, itself is a masterly masterpiece of this Mastermind! The Chinmaya Mission Pledge which He scripted masterfully, is verily a silken bond to bind us within His Embrace and launch us to the Boundless!

And Poojya Gurudev relished it!

Om AnushaasanapriyaayaNamaha!

Here is a typical reckoner from Gurudev:

READY RECKONER FOR A VAANAPRASTHA!

1. Seek solitude.

2. Introspect more.

3. Do not give advice to anyone (particularly junior family members) unless asked for.

4. Withdraw! Withdraw! Withdraw!

5. Eat small, Eat good.

6. Don't read profane literatures. Totally reject any source of such matters, even it be your daily newspaper.

7. Do retire from professional life, meaning do not live for your profession (medicine, Law, etc.).

8. Avoid being drawn into controversies.

9. Strictly do not buy anything beyond utility.

10. Reduce your baggage – Give away anything that is not required for daily living.

11. Clean out your closets and cupboards; also your Mind!

12. When in doubt, throw it out!

13. Diligently practice "Attach-Detach" policy.

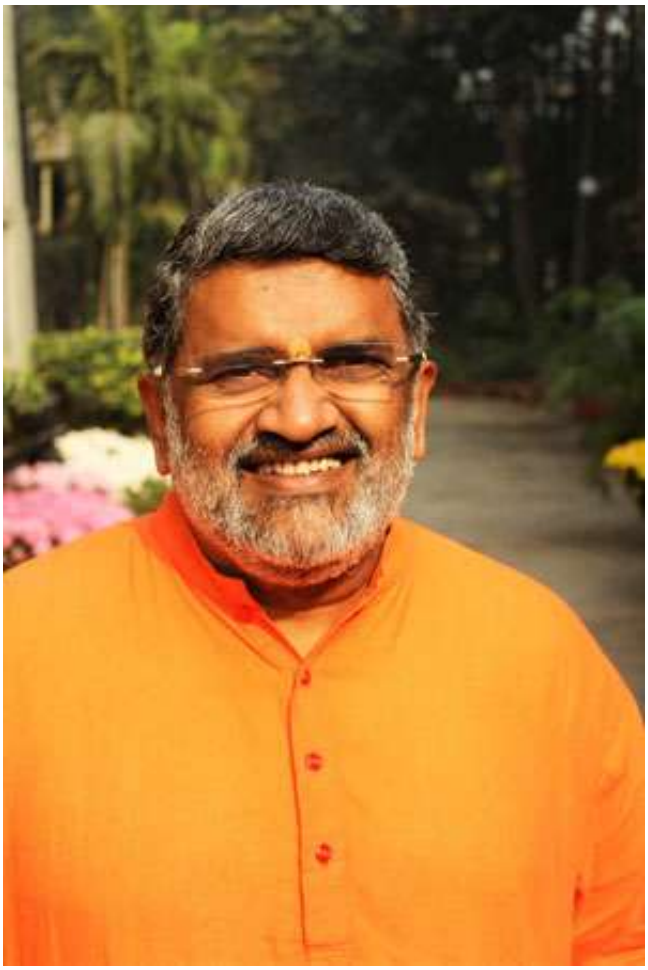
14. Make The Lord's name your life's breath!

Om AnushasanaPriyaaya Namaha!
Om Chinmaya Satgurave Namaha!

Om anuśāsanapriyāya Namaḥ
Salutations to the Lover of Discipline

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM- Delhi and NCR

Anuśāsana is discipline. Śāsana is rule and anu means after. Anuśāsana is discipline after proper understanding or well disciplined. It is not haphazard control without wisdom. It is controlling ourselves and the things around us. Priyā is lover. Anuśāsanapriyāya is one who loves discipline.



Swami Nikhilananda

Gurudev loved discipline. His philosophy was. ‘If we have to do something, do it properly.’ Speak properly. Write properly. Do simple, every day things systematically. He was meticulous with even the most mundane tasks. Once Gurudev was writing letters; Guruji was sitting beside him, helping to fold them and put them into envelopes. Gurudev wanted the letters to be perfectly folded and put into their respective envelopes. He was particular that the flap of the envelope be stuck properly, to ensure that the contents do not tear when the letter is opened.

He made sure that all arrangements were faultless and in perfect alignment. Once, he was presiding over aviñëusahasranäma arcanāpujā in Goa. Before the scheduled start, he inspected all the preparations. He wanted everything to be neatly placed. Meticulous to the last detail he even made sure that all the diyās were laid out in one straight line. There was perfection and military-like precision in everything.

There was joy in the work itself. He did not depend on the result of the task to experience joy. Those who enjoy their work are always happy. Those who do not enjoy their work are happy if the outcome of the task is pleasing; if not, they are

not happy. With Gurudev, you could see that his happiness lay in the process, in the doing.

Alongside being disciplined, Gurudev ensured discipline from devotees and students, and at times it showed in punishing the student and himself, the teacher! There was a time when Gurudev was in charge of the Brahmachāri Training Course. When he was unhappy with some issue, he would order the kitchen staff not to serve breakfast to the brahmachāris. But on those days, he would remain hungry as well!

He was particular that clothes should be properly worn. They should be well ironed, neat and clean. Hair should be combed well and the tikkā properly applied. One brahmachāri, in Gujarat, decided to grow his hair long and wear an Om sign on his forehead. Gurudev took one look at him and roared, “Who is this buffoon?” The brahmachāri quickly disappeared and made himself presentable! Gurudev himself, dressed with impeccable perfection. He had his own artistic style of tying his lungi. His padukās were also special, giving him a majestic appearance.

Everything he did was done with special care and attention. It was a great joy to see him working, arranging, walking, talking, teaching, doing his sādhanā, interacting with people. Some people suggested to him that we should have äçramslike those in Rishikesh and Haridwar, where travelers and sädhus could come and stay. He was very firm in his views. He said that our äçrams were only for those interested in their sädhanä. This revealed the clear lines he had drawn as far as the Mission’s work was concerned. That too was discipline.

According to him a disciple is one who follows discipline. He was strict, but not dictatorial. His discipline was backed with understanding, love, wisdom and kindness. During a yajïa in Goa one of our brahmachärinis visiting from New Zealand wanted to visit the beach. It fell to my lot to ask permission for the expedition. Immediately he agreed and said, “Yes, go.”

He knew the importance of discipline for a seeker and wanted us to enforce it in our lives. SamarthaRamdas Swami has also emphasised the need for discipline. According to him there should neither be lack of nor excess of it. Not too tight, not too loose - just right!

OM ANUSHAASANAPRIYAAYA NAMAH!

268. Naam 9:OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH

30-01-2016

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vilasini, of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Inner Sakshi

Through his life and teachings, Gurudev showed us how to live as the Sakshi. No matter what was going on, only a tiny part of him was acting. The rest was abiding in Brahman, Witnessing Consciousness, all the time. Gurudev said, "Just as when we wink with eyelids closed, the world is not seen directly, yet our continuous experience of the world is not obstructed because of the winking. In the same way, even though thoughts arise in a master's mind while serving the world, he recognizes it as both his higher and lower nature continuously. Even forms and thoughts are to him nothing but the Self."



All the while, through scriptural studies and through seva in the Mission, Gurudev was guiding us to equanimity. He was the best role model in this. I never ever saw him lose his balance and composure. Whatever was happening, he was fearless and equipoised. This was the teaching of some of his favorite verses from the Bhagavad Gita: The "SthithaPrajnaLakshana" of Chapter Two, or as he called it, "The Man of Perfection Downtown." Just like a coach trains his athletes to handle

any obstacle, it felt like Gurudev was training us how to walk through any obstacle in life, always serene and detached.

This is the ideal of Vedanta, and Gurudev was an ideal example and role model. The total peace, wisdom, security, and magnanimity he emanated took us to the highest place with him. We felt we were in Brahma Loka itself with Gurudev! But Gurudev would warn us, “I can give you a tourist visa to Brahma Loka, but you need to earn the green card and citizenship yourself! Otherwise, you will find yourself right back in samsara very soon!”

All Gurudev’s teachings, yajnas, books, and guidance were to help us get our own citizenship in Brahma Loka. Gurudev wrote to me in early 1981, “Be sweet to all but keep yourself free from attachments. Attach yourself only to Him.” In another letter, he wrote, “Be regular in study and meditation. Don’t judge its qualities. Hose pipe everyone around you with your love.”

Gurudev’s teaching that impacted me the most is summarized in another letter, “Watch the mind in a detached state. Love all as His Vibhooti. Work until work leaves you.” All three yogas of Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma in one! Gurudev helped us become aware of our own mind and vasanas, and learn how to detach from them.

“Watch the mind in a detached state,” practicing SakshiBhav, has been the most powerful blessing of all Gurudev’s teachings for me. Being the witness means recognizing the I who is never involved. Swamiji would explain: “In the traffic court, the witness is the person who was present but who was not involved in the accident. So should you be throughout life.”

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH!

It had another important purpose as well... Swamiji pointed out in his discourses that we can only let go of the vasanas in our minds if we are aware of them. The ones deeply hidden will persist until they become conscious, and with viveka and vairagya, are dropped. Gurudev's uncanny ability to bring us face to face with our attachments was one of the most impactful parts of his teachings!

Scriptures say, "Tune up your mind to the Guru, to that state of pure Brahman." Gurudev's deep abidance in Brahman helped his students tune up to that Witnessing Presence--He was the empty flute beckoning us to that State.

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH!

Om Antahsakshinenamaḥ

Offered by Brni. Shruti Chaitanya, *Sandeepany graduate batch of year 2005 to 2007, under Swami Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji. Currently Acharya at CM Puduchery.*(erstwhile Pondicherry)

Salutations to the Inner Witness

Antah means inside. Saakshaateekshatesaadanamvinaaitisaakshi – Witness is one who knows without usage of any other instrument. Gurudev being the self of all, is the witness of everything.

In the commentary on the Gita, at one place, Gurudev writes, “As I am writing these words, a certain part in me can stand apart and visualise, how my fingers constituted of mere minerals, can hold the pen at the right slant, and carry it along the paper so that the words may be spelt properly thereon.” To Gurudev, standing apart as a witness was effortless, that being His nature.

To an actor who came to receive Gurudev’s blessings, he said, ‘On stage be real, and in real life act well.’ He guided us to play the game of life well, the world being a stage and we playing our role on it, ever aware that it is a role.

In the famous sloka below, BhagawanShankaracharyaji explains to the student that the witness to all is Self, the ‘I’:

kiṃjyōtistavabhānumān-ahani me rātraupradīp-ādikam

syād-evaṃravi-dīpa-darśana-vidhaukiṃjyotirākhyāhi me |

cakṣustasyanimīlanādi-samayekiṃdhīrdhiyodarśane

kiṃtatrāhamatobhavānparamakaṃjyotistadasmiprabho ||

- ēkaślokī

अन्वयः

कतिवज्ज्योतिःमेअहनभानुमान्रात्रौ (च)
प्रदीपादिकम्।स्यात्एवं।रविदीपदर्शनवधौकज्योतिःमेआख्याहि।चक्षुः।तस्यनमीलनादिसमयेकं (ज्योतिः) ।धीः।धियिःदर्शनेकं (ज्योतिः) ।तत्रअहम्।अतःभवान्परमकंज्योतिःतत्असस्मिप्रभो।

The sloka is given as a dialogue between the Master and Disciple.

Master: What is the source of light for you to see ?

Disciple: During the day it is the sun; at night it is the light from lamps etc.

Master: What sees the sun and the lamps ?

Disciple: The eyes.

Master: When eyes are closed, who sees?

Disciple: The intelligence

Master: Who witnesses the intelligence?

Disciple: It is the 'I', the Self, who alone reveals the intelligence, its actions and changes.

Master confirms to the student the changeless permanent Witness as 'You alone are the Supreme illuminator'.

The student replies: Yes, O Master, I am That.

On analysis, we find that there is something different from the body, which is the witness of the body and its perceptions; something different from the mind that witnesses the various emotions. How the intellect decides is also witnessed by Me. What is that which sees all this?

Gurudev said on one occasion 'It is the light within that makes that Sun shine'.

Guru or God as the inner witness knows all our thoughts, desires and longings.

***

Sw. Mitrananda narrated this incident once at Sandeepany Powai in December 2006:

A devotee approached Gurudev and asked 'Where will you be day after tomorrow?'.

Gurudev replied 'I am here only'

Devotee: Your itinerary says Pune, Swamiji..

Gurudev: Yesterday Hyderabad was in front of me. Today Bombay is. Tomorrow Pune will be.

***

I / Truth is now and here alone. The moment a person knows that 'I am witness; I am different from the illumined', detachment comes to him quite naturally.

Although He is our antahsaakshi, He did not 'intrude'. Once someone asked Gurudev if he could read peoples mind. Gurudev promptly replied 'why should I look into other people's garbage?' He never encouraged idle curiosity nor obliged to such

queries with a direct answer. But he was the inner self of all and knew everyone's mind.

In His presence, many have had the experience of Him answering our questions without us having to vocalise it.

We siblings were school-going children when our father took us to Pujya Gurudev. Something about Him made us look forward to being with Him.

In 1988, during the Marathon camp of Vivekachudamani at Sidhbadi, a foreigner by name CyllaVonTiedman, gifted me with a pen which wrote with copper brown colour and looked great for me. I wanted Gurudev to see that pen. I asked my father to get me a book which he readily purchased for me. Gurudev was in the process of writing messages out to the various devotees with the pen that they were giving. I took the new book to Gurudev and stretched out the pen proudly and waited for Him to sign into it. Gurudev would not touch the pen. He called out loudly to Shivaramji who came hurriedly from inside the kutia, asked for His pen and signed on the book. I looked quizzically, wondering what happened. I understood only much later that my thoughts were wrong, of the nature of a show-off and He did not approve of it.

When I was not aware of what thoughts are being thought by me, He out of compassion comes in to pull me out. If we keep the bhaavana / awareness that Gurudev is the antahsaakshi, our minds will not go into unethical thinking and will be rendered pure. To such a purified mind alone, Vedanta darshan becomes possible. Om Antahsakshinenamaha.

(The following is from article 'how divine grace works' by SwaminiNisthananda published in Chinmaya saurabh – Silver jubilee souvenir of CTT)

I started a reverie as follows; 'He said He has no will of His own. He is an open house for Narayana to work through. I wish He will give me an instruction and I will follow it faithfully. He must be all knowing. Will he give?' Soon I lost track and sat listening to the general talk. It was time to go and all left. I was the last. When I got up Sri Gurudev got up too. Reaching my side, he said gently 'yadyad karma karomitattadakilamsambhotavaradhanam'. .. It said that I needed to surrender, that I must do all work as worship of shambhu, surrender the result of all actions as an offering at the feet of the lord who was none other than my Gurudev who was a walking, talking God.)

***

General Cariappa, a long time devotee from Coorg, Karnataka, once asked Pujya Gurudev, "Why are you not declaring yourself as a Godman?" .

Gurudev retorded "Why should I?"

General responded, "This answer is not enough."

Then Gurudev explained, "Every day, thousands and thousands of people flock into

my yajnasala and after listening to my talks, all of them go back to their homes with the feeling 'I am God, I am God.' What is the need to declare myself a Godman?"

May Pujya Gurudev, Self in us, bless us to realize Him as the ever present witness.

Om AntahsaakshineNamah!

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

Om AntahSakshineNamah.

Our Humble Prostrations to that Chinmaya -the Chit-concentrate, Consciousness-concentrate, who is The Pure Consciousness, The Omniscient Witness Within.

A witness is one who just 'looks on' an event without getting involved. He is compared to The Sun, who illumines everything under Him, without any attachment or involvement. Therefore, He is perceived as the Pratyaksha(Perceivable) Brahman or Karma Saakshi.

Saakshi is the one who looks on-- the One behind the eye (Akshi). The Eye of the eye -The Vision. Physical eye cannot see, there is a 'seer' behind it. The physical eye is compared to a camera or a telescope. There is always a photographer or a seer behind them. The very nature of the sense organs is such that it functions as 'look out' points, with outgoing tendencies; therefore, one beholds the external Universe and not the internal Self. Even though this is seen as a manufacturing defect (Kath. Up. II-IV-1), God -The Creator, out of sheer Compassion, gifted the organ Eye (Akshi) with a capability to avert.

Aksh means - Axis –an imaginary line around which an object or shape rotates. Akshi- The Eyes –derived from the root Aksh, are fixed on an axle (Aksh). Hence the capability to avert (turn inside). Some wise men take a U turn and see the Eye of the Eye- 'The Mind'- the Eye of the Mind - The 'Intelligence' of the Intellect- and see The Director who permeated and illumined all these faculties, who is the Pure Consciousness. This is The Director who willed and directed the mind-light upon its objects. He commanded the main vital air (praana) to proceed to function. His Will do men utter speech. His Intelligence directs the eyes and the ears (towards their respective objects). This is the Eye of the Eye. This is Absolute Consciousness - the Antah Saakshi or the Witness Within. See how He Looks on.

I quote Poojya Gurudev: - "It is not that which is conscious of the internal subjective world, not that which is conscious of the external world, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass of consciousness, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor is it unconscious. It is unseen by any sense organ, not related to anything, incomprehensible by the mind, un-inferable, unthinkable, and indescribable, essentially of the Self alone, negation of all phenomena, the peaceful, all bliss and the non-dual. This is what is known as the Fourth --- Turiya. This is the Atman and this is to be realised. (Mandukya Up. Mantra 7 Page 66).

Poojya Gurudev was conducting His 455th Yajna in Jamshedpur during 1988, Nov 20-26 and the text for the morning class happened to be Mandukya and Karika1. We were with Him. I enjoyed listening to Gurudev's explanation of the above quoted Mantra. After Jamshedpur Yajna Swamiji was to catch a flight from Calcutta to Lucknow on the 27th, drive to Kanpur and inaugurate His 456th Yajna at Kanpur on Nov 27th. Since Jamshedpur Yajna could be concluded only on 26th evening at 8.30 PM, this necessitated a change in His itinerary (because it also included travel from Jamshedpur to Calcutta to take that flight). He asked me to find an alternative plan.

When I spoke to Indian Airlines Calcutta, they informed me that Gurudev's flight is rerouted via Ranchi (130 kms from Jamshedpur) and Gurudev can board the flight at Ranchi. Gurudev said "See, It is Naraayana's work, everything has to come." Therefore, Gurudev decided to drive from Jamshedpur to Ranchi airport early morning on the 27th, fly Lucknow and follow the original pattern.

There is a reason for everything. This is one of His typical detours. I waited. One Nair family from Ranchi arrived at Jamshedpur to meet Gurudev. They were highly devoted to Poojya Gurudev. When I told them Gurudev was on a short transit at Ranchi, Mrs Nair asked me whether Swamiji will have some breakfast (Idlis), if she brings it to the Ranchi Airport next morning.

I told her "Amma, Yes, not only Idly, Swamiji loves potato stew and small onion chutney also. Get some freshly churned butter also." I set the menu.

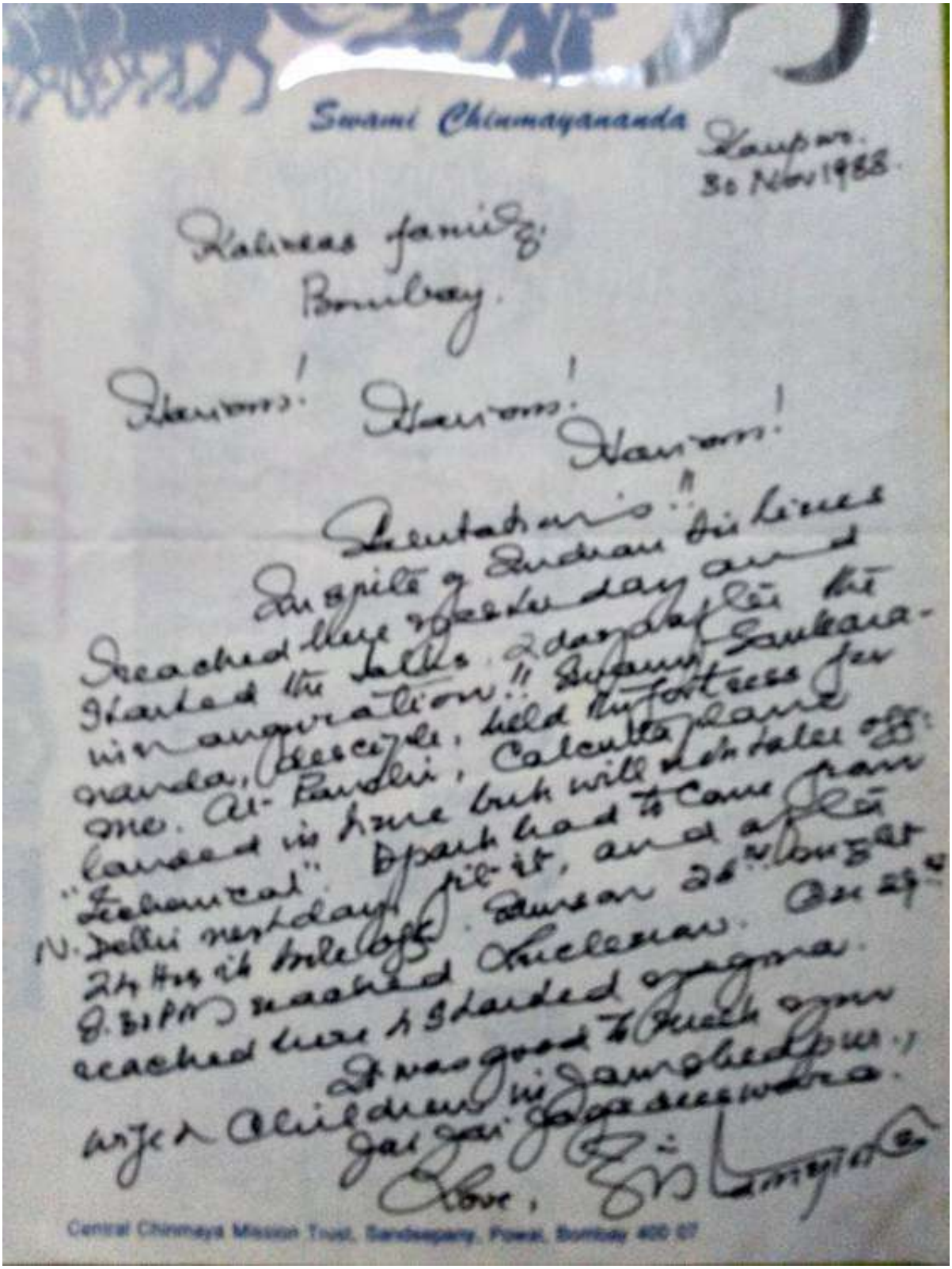
The Nairs returned to Ranchi. Gurudev reached Ranchi Airport as planned, had Nairs breakfast as per the menu. A technical delay was announced and the aircraft remained on ground for more than 24 hrs. Gurudev told Nairs, "Breakfast was very nice, there must be some fresh butter left over at home, let us go home." Hence Gurudev had a transit halt at Nairs.

Just see the punya of His Devotees! This was a typical example, which explains Gurudev's true nature. Since Gurudev was the illuminator of all our thoughts and faculty, He was aware of everything. What was in Nair's mind, what plans Indian Airlines made, the technical delay at Ranchi – everything.

Gurudev orchestrates and orders anything and everything, to exhaust the punyas of His devotees. Poojya Gurudev wrote to me on arrival at Kanpur: -

"In spite of Indian Airlines I reached here yesterday and started the talks two days after the inauguration. Swami Sankarananda, disciple, held the fortress for me. At Ranchi, Calcutta plane landed in time but will not take off. 'Technical.' A part had to

come from N.Delhi next day, fit it and after 24 Hrs it took off. Thus on 28th night 8.30 PM reached Lucknow, on 29th reached here [Kanpur] and started yagna. It was good to meet you, wife and children in Jamshedpur. Jai JaiJagadeeswara. Love, Chinmayananda"



Gurudev's letter to Kalidasji explaining the 'technical' reason that gave Him more

time with the Nairs.



The Lucky Nair Family

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Starting from AjayaNamah, except AnushasanapriyayaNamah, all other namas are based on AtmaSwarupayaNamah. As such Atma Gurudev is anthasakshi.



Hemuji serving bhiksha to Gurudev

Apart from this this months Tapovan Prasad has interview by Sri Swaroopanandaji in which he says a few of them went to meditate on a nearby peak which others did not know about, and consequently went searching for this group.When they all returned to the ashram, Sri Gurudev told them you do not have to go to a peak to meditate; reach the peak in meditation.
Probably in the beginning Gurudev gave mantra to some and therefore everybody requested Sri Gurudev, ‘please initiate me into mantra.’

When I approached Sri Gurudev he told me "I have given you all a mantra during my classes in the yagnasalas; you are doing meditation with them. You are improving. Earlier you were a shy boy (when I was 25 or so) now you are confident. That is enough."

Therefore He knows what is happening in us. Antahsakshi.
There were several occasions where Sri Gurudev chose somebody or dropped somebody, either against majority wishes or because he had an insight into that person. In many cases Gurudev had barely met or ‘known’ that individual. But

Gurudev ‘knew’ them.

Also Gurudev himself told us "look within you can see me". He is always the inner Saakshi.
Many others have experienced this: they would come to Gurudev with some doubts and even without asking, their doubts were ‘answered’, clarified. He knew, for He was within.

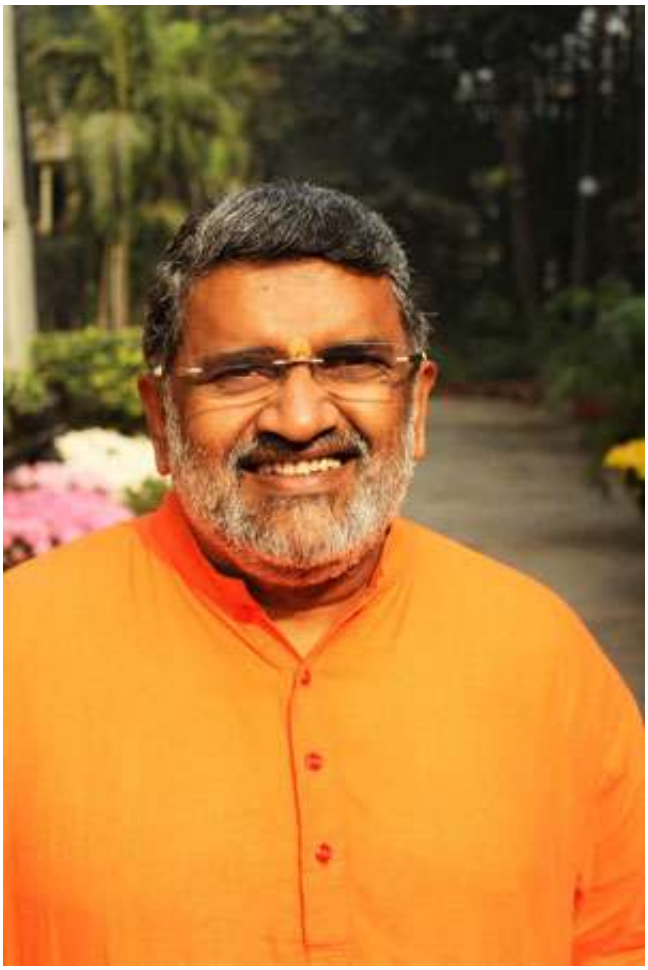
Om AntahsaakshineNamah!

Om antassākṣinenamaḥ

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM- Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Inner Witness

Sākṣi means witness. The witness is one who is aware without any means. The Supreme Consciousness is aware without the need for any support. To see the flower, one has to use the eyes. To think of the flower, one has to use the mind. But how can one become aware of the mind? Not by another thought; it is something subtler than the thought. Consciousness is aware of our thoughts and this Consciousness is aware, without the mind or any other instrument. It is of the nature of Awareness itself. It is the inner witness. With reference to this inner sākṣi, Kabirdasji, while reprimanding someone who was praying loudly, wrote, “Do you think God is deaf? He can even hear the sound of theghuìgharü tied to the feet of an ant.” The Lord is the witness of everything.



Swami Nikhilananda

A teacher wanting to test the intelligence of two of his pupils gave each of them an apple. His instructions were to eat the apples in solitude, where no one was watching. They both went to the forest, traveling to its remotest corners, but everywhere, somebody seemed to be looking. At last, one of them went to a solitary place and ate the apple. They returned to the teacher, one with the apple and one without. The one with the apple said that he tried to find some place where no one was present, but failed. Everywhere he went, he found himself there. He could not find a place where God was not present. God is the inner witness. He knows all our thoughts, desires and longings.

BhagavänRamanaMaharshi was asked, “What is the greatest upadesha of a Teacher?” He replied, “The greatest upadesha of a Teacher is in silence. If that is not understood, the Teacher uses sign language. If that is also not understood then the Teacher speaks the language of the student of the time.

OM ANTAHSAAKSHINE NAMAH!

269. Naam 10 : OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

31-01-2016

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri Govindraj ji, an old devotee of Gurudev who considers Gurudev his ishta bhagawan. Govindraj ji lives at Tiruvannamalai, in contemplation.

As we know that all the 108 Namas are powerful for spiritual seekers and with firm faith, I can say that chanting of the same will not only lead to inner peace and tranquility but also help in facing the challenges of this mundane world and forego 'Samsara' pain by His Grace.



Govindraj ji

Each Nama describes a particular quality of Sri Gurudev. When we chant with devotion and concentration, the mind is forced to reflect on that quality. Let us take the example of the 9th Namavali ' Om Antaryamine Namah', I chant with the feeling that our beloved Sri Gurudev is the Universal consciousnesses and the All pervading reality sitting in our inner chamber witnessing our thoughts. When I identify Him as the Supreme Lord,I conclude that everything and everyone around me is Him alone, thereby Fulfilling Sri Gurudev's advice to me to "SEE ME IN EVERYONE", This in itself has become a Sadhana for me.

This chanting gives me a sense of at-one-ment with Him. And my suggestion to fellow seekers is to pay attention to the meaning of the Nama when chanting. May His blessings be ever upon His devotees.

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

Offered by Smt. Prathna Saran

Gurudev had once got a few Rudraksha Malas from one of his devotees in Indonesia. They were selling at the bookshop in Sidhhabari so I bought one and with great eagerness took it to Gurudev to get his blessings .

I put it in his palm saying "Swamiji please bless this Japa Mala for me."



Prarthna ji Saran

He called his personal attendant Shivraman ji and said, "Go and keep it on my bed near the pillow", then looked at me and said , "you can come back tomorrow to take it."

Next day I came to him very anxiously, did my pranams and sat down at his feet. "Yes, the Japa Mala " he said, then asked Shivraman ji to fetch it from his bedside. He closed both his palms over it and with closed eyes chanted a Japa over it, then he gave it to me saying that they were very good rudrakshas he got from Indonesia."

I prostrated and returned to my room.

Since then this Mala has been my mainstay and a great help in steadying my mind. Attachment grew and I could not part with it for anything, so I took it in my bag to the US on a recent visit. Many a time the thought came to my mind that I should now be able to walk the Japa without it and that I should pass it on to a spiritual seeker, but the cloying attachment for it would just not allow me to part with it. I would keep holding it in my hands and putting it to my heart and forehead.

Then, some weeks later I dreamt of Gurudev. We were sitting somewhere and he strode in and sat down on a chair. Then, looking directly at me he pointed a finger at me and said in his usual stern manner," You, drop that Mala." It was a command by the Guru, I just lamely said "Yes Swamiji."

Next morning, the dream command was fresh in my mind. I was amazed at the assistance my Gurudev could give me in my Sadhana even when not in the body, that he could see the clinging attachment and wanted me to rise above it.

From the morning onwards I could not dare to use that Mala! When I left the shores of America I put that Mala in my daughter's hands saying, "This is one of the most precious things I have and Gurudev has asked me to give it up. Take care of it. " She was overwhelmed as she quickly put it at the feet of the Lord Shiva idol which Gurudev had blessed for her.

I felt much lighter and so relieved.

The name that surfaced in my mind was: "Om Antaryaaminey Namah"

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH!

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu

Many people have said that the way in which they came to know Gurudev, was nothing short of a miracle. This means some force beyond them worked through them and they were led to Sri Gurudev. Again when they met Him they found a deep bond already existing as though for a long time. Some met Him very briefly as a child, never placing any importance on the encounter, only to find themselves actively in His Grace and love later in life.



Hemuji with Gurudev

There is an instance of a devotee who came to see Gurudev off at a railway station. In the last minute, Sri Gurudev asked him to get onto the train with Him. The devotee had come to see Gurudev off at the railway station. And there he was, totally unprepared for the travel, no clothes, no prior notice, no time to respond. But he got into the train anyway. He had a job to go back to the next day and he could not apply for leave. He already had some discomfort with his boss.

When this devotee expressed his fears -- because Gurudev made him stay with him for a few days -- Sri Gurudev said everything will be alright when he goes back to office.

True to Sri Gurudev's words, when the devotee went back to work, the officer with whom he was not comfortable, had been transferred. As for the other staff, they all related to him as if nothing happened. Extraordinary instance.

In a similar instance a school student who had problem with the authorities, was not attending school. Gurudev said everything will be alright. The school authorities sent word for this student and all was smooth thereafter.

Once I introduced to Gurudev a friend of mine with whom I had business interests. Gurudev was not happy with that man, who He never knew. When I broke off

relationship with that business associate, I told Gurudev that His guess was right. Sri Gurudev replied, 'When I say something it has to be so.'

There were many people,whose horoscopes had certain factors that were unchangeable. Sri Gurudev changed them. Countless are such instances where Sri Gurudev worked from either within the devotees or others who were inimical to devotees. This is happening even today for those who can see. Gurudev lives in each one and taking care of their lives every second. Let us surrender and enjoy. Tena tyaktena bhunjitha. By that surrender let us enjoy.

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

Om Antaryaamine Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidasji, CM- Mumbai

Antaryaami means IN dweller, Inner Ruler, Supreme Self – Brahman, present in every creation! The word IN itself is an expression of that Self, expressing the position of something that is enclosed or surrounded, indicating that something is included or involved!

Poojya Gurudev is Brahman- the Self in us who bestows us Intuition- the ability to understand or know something without conscious reasoning (the inner tutor!)! He rules us from within! He is the only Doer! His letters are addressed to "Blessed Self" from "Thy Own Self"! He is "Present" in all of us! This 'is-ness' and 'are-ness' is the nature of Sat- Existence! Fusion of this Sat with Chit-Ananda was Chinmayanda! My Humble Prostrations to that Antaryaami!



N. Kalidas ji

Poojya Gurudev was flying to Muscat on Gulf Air 065 Dep.2015hrs on 16th March 1993 for a Gita Jnana Yagna. A devotee of Poojya Gurudev was to accompany Him to Muscat. Her passport had expired and to be renewed for the travel. She had sent her passport to Mumbai CCMT well in time. For reasons unknown, it was not done till the date of travel. I was in Mumbai and had gone to Powai ashram. While I was doing my pranaam to Gurudev, He gave me a Passport and asked me “Can you do it?

My answer is always yes because of my conviction that I am just not the doer, He had already done it! I told Gurudev, “But, Swamiji, I need something from you- just a kataaksha- a glance through the corner of Your eyes!”

I got it! I took a cab and went to the passport office. I was stopped at the entrance because of some VIP movement. I waited there. I found the VIP was none other than a very close devotee of Poojya Gurudev, a senior secretary from the Ministry of External Affairs, who had come for the inspection of the Regional Passport Office! He knew me also and took me inside and got the Passport renewed, while we were

having a cup of coffee!

I returned to Powai with the renewed Passport and arrived before lunch! Gurudev was waiting for me in front of His Kutia. He asked me to enter the car and as we drove to the Annakshethra, I gave Him the Passport. He gave the Passport to that devotee and said Yoga- Kshemam----Vahaamyaham! The devotee travelled with Gurudev to Muscat on the same flight, the scheduled flight!

Who did this? To that Yogi, inner doer in everyone- thatAntaryaami, our Humble Prostrations!

Kamala Hall in Siddhabari, a hall Gurudev constructed, in memory of His "mummy" Kamala Chanrai, was inaugurated on 8th Oct 1992 by Kamala Chanrai herself.This was during the Viveka Choodamani Camp and a day before Hanuman Abhishekam. Siddhabari was packed with delegates and devotees from all over the world! My wife prompted me to get a stand-by ticket on Indian Airlines on sector Jammu-New Delhi, in case the Vayudhoot flight I was planning to return with Gurudev gets full (as an airline employee, my tickets were subject to load).

I arrived at Dharmsala (Gaggal) airport by Vayudhoot, to find Kamalamma boarding the same aircraft. She was returning to Bombay after the inauguration of Kamala Hall. She was a wheelchair passenger. I facilitated her on her departure.

On arrival at the Ashram, Gurudev asked me "So Amma travelled?"

"Yes Swamiji."

Gurudev continued "You see that General from Northern Command wants me to give a lecture at Udhampur on the 11th, so there is a change in our schedule, we have to fly Delhi from Jammu not Gaggal!"

My hands went to my pocket to feel the stand-by Jammu-Delhi ticket. Gurudev with His Graceful glance said "So you have already come with the ticket!"

This is Gurudev's true nature! To such a Gurudev, the Antaryaami in everyone, Our Prostrations!

OM ANTARYAAMINE NAMAH

Om antaryamine namah

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM-Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Inner Controller

God or the Supreme Reality is the inner controller. Being in everything, God controls everything. The Government controls from the outside. If someone commits a crime, the Government can punish him but cannot control his mind. God remaining in and through everyone controls even our thoughts. By reflection we will come to know that whether anyone knows or not - God knows, the Guru knows. Mahatma Gandhi used to call this the 'inner voice.'



Swami Nikhilananda

We can understand this better through the story of an old lady, who did not understand English, but attended Gurudev's talks regularly. Once he asked, "Amma, do you understand what I am speaking?" Very sweetly she replied, "Yes. I see your expression and understand what you are saying." It is much like the child and the mother. Children intuitively understand the mood and know from the expression whether the mother is happy or unhappy. They do not necessarily have to understand the words or the sentences.

Love and attachments like everything else have a particular flow. They have their own dynamics. Even love for an object or for money has a flow. If this flow is correctly directed, it is be good for the whole country but if it flows into Swiss bank accounts or into Al-Qaeda hands then the flow is not good. Suppose it flows through villages and through more and more hands, it will improve the health of the country. Similarly if I have deep attachment to someone who in turn has deep attachment for God, then I will also develop that same love and devotion to God. Scriptures lay much stress on having love for a saint because he does not keep anything for himself. He directs even the love of his devotees to God and ultimately unites them both. Herein lies the greatness of a great Teacher or a Mahatma.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

270. OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH

01-02-2016

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda – with permission



Om Aanandaaya Namah!

*Gurudev wrote this to a devotee (about what it is to stay inside), “Hold on to Him

who brought us here, who looked after us all these years, by whose grace we are now here, and that Divine Master will have His plans for our future too. Surrender to Him, learn to live in Him." That line is important – 'Learn to live in Him' and smile away all worries.

* From His lap when we look out at the world, life is a comedy. With ever growing faith in His protecting shelter, live joyously. 'He is there, why worry?' let this be the underlying thought.



Sw. Mitrananda

* But when we don't recognize that we are sitting in His lap, that 'play' is a tragedy, a serious tragedy. How easily we become miserable. The most insignificant triggers it, and we are unhappy; because we are not practicing 'staying in'. Hold on to Him who brought us here, who looked after us all these years, ...

*Just remember, you are merely the actor, not the role.

* The difference between great masters and ordinary people is, they operate FROM happiness; ignorant ones operate FOR happiness. We seek happiness. Masters function out of happiness, ever joyous. Gurudev's happiness was contagious. People around him also felt happy. Just his presence was enough!

*People crossed seas and continents to just be with him, even if for just a few minutes. [Even if a few seconds was all he had to give], people came all the way to get a glimpse of what is called Bliss. Om anandayanamah. He was happiness. Ever happy. Lived like that. Worked like that. His joy remained untouched.

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

I heard Sri Gurudev narrate all of Sri Krishna's ordeals and in the end He would say, 'yet He is always with His one-and-half-inches smile!'

Gurudev led a hectic life since everything was conceived and built by Him and it was a huge organization. Needless to say, the number of challenges he would have faced, including finding money for maintaining Sandeepany Bombay, would have been huge. In those days the Mission did not have any surplus funds. With all these challenges and His acute health problems, nobody can miss the atmosphere that was charged with total peace and many a time, His roaring laughter.

Here are a few instances culled out from devotees experiences quoted earlier. There was a book called "As I know Him" experiences of devotees on Sri Gurudev. Mr. K. S. Bhatnagar writes in that book, on page 70:

"Being in His presence was soothing; it sent a thrill through the entire body, reminding one of the benign presence of heavenly spirits, a feeling which elevated one to a state of "Tranquil joy", a feeling experienced in one's life time. Up to this moment one feels that he has lived for ages in this tranquility."

Swami HaridasGiri, (direct disciple of SwamiGnyananandaSwamigal of Tapovanam), a highly popular Swami in those days, had thousands of disciples, a few hundreds who also did Hari keertan and many bhajan groups that held bhajans in Swami HaridasGiri's name, built a lovely Ashram with a Panduranga temple in Thennangur, Tamil Nadu.

In "As I know Him" page 123, Swami Haridas ji, says:
"What I am happy is that we both are indeed related to each other. Surely there is a closer relationship at least in one aspect. Everyone should become a Chinmayananda. Chinmaya means 'happiness'."

In the now famous book, At Every Breath a Teaching, page 9, S. Subrahmanyam of Bombay, quotes Gurudev " 'Whatever comes take it with laughter. Never be grim'. People who worked with him often remarked that he was able to laugh no matter what happened. That is what my teacher taught me."

Subrahmanyam recounts for us how Gurudev used to laugh. "No one could laugh like Him. Once when we started laughing in Gurudev's presence Gurudev said "Now you are coming very close to me .....".

How touching and how beautiful it is to visualize this moment in Subrahmanyamji's life. Even hearing about Gurudev's laughter brings a stillness to the agitations within!

It is Gurudev who gave the motto for Chinmaya Vidyalyas "keep smiling". Yes, that

smile must be planted young....

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH!

Om AanadaayaNamah!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM- Mumbai



"And the Lord Walked in ...." - Kalidas ji's parents receiving a glowing Gurudev into their home

The Supreme Brahman is a mass of Pure Bliss. Bliss is His pure nature, essential nature.

The Infinite Bliss is the very womb from which the universe has emerged out. The procreated world of endless variety has only one Eternal Father, and this source is

immaculate Bliss!

"
Yatovaachonivartanteapraapyamanasaasaha
aanandam brahmanovidvannabibhetikadachana"-

"The mind and speech return back from it baffled as they are not able to grasp and describe it; the wise who knows the Brahman which is Bliss, is not afraid of anything at any time"(TaitiriUp 2.9.1.).

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says: "Of this happiness, all other beings enjoy only a part."(Brih.up IV 3rd brah.32). Even ignorance is Bliss-Aanandam! When one identifies with the innermost sheath called Aanandamaya Kosha (The Blissful Sheath), when one hugs on to Brahman and falls off to sleep, in deep-sleep (sushupti) state of Consciousness, the Bliss derived out of that ignorance (I know 'I don't know') is the part (maatra) all other beings enjoy.

Brahman is the "One who makes others Blissful"! Chandokya Upanishad says" That which is immensity is felicity; there is no felicity in littleness" (Chand. Up VII-23/4-1). Since Brahman, the Infinite is the very source of Bliss, one who arrives at that divine plane of Pure Consciousness, it is in Him one gets himself intoxicated with the endless drunkenness of that unceasing Bliss! My Humble Prostrations to that aananda who is Chinmayaananda!

That Unceasing Blissful Brahman, who is this Poojya Gurudev, intoxicated me and sucked me to the very source of Bliss, to such an extent, that I used to extend my 'duty' flights to the Far East and the West, just to have a glance of His Graceful look through the corner of His eye- Kataaksham! , just to hear "HaaiKaali! You have come?!" It was both a question and a joy exclaimed. Like a mother who sees her son and says, 'Son you have come?' knowing he will come, and happy that he has come!

Gurudev was my Director and Scheduling officer! He used to say "I am His travelling agent "! Since He is Brahman, the " Inner Governor-Ruler" present in every creation, He could do wonders! The erstwhile Vayudhoot had an aircraft-Dornier with one of her Pilots, Capt. Goswami. Gurudev would board this aircraft and say "Captain Go! Swaami!" This Dornier and Goswami were at Gurudev's disposal, wherever and whenever He wanted! This Dornier was the Garuda of Poojya Gurudev Who is Naraayana Himself! Platform features of this bird,also was such that, it can remain still while airborne, like Garuda, with wide range of possible sensors, with a bubble window for full downward looking view (180 degrees)!

See the beauty of His Creation! Can you see Poojya Gurudev peeping through? Aanadam Para BrahmetiYonihi- Supreme Brahman, the Infinite Bliss is the very Womb- yonihi (Vishnu Sahasranaama).

To such a Blissful Lord Vishnu, who walked upon this Earth, My Humble Prostrations! Om Tat Sat!

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH!

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, Chinmaya Mission Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Bliss

The Teacher is of the nature of ananda or bliss. Each one of us experiences happiness at some time or the other in varying degrees but despite this it is very difficult to comprehend. Most of us experience it in an adulterated form, not in its complete purity. We experience bliss in deep sleep, without the need for any particular outer condition, no house, no wealth or anything external. A person in deep sleep experiences unconditional bliss, whether he is wealthy or poor, educated or illiterate, young or old, sick or healthy. We experience the absence of all sorrow, pain, worry and anxiety. There are no problems, no differences.



Swami Nikhilananda

Gurudev gave an example of two passengers, one a devout brahmin and the other a Muslim, traveling together. They began their travel by quarrelling with each other but the journey being long, they went to sleep. When they awoke, to their horror they discovered they had spent the night sleeping on each other. While they slept,

there was complete peace and harmony, no fight, no differences, no anxiety. But on awakening, the differences resurfaced and they began to fight again.

In the deep sleep state, we experience an absence of ego. There is no feeling of 'i' or 'my'. When 'i' forget 'myself,' there is great joy because the ego is absent. We are the greatest obstacle in our own joy. The 'I' referred to here is the small 'i', with a small dot on top. People try by various means to forget themselves - in work, in drinks or in drugs. When the 'i' is forgotten there is joy and when the 'i' is remembered there is sorrow. There is bliss or joy by indulging in sense pleasures and also in the deep sleep state.

Each of the sense organs have their own likes and dislikes. We don't know why the nose likes certain smells or the eyes certain forms. The joy from the sense organs is short lived and lasts as long as the contact remains. The senses do give us joy but it is not the ananda that we seek. This joy is adulterated with sorrow and time.

The mind gets sattvik joy after performing rituals, giving in charity or doing some seva. After a pilgrimage one comes back feeling joyous. After walking up to Vaishnodevi, one may be tired but at the same time happy too. To walk to the market, one may make a fuss but to walk up to the shrine, there is great enthusiasm.

Sattvik joy comes when the mind is pure, full of love and compassion. All worldly joys are temporary because they are dependent on the three gunas - sattvaguna, rajogunaandtamoguna. Pure joy is the very nature of our Self. We do not experience it because, before it reaches us it is coloured or adulterated by the gunas.

ananda is beyond all gunas, effortless and eternal. The Teacher is of the nature of this joy within. This Itself is the Teacher. Rather than surrender to the joy of sleep, one should surrender to this real and true joy.

OM AANANDAAYA NAMAH!

271. OM AATMA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

02-02-2016

Om Aatma Swaroopaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM-Mumbai



Sat-Chit-Aananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) is the true nature of Atman-the Individual Self that is The Supreme Brahman, the Paramaatma!

Sat-the Existence exists as the 'is'ness and 'are'ness in all inert objects and sentient beings while Chit- the Consciousness is the illuminator of all experiences experienced by the experiencer. This Consciousness can be called Consciousness as long as there are objects to illumine and are conscious of them. When there exists nil Objects, Emotions and Thoughts, this objectless awareness merges with the Subject I, and when I experience that absolute status "I am", the joy derived out of that status is the Absolute Bliss! This is the very nature (Swaroopa) of Atman!



With his Light

Our prostration to Him who constantly abides in his true nature Sat-Chit-Aananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).

The two who enjoy the fruits of their good works being seated in the cavity of the heart, the Seat of the Supreme, the knowers of Brahman call them shadow and light.(Kath. Upa.1-iii1).

These two are Jeevatma (Ego) and Atma (The Self).The knowers of Brahman declare

that though the body seems to be controlled and directed by these two factors, one of them is but the shadow-replica of the other. The shadow or reflection has no independent existence of its own. It exists only with reference to the Light or the illumined object.

A composite shadow, ever trembling and changing, forms in the befuddled mental lake, due to the rise and fall of the desire prompted thought waves kicking about their pranks in front of the mind. The individual in his extrovert-ness gazing on outwardly views this shadow and identifies himself with it. The shadow represents the (I -ego), the samsarin, who suffers the mortal agonies of his physical pains, mental tortures, intellectual failures and spiritual bankruptcy. This shadow [the 'I '-Ego] is called the Jeevatma and the Light, the God Principle in us, is called the Atma or Paramatma- The Supreme Self.

Sri Gurudev roars: - "Detach yourself from thisshadow. Know thy real Self. Kill the tyrant within you. It will bring the real Ramarajya (Kingdom of Perfection) in you bosoms! "How? He says" Recognise! Re-See! Remember our own real Nature (Swaroopa)! He says; "The one way to end the shadow in front of us is to turn our gaze towards the light within! If we cannot all of a sudden do so, let us then do the easier act of self-surrender. The taller we are the longer shall be our shadow. Bend double, the shadow is half. Sit down, the shadow is still smaller. Fall flat at His Feet in love and surrender, and the shadow is no more. End the shadow in us, this ego -- by surrendering unto Him, the Atman, the Self in us.Detatch the false ego from the true Self.Egolessness is the state of godhood. Attain this Supreme goal of life through Atmaarppanam --total surrender!"

Total Surrender-within-is possible only with the Grace of Guru who is The Lord within, with His unseen hands lifting you! When you have none to depend other than yourself, you really become in-dependant!

"Creator forgot His true Nature and called Himself a creature; this is the journey of the creature towards the Creator!"

Thus said Poojya Gurudev! This creature (Jan-tu) is verily thisJeeva or the Jeevaatma! Let us remember our true nature Sat-Chit -Aananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) and arrive at our destination-Brahman!

And where do we stand? The answer lies in Sri Hanumanji'sascertained opinion expressed to His Master, Sri Ramji, while explaining his relationship with Him! Hanumanji says: - "Oh Lord, at moments when I am steeped in my body consciousness I am Thy servant (daasa), when I identify myself with the mind and intellect- as a jeeva, I am Thy part (Amsa) and when I am in mySwaroopa-(Aatma-Budhi)- as the spirit, I am Thyself! This is my ascertained opinion (NischitaaMatihi)"

To that Aatmaswaroopa, our prostrations.

OM AATMA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

OM AATMA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

There is a close connection between AnandayaNamah and AtmaSwaroopayaNamah.

The nature of Atman is Ananda. Gurudev also taught us this Ananda Atma is the same in all.
At His very beginning of missionary work he used to address everyone as,'Blessed Self' and sign as,'Your own Self'. This is also seen in how everybody felt He is their own, like the Gopis of vraja, felt of Sri Krishna.

Sri Raghavan, Hyderabad, writes in As I know Him- page 96:

Once in Cochin when all the members rushed to prostrate to Swamiji He said "Why do you want my hands and legs? I am already in your heart, buddhu (colloquial for person of low intelligence)!"
Sri M. Balamuralikrishna, the renowned Carnaticsinger, says in As I Know Him :
I never think that He is "no more". I think He is still here talking to everyone and that He is still the Real Force. You can't miss God, can you?"

Page 251 Vedanta --Mananam series
He also showed us that He knew our thoughts and knew us more deeply within than we know ourselves. He effortlessly lived the Truth that the "Self in me is the Self in All".

At Every Breath a Teaching-- page 321
The particular form that the great Lord took in the name of "Swami Chinmayananda" has dissolved and He has gone back to merge into His own Nature. He has now become the essence in each one of us.
Wherever we find the glow of divine compassion, love, purity,and brilliance there we see but Gurudev with His ever smiling face. He has left His sheaths. He has now become SELF IN ALL OF US.
"Yadyadvibhuthi mat satwam "

When I once wrote to him not to leave early,..... in spite of all my short comings He said there will never be a time when He is away from me.

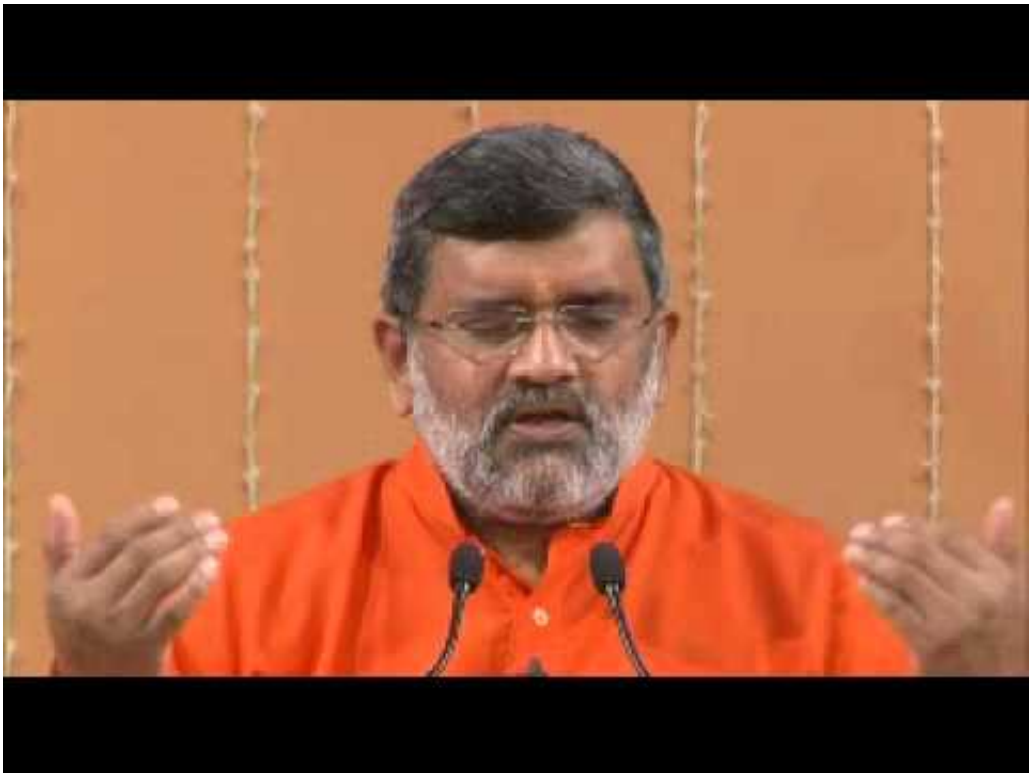
To That One Who is Never Away from me, my salutations.

OM ATMA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

Om Atma svarupaya namaḥ

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM- Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One who is of the Nature of the Self



Swami Nikhilananda

The Teacher is of the nature of Atman or Self. Dakshiëamurti Stotra, reveals the identity between Ishvara, Guru and Atman.

ईश्वरोगुरुरात्मेतमूर्तभिदवभागनि|

व्योमवतव्याप्तदेहायदक्षिणामूर्त्तयेनमः||

Isvarogururatmetimurtibhedavibhagine

vyomavavatyaptadehayadakshinamurtayenamah.

Ishvara, Guru and Atman though different in form, are the same in essence. On the path to seeing this Oneness, there are some signposts which we can use. First we meditate on the Guru as Ishvara. When we develop the proper rapport, love and shraddha for the Guru as Ishvara, we meditate on the Guru as a person. We then come to see Ishvara Himself as the Teacher, one who we can contact, interact and learn from. Through this process, we internalize the Teacher. The outer Teacher then becomes the inner Teacher and guides us in meditation.

Awareful experiences are our Teachers. Often we experience things but being unaware of them, we do not learn from them. So the experiences are repeated in life, till we learn our lessons. We are here to learn something and till we learn, Bhagavan sends us the same experience in different ways. We have to learn the subtler lessons, of compassion, of forgiveness, of humility and these can only be learnt through experiences. We will never know the greatness of certain emotions till we go through them.

In infancy and childhood, parents are the inner teachers. They give instructions, which slowly become a part of us. Most of us clearly remember the instructions our mothers gave about crossing the road. Even now, while crossing the road, their instructions come back and we look around to make sure that everything is in order. The mother instructs her young children. At that time they do not listen. Later as parents, they give the same instructions to their children, sounding exactly like their mothers.

The mother is deeply embedded in our psyche and in the absence of the outer mother; the internal mother continues to guide. Similarly, the outside Guru is wonderful but once he goes within, he cannot be removed. One can think of changing the Guru, while he is outside; there is a choice. The more love, faith and devotion we have, the deeper the Guru penetrates. After a point the instructions come from within.

In the depths of deep, inner sadhana, it is the inner Guruthat takes over. While learning music, first the outer teacher teaches, but after a while the growth takes place from within. The inner instructions are spontaneous and intuitive.

For an initiate on the path of spirituality, the Guru is far away. Then the Guru comes closer and finally becomes the Self. Here ends the journey. We then see the same Self in so many bodies.

To that Gurudev who is of the nature of our Self, our prostrations.

OM ATMASVARUPAYA NAMAH!

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

272. OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH

03-02-2016

Sri Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Om Angla-bhasa-viduttamayaNamah

Offered by Swami Dheerananda, the last disciple directly initiated into sannyaasa by Pujya Gurudev. Swamiji was placed as Acharya for CMWRC by Gurudev in 1989 and has since been serving the Washington area.

Salutations to Sri Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, The embodiment of eloquence in English Language



Swami Dheerananda

After India's Independence in 1947, there was feverish excitement all around the newborn nation. With this excitement, came a sense of confusion found all over India. India had become free but what about Indians? Were they free?

The British left India but India's fascination for the English language and culture remained. People not only started admiring the English language but also felt that only those who spoke English were educated and civilized. Even those among the educated class, who had respect and yearning for Bharatiya Culture, did not know the real glory and significance of it.

At that time, a mysterious and mighty man of inner perfection, beauty and glory had to come. This answer to India's confusion was none other than Sri Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. A man who could speak the great unknown mysterious myths and the glory and beauty of Bharatiya Culture in a language many admired and appreciated ... naturally people rushed towards Him. Indeed it was a Hindu Renaissance.

It is said that, "The merits of many lives are experienced when the Master comes to you!" Swami Chinmayananda's genius is the resurrection of the age old Yajna into Geeta Jnana Yajna— 'The Art of Man Making' Science! His mastery of the scriptures of Sanatana Dharma, His proficiency in English, His commanding voice, His charming personality, infinite patience and love, and tireless energy were the means by which He communicated, to the eager and confused Indians, the true essence of freedom and happiness.

He introduced the Three Laws of Causation and captured the hearts of seekers. It was Love at first sight. The remarkable BMI chart became the GPS for any new seeker trekking to Truth. The Chinmaya Mission Pledge dictated by Him spontaneously has now become the Universal Prayer invoking 'The Powers Divine'. The Power of Mother Durga isinvoked so we become courageous and disciplined, ever ready to fight against all low tendencies and false values, within and without us. The Power of Mother Lakshmi is invoked so we live honestly the noble life of sacrifice and service, producing more than what we consume and giving more than what we take. The Power of Mother Saraswati is invoked to keep us on the path of virtue, courage and wisdom.

Listening to Swami Chinmayananda was indeed an ecstasy. He was indeed Blissful Consciousness. He was eloquence incarnate. Goddess Saraswatijoyfully danced on His tongue. Watching Him was like watching a spectacular movie. Wittily, He once remarked, "I am Cinemananda!" In reality, He was Vedanta's Voice in English.

When a reporter asked Him, "Do you have anything else to tell me?" Sri Gurudev said, "I have nothing to tell ... Keep Quiet. The only Spiritual Truth is 'Shut Up & Get Out!'"Then Sri Gurudev added, "I am not insulting you. Shut up in your mind... not your mouth... next thought need not come; and get out of this misconception that you are a body. You are something more than a body. You are not the body. You are the all-pervading eternal essence, the Self— the Consciousness, the Life in you. The Life in you is the Life everywhere. Discover your identity with God the

One Life everywhere. And that cannot be done until you shut up; so then all that I can tell you is 'Shut up & Get Out!'"

He majestically walked the divine path of LOVE ALL, thus fulfilling the Motto He gave to Chinmaya Mission, "TO GIVE MAXIMUM HAPPINESS TO THE MAXIMUM NUMBER FOR THE MAXIMUM TIME!"

Salutations to Sri Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, the embodiment of eloquence in English Language.

OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH

Om AanglabhaashaviduttamaayaNamah!

Salutations to the One who is most eloquent in English

Offered by Mrs. Indra Advani, wife of Shri Gulu Advani, Trustee Chinmaya Mission West, USA

During one of Gurudev's stay at our home in the early 1980s, our neighbour, also a devotee, invited him for breakfast. She offered to make various parathas for him, and coaxed him to agree. Then on the appointed day, they came over and picked him up at the appointed time.



Indra and Gulu Advani at Mahasamadhi Camp 2015

I used this time to vacuum and mop the house. I had not completed these chores, when I heard a honk of a car. That was our neighbour come to drop Gurdev back. (We had agreed that our neighbour would honk when they reach our home, in a manner of signalling to us that they had arrived.)

Gurudev was at the door. He entered rubbing his stomach with a satisfied smile. "Great Parathas!" he said, heading towards his room.

A thought flashed. "O my God, the floors are damp!" At that very moment I noticed his unsteady step and involuntarily reached out to hold his arm. He stopped; before entering his room, he looked at me and spoke, emphasising two words (capitalised here):

"YOU are supporting ME?"

Using minimum words, Gurudev had indicated the difference between a jiva and

Ishvara, Lord. Such was His skill with the language!

I am reminded of Verse IX:18 of the Bhagavad Geeta, I am the Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Shelter, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Foundation, the Treasure-house and the Seed Imperishable.

OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH!

OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,Chennai

A majority of our modern education specially at higher levels, is through English. Naturally the future generations can have access to subjects only through English. Hence those interested in carving out a great future have to address the future generations in English.

Many today cannot read or write in their mother tongue. Some of them also cannot speak their mother tongue. Probably bearing this in mind the great visionary and missionary, our Gurudev, started addressing masses in English. Yet he has also made provisions through His disciples for His teachings to be made available in the regional languages.

The purpose of language is to convey ideas and only languages which can adapt to the changes that are coming in society can grow. A few decades back we would not be having in our dictionaries words like computers, laptops, tablets, software, hardware, 2G or 4G as valid words.
Thus knowing this purpose of language Gurudev many a time made His own grammar and created phrases like "when the last thought is thoughted of ..." and such like, much to our glee and joy.

Apart from these let us see the lovely precise pregnant phrases He created. Some of these are appropriately dramatic, unique and spectacular and completely Gurudev!

*Relationless relationship.
*Contactless contact.
*Hasten Slowly. etc

Tatwamasi -- the essence of all Advaita Vedanta, which therefore is too subtle and needs technical treatment with word meaning (vacyarth), implied meaning (lakshyartha) and with terminology jahalaksna a-jahalaksnajahajahlakshanaetc, all, together keeping the average man at a distance.

Sri Gurudev without compromising any of these aspects brought all those ideas into one simple sentence, that both retained the pristine purity of the original Sanskrit yet delivered the precise meaning with the deft use of English: "That dressed in matter is the vainful thou; thou undressed is That "

Other artful use of the English language are seen in such exquisite terms such as:

Undress and embrace.
Shut up and get out.
What you meet is destiny. How you meet (it) is free will.
You make a living with what you get. You make a life with what you give.

He showed us the difference between ‘people’ and ‘population’, ‘country and nation’, ‘house and home’, ‘life and living’, to name some.

Here is another classic Gurudev: “To see the one in many is love. To see the many in one is lust.”
Or this: "the ability to respond to others’ need, is responsibility".

Everyday, I have to reflect on one Naama (for this phase of the celebrations of the centenary year) along with other commitments, and bring Gurudev’s depth of English into these articles. This is the unkindest cut of all.

I shall just bring one more sentence of Sri Gurudev and leave the readers in peace: Introduction to Chapter 18 of Bhagavad Gita:-
“It is the duty of science to describe life, it is the purpose of philosophy to explain life. Thus viewed, the Bhagavad Geeta is an enchanting impossibility; it is at once a science and a philosophy, and yet, strangely enough, it is neither a scientific philosophy nor a philosophical science.” Look at the ease and elegance with which He expresses!

It occurs to me, the British quit India after hearing ‘last thought thoughted’ and such like!

Om AanglaBhaashaaViduttamaaya Namaha!

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Poojya Gurudev reveals Himself through His talk on “Krishnaavataar” while He eloquently expounds the concept of an Avataar! He says “The Lord, taking a form to help you and I, to get out of the rut into which we have fallen, to help our evolution, He presents Himself and naturally, He will have to present Himself in the

form, in which you and I can understand! If a Sanskrit scholar were to come here and talk on Krishna, crowd will be there, but, not you, because you will not understand! That Swami Chinmayananda, who will talk in English, we will understand! Therefore, that is why so much of educated people come. It is natural."

Therefore, this 20th century Master-Painter chose English language (AanglaBhaasha) as a powerful tool, that He efficiently used for the 'word painting' on the moving canvas of the Intellect!

Poojya Gurudev's command over the English language to explain vedantic concepts is truly amazing. Some of His statements give a shock treatment and straighten the questioning intellect and make you erect.

"Shut up and get out"! Heard Him say that? What He meant was, shut your mind and get out of your body consciousness!

"Undress and Embrace"! Means undress your ego and embrace the Lord within!

"Detach and Attach"! Means detach from the lower and attach to the highest!

Many times He has changed a normal word and coined a new word out of it, to express, explain and expound a particular concept. This is truly inimitable! Check this out: "Second is the grandson of Time"! He explains: - Time started with the First thought! First is before Second (unit of Time)! First thought 'thoughted 'and the next thought thoughting, second started! Hence, second is the grandson of Time! Just before 'thoughting' the First is the no-thought – Timeless(Akaal)! That is Sat (Existence) and Sri (Auspiciousness).
Hence Sat-Sri-Akaal!

"To try to discover our 'at-one-ment' with God is prayer!"

This was during a doubt clearing Sat-sang session at Siddhabhari.Gurudev was sitting outside His Kutia, gazing at Hanumanji. Sitting behind Him, I was thinking, 'what a fool I am, no doubts to clear, can't even manufacture one and ask!'

When I went to prostrate, He asked me "no doubts? "I just looked at Him! He asked "What is a doubt?"

And He only answered - "A doubt is the gulf between your intellectual understanding and your conviction. If there is no gulf, how can there be a doubt?" He said this is called the 'The Sethubandhanam' –bridging the gulf! And I Prostrated!

Many of His quotes express complex vedantic ideas in utterly simple layman language. His knowledge of synonyms was remarkable. In various extempore discourses, He has regaled His listeners with a choice of four to five words with the same meaning. He used to nonchalantly reel these out with the utmost ease.

Our prostrations to Him, who helped us to understand Him and to stand underthe Supreme Brahman!

OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH!

Om Aanglabhashaviduttamaya Namah

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda, Regional Head , Chinmaya Mission Delhi & NCR



Swami Nikhilananda

Salutations to the Master of the English Language

Anglabhasha means the English language. Viduttama is one who knows very well. SoAnglabhashaviduttama is one who is very well versed in the English language.

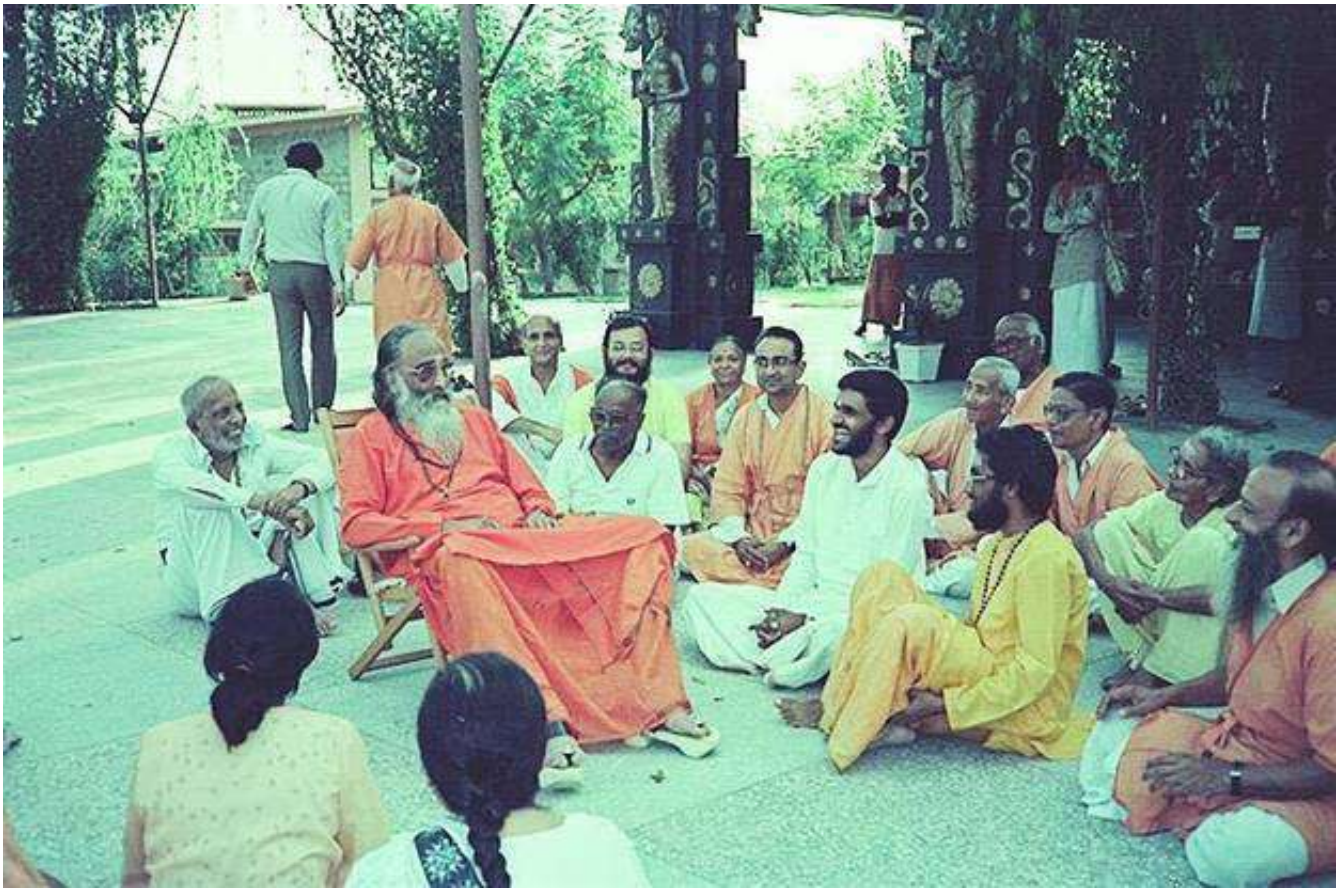
Language is a fascinating subject. It develops over hundreds of years. Indian languages are very powerful but English is more widely accepted than any other language. It is versatile, has spread all over the globe and is now considered a world language.

Gurudev's students were the intelligentsia of the country and they knew English. This being the case the Teacher in him had to convey the message in English. He was a master of the English language and used it to effectively to convey this Truth.

During his time this was a revolutionary step. Earlier Swami Vivekananda was criticized for speaking in English. Similarly, orthodox pundits of his time spoke vehemently against him. However, he realized the dire need for this Knowledge to reach the masses. Malayalam was not understood by everyone and he was not

conversant with Hindi, so he chose English as the language of instruction.

To listen to Gurudev was a great joy, because he had the ability to twist, turn and mould the language. There was poetry in even the simplest ideas that he conveyed. He developed his own terminology and coined words and phrases to explain his thoughts. At one place he wrote, “Attachment to results not only vitiates the capacity in the individual to perform the work but it leaves certain impressions in the mind, which debilitate and demoralize the individual concerned in all his future activities. Depersonalisation is the secret of inspiration.”



Gurudev’s descriptions were extremely lively, accompanied with sound and action and liberally peppered with an assortment of adjectives. Often, he would make up his own stories and name the characters. His vivid descriptions would bring the whole detailed picture, to the mind of the listener.

English is an administrative language, while Sanskrit is more poetic. Despite this he used it to transmit the tremendous beauty of the scriptures. People are not

interested in technical terms. He appreciated this and did not go into too many technicalities. Technically the mind is, 'sankalpa vikalpa.' But if you use this to describe the mind, people will lose interest. He simply described the mind as, 'a flow of thoughts

We glimpse poetry in 'a flow of thoughts'. The visual of a river comes to mind. Thoughts are constantly flowing, like a river. The qualities of the river include the speed at which it flows, the quality of water, the quantity of water and the direction it takes. Similarly, the mind has quantity, quality, direction and speed. Sometimes it is turbulent, while as at other times it is calm and peaceful. His ideas about the pressure of vasanas, based on which we perform actions, also made things easy to understand.

Anglabhashaviduttamaya means master of English language. It also pertains to all Masters who use the medium of a particular language to convey the message to their students. Teachers and sometimes parents commit the mistake of not being able to communicate in the language of the child. They talk in their language, regardless of whether the child understands. To talk the language of children is an art, which Gurudev had mastered.

At one youth conference, unhappy with the work that had been done, he used shock tactics. His discourse began with, "I hate all of you!" It continued, to end with, "I love you all." He used unorthodox methods to get people to wake up and listen. He would shake everyone and then begin to feed them. His style was inimitable, not everyone can use it.

The mother wanting to feed her disinterested child uses different techniques. She distracts him and before the child realizes it the food has all gone in. Likewise, Masters have to use different techniques to suit the situation. The Truth does not change but we have to reinterpret the scriptures to suit the period or era. Swami Vivekananda's interpretation may have been suitable for that time.

It is possible that even Gurudev's language and examples may at some time become irrelevant. Today, we use examples pertaining to cell phones and computers, which were irrelevant 50 years ago. Examples from Nature used extensively by SantJnanadev, are fresh even now. These never change because Nature is more lasting then mobile phones!

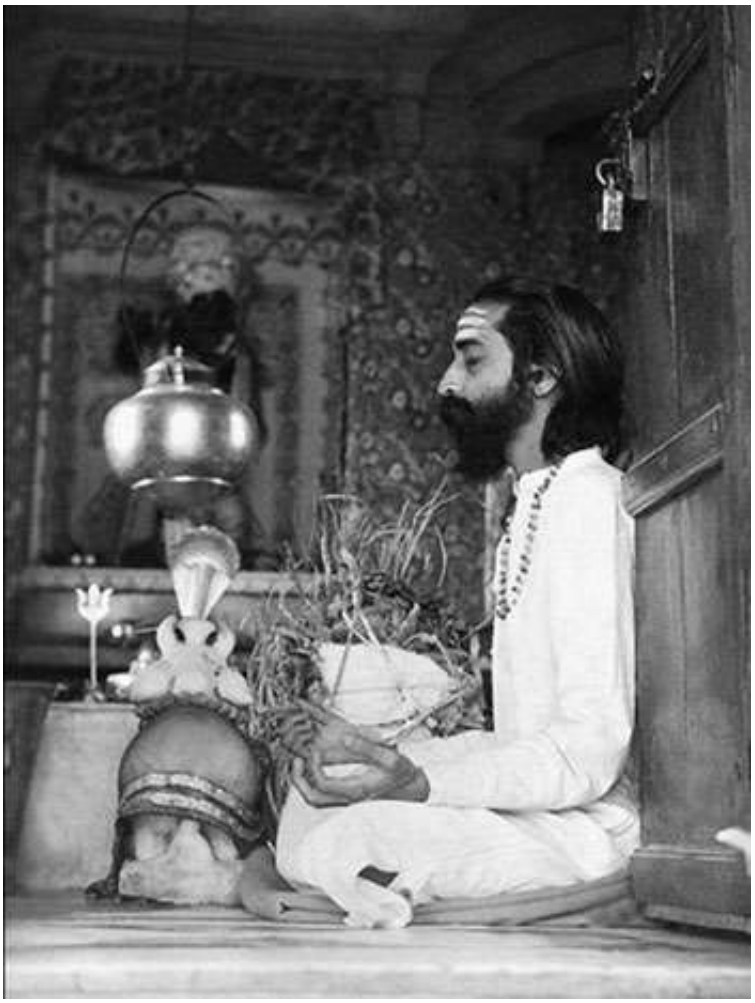
OM AANGLABHAASHAVIDUTTAMAAYA NAMAH!

273. OM ISHVARAAYA NAMAH

04-02-2016

OM ISVARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni.Shruti Chaitanya,CM-Puduchery



Salutations to the Supreme Lord.

Isaha means ruler or Lord and varaha means Supreme, best, sreshta.

When Br. AniketChaitanyaji asked Gurudev 'Is Brahamajnani equal to Ishwara?

Gurudev quipped 'Why do you bring Him down to Ishwara (ruler of the world)?' (narrated by Sw. Mitranandaji)

A letter to Anjali Singh gives us a glimpse of Pujya Gurudev's identity. 'The year I was born is the year the entire cosmos emerged from Me. Thereafter I was called by the world and the Vedas as the creator of the Universe, the Jagadeeswara!'

Who is Ishwara?

a. Ishwara is Maayaapati – keeps maya under his control unlike many who are maayadaasa – under the control of maya.
b. Ishwara is valourous and is capable of great achievements. He is a master in all situations.
c. Ishwara is not affected by any activity done by a group of individuals, or by situations around.
d. Ishwara makes laws, and also is above all laws.
e. Ishwara is compassionate.
f. Lord does the role of protecting the righteous, destroying the unrighteous and establishing dharma - paritranayasadhunam vinasaya ca duskritam dharma-amsthapanarthaya sambhavamiyugeyuge

Pujya Gurudev as Ishwara:

Whatever happened in the realm of maya, had no influence on Him. Gurudev was ever a master in all situations. He was never disturbed. Infact with His blessings devotees also experienced a calm mind. All solutions to problems can be found only in the presence of a calm mind.

Being the Lord of Prakriti, Gurudev was a master of nature too. Many instances are recalled by devotees of how nature was coaxed into submission at Sidhbari. The wind and the sun and the rains and the beings around obeyed His command.

During a yagna in Andhra Pradesh, a lot of peacocks were screeching. Loudly but affectionately Gurudevcalled out, 'MuruganMurugan, go!'. The peacocks went into silence. IncidentlyMurugan / Karthikeyan's vehicle in our puranas is the peacock.

Gurudev is full of achievements. When someone is without ego, it is said that the total mind-intellect (Ishwara) identifies with the equipment of BMI. Thus whatever is born out of their resolve, manifests as blessings for the entire world. Swami Chidanandaji of Divine Life Society said to the effect that it would take 10 masters to accomplish what Swamiji (Gurudev) accomplished in his own lifetime!

In order to replace the beast in us with the best in us, He took the message of our scriptures to the maximum. Thus Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF), many

SandeepanySadanalayas, many mission centres around the world, schools and colleges, hospitals and medicarecentres, CORD to take care of the rural areas, the Balavihars, Devi Group and Study Groups forming grass root level activities were started, organized and run by Pujya Gurudev Himself. His delegation of work to us, was out of compassion for our own inner growth. He explained to us the vision behind the activity and how it is to be organized and conducted. Gurudev left a legacy in the form of the many publications, newsletters and magazines, the recordings in audio and video and also ensured that students share the knowledge they gain in the Mission with others.

Gurudev was a master of situations. In a letter dated Jan 25, 1958, Gurudev writes, 'Here on 23rd fire broke out and gutted the entire pandal, just 30 minutes before the lectures. Only some 20 people were there. Before fire brigade could come, every bit was down. So we held the discourses on the opposite road – an island under the tree – under the street lamp.' Nothing could stop His sankalpa.

Gurudev was never disturbed nor could be stopped by the activity of a group of people. In April 1953, during the 2nd jnana yajna in Madras, Gurudev wrote 'There is neither any funds, nor men to work, nor place to stay, nor a site to conduct the yagna. All that I have is the extra responsibility of a cumbersome and vast looking committee, stiff oppositions from orthodoxy and hesitation – idleness – idiocy – and madness in all of them!! … from the very teeth of this opposition I am going to fulfill the work of Upanishad saints, nobody can stop this work now. It must and WILL go on.'

We do know how it did go on and how it continues to roll now.

Gurudev is above all laws – The very instrument of His physical body roaring from the Vyaaspeeth is a miracle with missing heart beats, an enlarged heart, flooded lungs, greatly diabetic and whatnot.

Gurudev was an epitome of compassion – The only reason that can be attributed for His coming down to the plains from the lofty heights of the Himalayas is the fine emotion of karuna. Rightly one of His names is Karunasaagarayanamaha.

Supreme power to pardon – Gurudev said 'Hate the sin and not the sinner'. He chose to overlook many of our mistakes, and would diligently guide us. Lord Krishna promises in the Gita, 'Maameva ye prapadyantemaayametamtarantite'. If we surrender to our Gurudev, even Maya can be crossed over.

Gurudev's avataara karma: He protected and encouraged the nobleness within us, He destroyed our negativities and kept spreading the knowledge of the scriptures in manifold ways for upholding Dharma.

Om Ishwarayanamaha

OM ISHVARAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Shri K.K. Rajan, Chief Sevak & Trustee Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF)

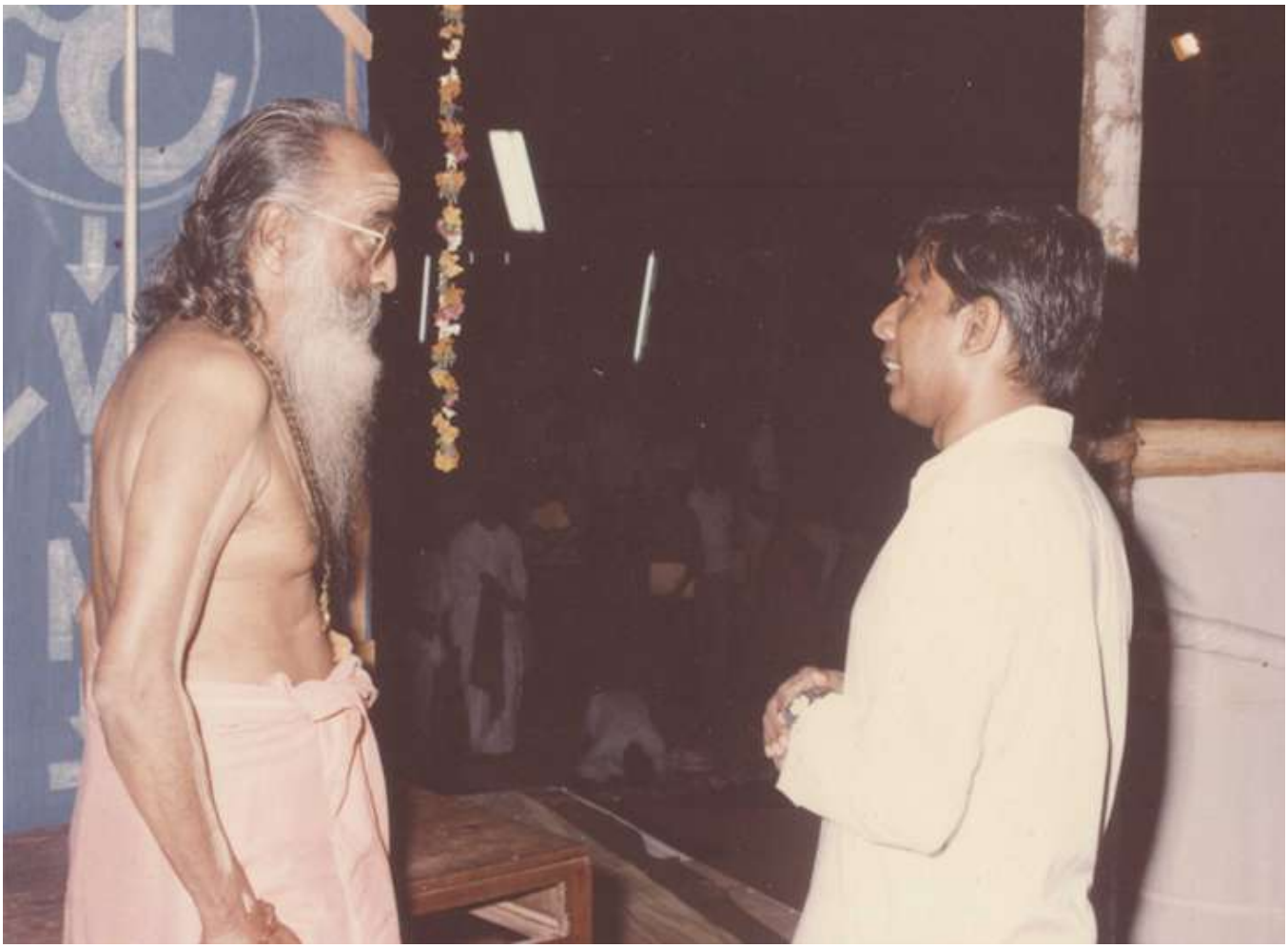
In every action, however subtle, He revealed Himself as Ishvara Himself. It was there to see, but not always does the mind see.

In 1987 was the mastakabhisheka ceremony at Sidhabari ashram for Hanumanji. This was on 10th Oct. of that year.

Since the very inauguration of the Sandeepany Himalayas, I have always been asked by Gurudev to go to Sidhabari and help to organise the event.

But in 1987 Swamiji did not ask me. Instead, He wrote to my wife, Sugeetha, "You come here with Janaki Menon (who was in Ernakulam).

At first, I was a bit agitated, because of my ignorance. So I thought, maybe I won't go to Sidhabari. It was a mix of sadness and restlessness. Then I thought again; Gurudev has entrusted me with the responsibility of organising the 3rd International Spiritual Camp at Cochin in 1989 as the Secretary General of the Organising Committee.



What then happened was, Janaki Menon cancelled her program and so Sugeeta also cancelled the trip to Sidhabari.

On the evening of Oct. 7th I was packing to go to Ernakulam for some print jobs that were pending for the International Camp, when my sister-in-law from Trichur called. My father has been admitted to the hospital. “Nothing to worry but letting you know. Everything under control just informing,” was the gist of her message.

But Sugeetha said, ‘I think this is the 3rdheart attack. Let us go to Trichur as early as possible

Luckily we got the reservation for the night train and getting off at Trichur, we went straight to the hospital.

Father was conscious and said, I am perfectly alright, why did you rush?

Next morning, I again went and met him. I was not worrying about any seriousness as the doctor had told me that father's condition was stable.

Seeing me again, Father said, "You go to Cochin and finish your work! Swamiji's work is more important, go and attend to that."

So I went to Cochin, finished the work and returned to Trichur.The plan was to return home to Kannur same night.

At Trichur,Sugeetha said, 'We are already here, so why rush tonight, we can take the train tomorrow.' So I changed the program and that night at 8.30 pm I went to the hospital to be with my father.

By 9 pm my brother was calling me from Dubai to enquire about father's health.

Almost at the same time as he called, father's health suddenly deteriorated and he passed away even as I was on the phone.

Seeing all this I was amazed at how close we had come to not being with him during his last moment. Gurudev was trying to connect us all. How marvellously Gurudev was engineering all round. If I had gone to Sidhabari for the Abhishekam I would not have been able to reach my father in Trichur by 8thOctober. Because Sidhabari to Cochin would have taken at least 5 days of travel. I could not have reached even for the funeral, let alone see my dad when unwell.

That would have been a life-long pain for me.

In 1989 Gurudev had known of father's end coming. He ensured I was not involved with the mastakabhishekam work that year. He kept me in Kerala. And when father's end came, I was with him, as was my brother on the phone with me. Thus both sons were by his side by Gurudev's compassionate grace.

OM ISHVARAAYA NAMAH

OM ISHVARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

In spiritual literature there are many meanings to the wordIshvara.

I would like to confine myself to the common usage of this word and its relevance to Sri Gurudev.

The common meaning is the Lord, again meaning one "who can do,who need not do or who can do otherwise."

SwaminiSaradamma was given a piece of land where there is no possibility of any water possible underground. Infact not in many miles around that piece of land.

Sri Gurudev went upon that land, tapped his walking stick here and there and then at one spot, he asked amma to dig there. Lo! There was plenty of water!

The whole area’s face changed. The lands became arable. The villages got enough drinking water. Joy came to the people there!

Sidhabari was prone to heavy winds that can at times be very disruptive, affecting normal life. Gurudev brought Sri Hanumanji saying Vayu Bhagavan will be benevolent with his son there. It came to be true.

There are many instances in Sidhabari of pouring rains upto themoment of Sri Gurudev's program, and then the rains would stop and begin again after the program. Out of respect for Ishvara!

Those days, we had mainly one or two airlines that flew to Sidhabari, and not always punctual. In spite of this, during his hundreds of programs he was rarely late though many a time he would finish one in the morning at a distant place and come in the evening for another program. It clearly showed his control over many factors, including Time.

Gurudev received many demands for money in letters. These were for centers, some construction, some school building, some yagna, a variety of causes. The next letter that He would open invariably had cheques for those demands!

Gurudev has proved medical science wrong, many a time, by doing just the contrary of the prescribed. Like when Doctors would strictly prohibit talking more than one hour, and He would do four One-Hour talks.

There is an instance when Gurudev who normally does not reveal his knowledge, told a worrying mother that her daughter’s biopsy tests would return benign results. And it was so!

OM ISHWARAAYA NAMAH!

Om IswaraayaNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidasji, CM Mumbai

God, Guru and the Self are identical; the Guru is God in human form and, simultaneously, he is also the Self in the Heart of each devotee. Because he is both inside and outside, his powers work in two different ways. The outer Guru gives instructions and by his power enables the devotee to keep his attention on the Self; the inner Guru pulls the devotee's mind back to its source, absorbs it in the Self and finally destroys it. (Bhagavaan RamanaMaharshi)

Gurudev pulled my mind back to its source, sucked me into Brahman and instilled the firm conviction that, God, Guru and Self are identical and the Guru is God in human form, within and without! There is absolutely no difference among the three; Iswara, Guru and Atman- the Supreme Brahman. The difference, if any is perceived, is due to our marred perception. TasmaiNamaha Sat Guru Chinmayaaya!

Iswara means Lord- the Master, God capable of anything!"We see the Guru, God or The Self as we are! So, if we approach the ocean with a cup, we get a cup full of water, the bigger the vessel the more we are able to carry! There is no meaning in blaming the ocean for what we have!" Gurudev was really an ocean of Bliss- Lord walked upon earth. He revealed! The revelations are plenty!

Poojya Gurudev was flying to Dharmashala, on board Vayudhoot Dornier aircraft on 30th Jul 1992 en route to Siddhabhari. I was accompanying Him up to Gaggal airport and planning to return on the same flight to Delhi, after reaching Gurudev to Gaggal airport, as I had to undertake a flight out of Delhi the same night. The inauguration of His VivekaChoodamani marathon camp was scheduled at 7 PM, the same day. We were scheduled to arrive Gaggal at 3 PM.

At Gaggal airport, visibility was zero due to fog. Gaggal airport is surrounded by Kangra ranges and it is a tricky approach to the runway even in normal circumstances, and the runway was as if cemented with thick fog. The weather radar screen shown totally red in colour, implying the entire area was covered with thick fog and cloud and there was no way we could land the aircraft.

Capt. I D Singh (Gurudev lovingly call him ID), again a devotee of Gurudev, who was flying the aircraft, didn't want to take a risk, with Gurudev on board and He decided to return to Delhi, as all other alternate airports, Pathankot, Jammu, even Chandigarh were closed.

Capt.Singh called me to the cockpit and asked me inform Gurudev that we have to return to Delhi due to bad weather. I came and informed Gurudev. He immediately glided to a contemplative mood, with His eyes rolled up, along with some gestures – Mudras- and said, "Ask ID to approach once more."

I went back to the cockpit and conveyed Gurudev's message. I was waiting there looking at the radar screen in the cockpit, and to our utter surprise, there appeared a hair line split on the radar screen, which began to move apart, indicating the thick cloud and fog was parting and we are getting a gap to dive in and touch down at

the runway!



Gurudev in contemplation aboard a B-747. With Anjali Singh and Kalidas ji

Capt. ID Singh, completely taken aback, uttered "What is happening, my instruments cannot read wrong, what is this?"

We landed the aircraft safely and Gurudev deplaned! Swami Subhodhanandaji had brought two garlands made out of roses from Gurudev's garden and garlanded Gurudev. Gurudev removed them and garlanded the Pilot and me and said "Garland my Garuda". We in turn kept the garlands on the control columns of His Garuda, the Vayudhoot Dornier aircraft!

I was operating another flight out of Delhi that evening, on duty Air India. I told Gurudev, pointing out to the thick cloud in the sky "Swamiji, I think I will miss my duty flight, how can we take off and penetrate through this thick fog and reach Delhi? Gurudev said '"Let the aeroplane have some coke (fuel), you too have some coffee. By thattime I will reach the Ashram and will be there standing out saying Bon voyage!"

Normally whenever we fly back from Gaggal to Delhi, we fly over Sidhabari Ashram, low level, do a pradakshin to Hanumanji and climb! This time also, as per Gurudev's instructions, we took off and flew over Sidhbari Ashram, gliding low by the side of His Kutia. Gurudev was standing out and waiving at us as promised!

And Gurudev inaugurated His Vivekachhodamani Marathon camp on schedule as He

planned and willed! Om IswaraayaNamaha!

The Guru is both external and internal. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn it inwards. From the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps in the quietening of the mind. That is Guru's grace.

I was in Ernakulum once in Dec 1982 and was put up in Bharat Tourist Home, close to Eranakulathappan Temple. Gurudev was also there, staying at Parvathi Nivas, very close by on the same TDM hall road. I and Vasudevanji (ex CEO CCMT), was walking towards Parvathi Nivas – the home of Janaki Menon, at 4 AM to meet Gurudev, just to do a Pranam at Brahma Muhoortham. As we were walking on the road, we heard a sound tak-tak-tak, the sound of Gurudev's padukas! Gurudev was walking towards us, on His way for the NirmalyaDarshanam of Lord Eranakulathappan (Lord Shiva)-His Kula devatha.

As He approached us,He said, "About Turn!" After having darshan at the main Shiva-Linga, He stood in front of His favorite moustachioed Shiva-the KiraathaMoorthi and pointing at Him, said, "He is the one who made me what I am!" Om IswaraayaNamaha!



Gurudev performing abhishekam at the Sarveshwara Temple Tamaraipakkam

BhagavaanRamanaMaharshi asks: - Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper in the ear? You may imagine him to be what you are yourself. Because you think you are with a body, you think he also has a body and that he will do something tangible to you. His work lies within, in the spiritual realm.

My whole life and its experiences, both divine and secular are a function of His work from within, to the hum of Krishnaa-Krishnaa!

Om IswaraayaNamaha!

OM ISVARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head CM- Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Supreme Ruler

Ishvara comes from the root it, to control. Ishvara is the Master, the Ruler, and the Controller of the whole world. He is the king of the whole world. When we go to a new place, we are curious to know where the king lives. We cannot see the king but we see his soldiers and other officers, through whom he controls the kingdom. Similarly, God or Guru manages the work of this whole world by the delegation of His power. Through all these He controls the world.



Swami Nikhilananda

In a monarchy the king is the law maker and hence above the law. He is above the Supreme Court. He is the President. The Supreme Court is guided by the rules, but the king is even above the laws. Lord Yama can be likened to the Supreme Court. He makes sure the laws are maintained but even he does not have the power to pardon. At the level of the universe, God alone has the power to pardon. We can be pardoned but the appeal must be sincere, or else, we have to take the consequences of our actions.

There is a general feeling that, we have to suffer for our sins. This is not always necessary. If we ask for pardon, we need not suffer. He is the ocean of compassion and also has the supreme power to pardon. He can change anything, even time, take you back in time or forward into the future. We experience this in the dream world. Often in our dreams we travel to different places and varieties of time periods.

The Guru is Ishvara alone. His diktat holds sway even over the phenomenal forces. He is their Master. In several instances, Gurudev performed miracles, showing his mastery over the elements. At times he would have the class in the open, under the shadow of thick clouds. He would then tell us, “I have told the clouds to wait till the class is over.” Sure enough, as soon as the class would finish, the heavens would open and it would pour and pour. He is the ultimate controller - Ishvara.

274. OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

05-02-2016

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P.Easwar,CM- Mumbai



Shri H.P.Easwar

According to ParamaPoojya Gurudev, no doubt can be termed silly. The doubt confirms that you have been thinking. So you have to be congratulated!

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH!

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri.L.Hemachandrudu,Chennai

All saints are called Mahatmas. The simple meaning is great souls. This is close to Udarahrudaya.

Naturally This is another dimension of our beloved Sri Gurudev. He had unconditional love for all.

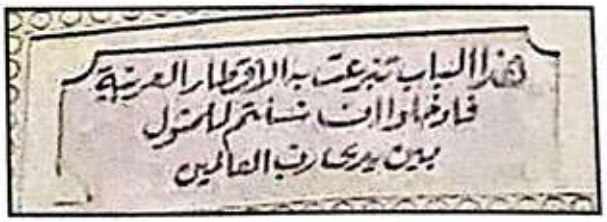
Whenever Gurudev makes referencein any lecture, He is always all-inclusive. So we have all heard him say: " ….be it Christ Krishna or Allah."

The Jagadīśvara Mandir in Powai stands on a tiny hillock and was consecrated by Gurudev himself. Gurudev intended for a devotee to become immersed in the divine, right from the temple gate called Jagadvāra. This Jagadvāra is designed like the Buddhist Stupa of Sanchi with stories from the Śiva Purāṇa carved on the two supporting pillars with artistic precision. In the middle of the three beams between the pillars, there is carved an inscription from the Quran, "Through me you stand in the presence of the Lord of the Universe."

A huge temple bell hangs from the center of the third beam. The gate symbolizes the union of the Indian culture with Arab secular influence and the influence of Buddhism on temple



Jagadīśvara Mandir in Powai



Source: Vedanta , a Mananam Publication, Centenary Series. Kindly refer He Did It too for more details on this arch.

Swamiji further says masters speak about the same Truth differently because audiences are different. He says you can't give same medicine for all disease. Swamiji also says (even if the words are different) the audience experience is the same. He gives the example of people returning from the same place, who will have

the same experience and mostly say common things.

As early as 1963 when Jagadeeswara temple was built, the entrance arch was embossed with an Urdu inscription at Gurudev's behest. This is the Gate through which you enter, is the essence of what that inscription says.

That was Gurudev's relationship with people of every religion, nationality, culture and belief.

In Chennai there was a Muslim devotee who used to sing in yagna salas in the presence of Gurudev. Then again in Kerala there was a dear friend of Gurudev's, again a follower of Islam, who had a property by the sea side and Gurudev would love living in his bungalow. There are many instances and anecdotes around this.

All our yagna pandals were erected by a Muslim contractor.
When a Muslim who had been with Gurudev for ten years, went on and even studied at Sandeepanyand asked for diksha, Gurudev said there is no need to change his religion. 'All these are there in your own religion, simply practice and preach that!' was Gurudev's view.

When I was instrumental in promoting Chinmaya Nagar, I told Gurudev some non-Mission members want to buy a piece of land. Instantly Gurudev said, "A few years back you were also a non- member...."
Whereas Sri Gurudev studied under trying circumstances in uttar Kasi he provided all comforts to the Brahmacharis in Sandeepany. What is more important even for Brahmacharis,from other ashrams he not only gave everything free he gave all freedom to choose their life after the course.
Although Gurudev had several cars to take him for bhiksha, he went in an old fiat taxi which a host had brought to ferry Him,so as to not hurt ther feelings.

To such a Gurudev, my prostrations.

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

Sri Rama Hridayam is the ParamatmaTatwam (The nature of Supreme Brahman) that Sri Ramji Himself advised Hanumanji,in a capsule form.
Aikyajnanamyadothpannam ,mahavakyenachathmano,
Thadhavidhyaswakaryaischanasytyevanasamsaya.

The Lord reveals to Him thatParamatma (The Supreme Being) is His Sacred Heart(Hridayam) that is secret, Idhamrahasyamhrudayammamathmano.

UdaaraHridaya means munificent noble hearted soul. Swami Cinmayananda, our Poojya Gurudev, was one. Gurudev gave His Sacred Heart (Chinmaya Hridayam)ie, Brahma Vidya (The Supreme Knowledge) and spiritually enlightened vast audiences through His discourses on Bhagavad Gita, for more than four decades.



The hands that gave and gave and gave...

Credits: From the collection of Anjali Singh

Gurudev only gave. He never took. He was like a mirror ----reflected everything, kept nothing. Chinmaya Hridayam is the Upanishad-Ganga. Our Humble Prostration to that munificent, noble hearted soul. Om UdaarahridayaayaNamah.

Paalazhimadhanam (the churning of the milky ocean) produced many items. The end product was Amrit.Devas and Asuras, the participants in churning, started fighting

for the end product. The mediator suggested “Anybody who can demonstrate how to eat without bending the elbow can have the entire Amrita Kalasham or pot of nectar of immortality.



The Devas and Asuras tried multi-methods, but failed. Some wise person out of the crowd came forward, took a spoon full of Amrit and fed his neighbour, neighbour did the same thing to his neighbour, and eventually they all amicably shared the end product, the Amrit (Nectar), without bending the elbow!

The moral of the story is:Give. Give. Give. Give more than what we take. Om UdaarahridayaayaNamaha.

Few Quotes from Gurudev. “God gives and forgives.Man gets and forgets.”

“We may often give without love, but we can never love without giving.”

“The cultured give happiness wherever they go. The uncultured, whenever they go.

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, Chinmaya Mission - Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Large Hearted

Udarahridaya is one who is large-hearted, gives generously and gives whatever is asked for. Such greatness is revealed in Ramacharitmanas wherein the Lord declares, “You can ask for anything. There is nothing that I cannot give to my devotees. I will give you whatever you ask.” Asking, from the standpoint of the seeker is a very good sadhana, but we must know who to ask from and what to ask for.



It is important to ask only from God. ‘Ask and you shall receive,’ says the Bible. Our problem is that we do not ask. The ego does not like to ask because inherent in the asking is submission, or admitting to inability. When we ask, we accept our own

littleness and inability and so we do not ask.

Most often, we ask from worldly people and do not even know what to ask for. We must ask for the Supreme like Manu and Shatarupa did. Their devotion was true and single pointed. They wanted God alone. Being pleased with their tapas God appeared before them. Overcoming their hesitation they bespoke their minds and asked God for a son just like Him. God, Himself promised to come as their son, as there is no one like Him. In their later births as Dasharath and Kausalaya, He fulfilled this promise. He and was born as their son, Sri Rama.

The Lord is udara, the very epitome of generosity. The greatest generosity is in giving without any sense of possession. When we say, 'I am giving,' it shows a sense of possession and lessens the nobility of the action. The greater giver is one who gives without a sense of ownership. And the greatest giver is one who gives himself. The Guru is the greatest giver. The world starting from IndraBhagavan can give material things. But only the Guru can give us the Ultimate. He can make us like himself. He can make us like Brahman.

Most spiritual organizations have one great Guru and the rest are followers. But Gurudev's greatness is that he gives everyone the option to become great like himself. When a lamp is lit, it dispels darkness and brings in light. When one lamp lights another, they both acquire equal status, both dispel darkness and we cannot differentiate between the two. Only the second lamp knows the source of its light and has reverence and gratitude for it.

From the worldly standpoint, there is no differentiation between the two, because the Guru makes the disciple great like himself. The Guru isudarahridaya, both from the worldly and the Ultimate standpoint. The Guru or the Supreme Reality is the greatest giver.

When we joined the Mission, we came with impressions of the world that we had lived in. Our ideas about colleges included impersonal interactions with professors and financial transactions with the institution. In the Mission we discovered a completely different world. There were no fees, everything was free - food, clothing, boarding and lodging. Not only were we given the invaluable knowledge of the scriptures but Gurudev made sure that we lived in comfort, as well.

On completion of the two-and-a-half-year course, there was no binding on the brahmacharis. We had the option of staying with the Mission or going out and doing our own thing. A brahmachari once asked Gurudev, "You are doing so much for us, what do you expect from us?" Gurudev said that if I come to your town and you see me, I will be happy if you just greet me with Hari Om! If that is also not possible, I will not mind.

Worldly teachers do not reveal all their secrets because that gives them their power.

The Guru gives everything he has; the highest Knowledge and even himself if required, for the student's benefit. All this comes with no expectations, at all! The generosity and selflessness of the Teacher is unparalleled.

In all other relationships, even the most selfless like parent-child or husband-wife there are some expectations. Parents believe the children will support them in their old age. The husband or wife feels that the other will be there to take care. We have expectations from society. People do give, but like on an investment, they expect a return. Spiritual Teachers are good givers because they are fulfilled and do not want anything. Identified with the Supreme, their giving is total and complete. The scriptures rate ungratefulness as the greatest sin but Mahatamas are unaffected by ungrateful recipients. They give regardless!

To such a Gurudev, our prostrations.

OM UDAARAHRIDAYAAY NAMAH

275. OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

06-02-2016

Om UtsaahavardhakaayaNamah!

Offered by Swami Abhedananda, Resident Acharya in charge of Chinmaya Mission South Africa, and is based in Durban at present. Earlier, as the Resident Acharya of Chinmaya Seva Centre Singapore, he spearheaded the activities there for two years.

A touching and memorable event in my life happened in the year 1991. It was the year of Pujya Gurudev's Suvarna Tulabhar event, being held at the Leela Kempenski Hotel in Bombay. Thousands of devotees and several disciples from all around the globe had thronged to attend this unique function, to commemorate Pujya Gurudev's 400thGeetaGyan Yagna. In recognition of his unmatched contribution to humanity, Gurudev was to be weighed in Gold, and the equivalent value of the Gold would be distributed across all the Mission centres for their progressive activities.



Swami Abhedananda

As a young boy just out of college, I was very excited to attend the Suvarna Tulabhar. I had booked myself on the train from Allahabad to Mumbai but as luck would have it, my train reached Mumbai very late. So as soon as it arrived, I rushed from the station and went straight to the LeelaKempenski hotel. In spite of all my efforts I was late, the program had ended and Gurudev had left for Powai ashram only moments before I reached. When this happened I was really very sad and I kept asking the Lord what mistake have I done in my life that I was deprived to see this

golden moment. But something within me said that may be the Lord has something good to gift me and so I shouldn't lose my heart. I said to myself "Just go to the Ashram and atleast have darshan of Pujya Gurudev." So without a second thought I rushed to the Jagdeeshwara Temple Ashram in Powaiand right outside Gurudev's cottage there were many people waiting for him to come out and see him.

So amongst the same crowd I was standing somewhere in a corner and then I saw Pujya Gurudev coming in the wheelchair, as somebody was assisting him on the wheelchair towards the ramp. One glance at me, and he exclaimed with joy "Ah! You have come!". I was just stunned, and couldn't believe my eyes or ears, so I looked back thinking maybe he is addressing someone else, because there were so many affluent people, seniors, Trustees and Swamis all around and I was too insignificant to be noticed amongst them. But he roared again calling my name "I am talking to you, come here" and people started looking towards me and asked me to go to Gurudev. From where I stood among the crowds, I walked towards him, and to my sheer disbelief and inexplicable joy, Pujya Gurudev just held my hands tightly, addressed me by my name and asked " Where were you? " I said that the train was too late so I just reached. He then said patting me on my face and back "I was just looking for you and waiting for you, so good you have come. Now are you happy? Are you fine now?" I was speechless, I was moved, I couldn't say a word but that touch of his hand, his holding my hands for some moments and peeping into my eyes and saying this to me that he was waiting for me still gives me goose bumps.

I was always hesitant to come physically very close to him as I felt he was too big and I was too small. I couldn't utter any word in front of him, but I use to correspond with him regularly through letters. I thought that I can write to him and express all my emotions and all my feelings openly, rather than speaking in front of him, whereas he had such a deep appreciation even for the smallest of my love that I expressed in a childish way many a times. Never did I feel left out by him. Never did I feel that I was apart from Him. Never did I feel that in the big Mission that he was handling and working in, either I or my sadhana, my future and my emotions were of less value to him. He cared for my smallest of Love, he cared for my little emotions and the response that he used to give through his various gestures or through his words, I cannot express them.

We may sometimes lose hope on ourselves, at times the world loses hope on us but the Teacher never loses hope on us. This is the joy of living with the Teacher. I feel that the faith of a disciple on the Teacher is nowhere, as compared to the faith a Teacher has in the disciple. And that day when he said such touching words, I felt so moved and so quiet from within. Since that day onwards I never felt lonely in my life.

Today also many-a-times when things don't happen or when I feel being rushed somewhere I always feel there is a lap on which I can rest my head. There are hands of Pujya Gurudev that can hold me still and there are eyes of the Great Master that can always see me. Simply with his merciful gaze he can take away all my misconceptions... and it is this heart of Pujya Gurudev which always makes me feel that he has come just for us in this world !

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Smt. Pramodini Rao, her husband Shri Chittaranjan Rao and her mother Smt. Susheela Acharya.

Pramodini is a member of CM from her childhood and has been singing at most events of the Mission in Mumbai and elsewhere. She is presently serving as Director at Chinmaya Naada Bindu, Gurukul for Performing Arts, at Kolwan, Pune.
Chittaranjan has been an active CHYK, with his house being the CHYK office for many years in Mumbai. He has been a member of the team that edits and proofreads Mission publications for long. He plays Tabla and Side Rhythm, and is presently serving at Chinmaya Vibhooti in the Swagat Team.
Susheela Acharya is a talented musician, lyricist and composer. She ran a Bhajan class at her house for more than 30 years and directed many live CHYK Soul -Song Nite shows. She has many recordings of her songs in the Chinmaya Mission.



Pramodini ji offering bhiksha to Gurudev soon after her wedding when He visited ther home

How does a mother rock her baby to sleep in her arms? How big should the vegetable pieces be in the curry?

How does a minute more of cooking make a difference in the taste of a sweet?

What dimensions should a satsang hall have? Where should the tortoise be placed in a temple?

Not only did Pujya Gurudev know all this, but he also encouraged others to learn, know, do and understand more.

He taught continuously from the Vyaspeeth, almost every day of his 40 odd years of service to the scriptures.

But he taught more through example. With a twinkle in his eyes and his gurgling

chuckle, he brought a smile on people's faces, no matter what mood they were in. Worries would vanish; problems would dissolve and get resolved; frowns would turn upside down to become smiles; fear would fear - just by His presence.



Chittaranjan ji serving Gurudev when He visited them soon after their wedding

If there was someone who felt self-pity for having to put in many hours of work, He would show that in service, there was no counting of hours. He would take rounds of construction sites long after the workers and supervisors had left. If there was someone who felt great about his perfection in work, He would point something that would have missed his eye and encourage him to be more alert and vigilant. He was lovingly tolerant with the weak-minded and intolerantly stern with the strong-minded with only one purpose - to let them bloom into fragrant flowers from the buds that couldn't emanate fragrance just yet.



Smt. Susheela Acharya (in yellow sari), Pramodini ji's mother

My mother, Smt. Susheela Acharya, had won her 'lifetime achievement award', when at the end of one of the famous 'CHYK Soul Song Nites'conducted by the Mumbai CHYK, Gurudev roared: "Who says living 70 years is not worth living?! If at the end of it you get to hear something like this, it is certainly worth living 70 years!" Amma had written a special song, Ananda Paramananda (which has gone on to become one of the masterpieces that are included in most satsangs) on the occasion of Gurudev's 70th birthday.

We sang it in front of Him and, with folded hands, bowed down together from stage while singing the last line – Koti Naman Hai Aapko Chinmaya Gunamandira….

Song written on the occasion of Pujya Gurudev's 70th Birthday
By Smt. Susheela Acharya

CIF: Pramodini ji was kind to share the audio track of the song. A most heart wrenching rendition, clearly written for Him. Hear and glorify Gurudev! Click here for Song

Aananda Paramaananda Satchidananda Chinmayananda

Gnandata kripa sindho, deenavatsala he prabho!

Satya dharma shanti prema ke mantra hum ko bataaiye

Gnyan amrit ko humein swad karne deejiye

Sharan aaye hue humko aap raksha keejiye

Vishwa roopi vishwa premi vishwajita vishweshwara

Koti naman hai aapko Chinmaya guna mandira!

Amma, who studied Kannada in school, and who didn't have formal training in music, wrote a song so beautiful, in Hindi and set it to Raga Shivaranjani. All this, in the middle of the night,while she was burning with fever. At that time itself, she had allocated the parts for male and female voices and also the interludes. She wouldn't have done it for anyone else, I bet! Such was Gurudev's inspiration!

My husband, Chittaranjan, and I were blessed to be engaged at the hands of Gurudev during a camp in June 1989 at SandeepanySadhanalaya, Powai. The note that we received from him after that was:

"I am happy to know that you both are cheerful and settling to an ideal house-holders life. It is so reassuring to hear that you both will be working for the Mission.

The camp was great in Bombay and the peak point was your engagement!!"

How flattering and inspiring, despite the fact that we knew it was just one of the events that took place during the camp!!!

OM UTSAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

OM UTSAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Dr.Apparao Mukkamala, CM Michigan and Trustee, CIF



Dr.Apparao Mukkamala

Gurudev was an embodiment of encouragement. He never said no for any constructive suggestions or projects. The following are a few examples from my personal interactions with Gurudev.

I first met Gurudev in May of 1977 in Ottowa, Canada. I went there more as a chauffeur for a couple of senior colleagues of mine, rather than as a true seeker or a devotee. I heard of Swami Chinmayananda, but never met him. He, Himself, volunteered to come to Flint if we could organize a Geeta Gyana Yagna. And we did, in Flint in 1978. That's how I was introduced to Chinmaya Mission.

During the Yagna, in 1978, I asked Swamiji if we could organize a camp in Michigan (1979). Now, to want a camp in Michigan needs a lot in terms of organising skills, time and resources and we were all at the beginning of our careers, some with young families,and all with almost no time to get things going. Yet we asked. Yet He ENCOURAGED us to organize a family spiritual camp.Gurudev could have pointed

out all these roadblocks and told us, 'You won't be able to do it...'. Instead He egged us on and told us what we need to do. What we needed to do so that we could accomplish what we were desiring to....Not a yagna for Him, but an accomplishment for us.

The camp in July of 1979, was a grand success.

In July of 1980, we again had an opportunity to organize a GeetaGyana Yagna in Flint. During the Yagna, an idea came to our minds to build a temple in Flint. Flint has a very small Indian community and many of our friends discouraged us from undertaking this project. The Indian community in Flint is quite small, and most of them were new in the country, without a lot of financial resources. There were not many temples in the US at that time. Even big cities like Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, did not have any Hindu temples. It was quite ambitious on our part, even to broach the subject with Gurudev. When we broached the subject with Gurudev, he not only ENCOURAGED us, but instantaneously gave His ideas as to how it should be done, regarding the plans, idol, location, etc. He gave the name "Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple".

The temple construction was completed by October of 1982 and Gurudev made a special two day trip from India to do the PranaPrathishta of Lord Shiva.

In 1980, an idea crept into my mind to start an international school in the United States. There was a college for sale in Owosso, Michigan, Wesley College. When we broached the subject with Gurudev, he ENCOURAGED us to pursue starting an international school in the US and visited the Wesley College campus and gave his nod, but he cautioned us not to start the project until we do a survey of the Indian community in the US.

We sent out a survey to all the Mission members, and their response was NOT very encouraging. The main reason that the parents did not want to send their children to the international school was because the project we envisioned was a boarding school and the parents weren't ready to send their children away from home. That is when Gurudev suggested that we should plan an international school in India, so that we could attract students from all over the world, including India, and not just the US. (We see that encouraging is not merely with success in mind, but also the process of learning on the path. We learnt the business of a new venture.)

Soon after, one of the devotees in Coimbatore located a large piece of land in Siruvani Hills, and that's where the international school has become a reality!

We had the privilege to organize a family spiritual camp in Michigan again in 1981. An idea came to my mind that we should organize a mass Vishnu Sahasranama Puja by all the camp delegates and that we all should wear the same uniform dress. Some of my friends thought it was a crazy idea, but Gurudev ENCOURAGED me to go ahead. We procured about 200 dhotis and saris and it was a sight to be seen! It has become a routine since then in the Chinmaya family camps to do mass pujas, all wearing the same Indian attire.

After the first international camp in Mumbai in 1983, I asked Gurudev if we could

have the second international camp in the US. The main concern was whether devotees from the rest of the world would come to the US to attend a Chinmaya spiritual camp. Of course, cost was a factor. It would be difficult to obtain a visa to the US. But in spite of all these potential problems, Gurudev ENCOURAGED us to organize the second international camp in 1986 in Michigan. More than 50 devotees from India and about 20 devotees from other parts of the world participated in the second international camp in Michigan. Swami Tejomayananda's maiden visit to the US was to participate in this camp.

In May of 1991, we organized a 4-week camp in Piercy, California when the Geeta discourses were professionally recorded. While driving Gurudev from Piercy to San Francisco, I asked Gurudev if He could visit various university campuses to meet the college students of Indian origin and introduce them to Hinduism. The month of December is a holiday season for most universities, the weather is not very conducive, and the interest among the Indian students was uncertain. In spite of all these potential problems, Gurudev ENCOURAGED us to do so and he braved the harsh winter weather in November and December of 1992 and went to various universities to meet college students. The tour was a grand success and we attracted not just Indian students, but many American students and faculty.

These are just a few examples of Gurudev ENCOURAGING His devotees to undertake projects and implement them as Sadhana. Gurudev has repeatedly said "Do not worry about how many students will attend the meetings. Your part is to publicize the event widely and reach as many people as you can. Many of these students' parents probably know the 'Swami' and they will participate."

It was not easy to get permission from the universities. Coincidentally, this is when we acquired the property in Veliyanad and started Chinmaya International Foundation and AdiSankaraNalayam. Gurudev stressed during his university tour that CIF will be a bridge between the East and the West.

To that enthusiastic encourager, my prostrations!

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

One who is full and blissful is always expressive. The "quiet dynamism" of the God principle and an enlightened person is devoid of the worries fears and anxieties of the egoistic. Sri Gurudev always living centered in His ownBeing, was ever inspired and spread the same all round and everywhere. His mantra on this is:

"Depersonalisation is secret of inspiration".

He never turned down any positive proposal from anyone. All that He will say is your inspiration you only have to work it out. He will say,‘don't give me ideas and ask me to work.’

This is how He could turn out so much in such a short period.

An egoistic person loses his efficiency in agitations of past regrets, future anxieties, and feverishness in the present.

But Gurudev, He was working out of fulfilment; not for fulfilment!

Gurudev would ask youngsters to take risks not merely earn wages.
I was 27 when I took up a housing project of a few hundred houses, for the Mission, where we today have two temples, a community hall, a full pledged CBSE school, a medical centre, an auditorium and so on. Sri Gurudev not only encouraged me He brought great personalities, senior professionals from Bombay like Shri Ram Batra who was then the sheriff of Bombay,Shri Jumnadossand some others, and enthusiastically showed them the colony and housing project.

It is impossible to imagine such unconditional support and encouragement of a 27-year-old youth. Even parents may not support to this extent.

Gurudev completely envisaged a mammoth light and sound show called "Kamban" . The name was given by Him. He Himself guided the dancers on mudras. Flaws in logic in the production were easily spotted by Him and extracted for correction! Such was His keen eye.

That year (of Kamban’s production), He routed all his trips through Chennai just so that He could monitor the show.

The tickets were priced at an encouraging high level -- Rs.1000 for a show for a ticket, was big in 1982. Such was the response that tickets for many shows were sold out in advance! Ministers and bureaucrats would buy multiple tickets and came for the show more than once.

Such was its success that Swami Mitrananda later took this show to the neighbouring countries.

The mind recalls so many manymany incidents of Gurudev encouraging the young. Sw. Mitranandaji andSw. Aniketanandajialong with a few other youngsters --- they wanted to pilot Gurudev on their bikes. And they did do that. Gurudev enjoyed their enthusiasm and egged them to greater accomplishment. And His encouragement only saw them climb higher and higher to accomplish, both for themselves and for the Mission.

Nothing of Gurudev is possible to say in a small write up. The heart and mind gushes with memories of such enthusiastic encouragement .....

To that unparalleled utsaahavardhaka, my prostrations.

Om UtsahavardhakayaNamah

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P.Eswar,CM- Mumbai



Shri H.P.Eswar

Delhi – Tulabharam – 1991

Parama Poojya Gurudev seated in one of the two scales of the tulaa. HP Eswar doing pradakshina. Amidst all devotees gathered there, Gurudev calls out aloud to me,

"Hey! You have to do it like this in Bombay!

Bombay's Tulabharam was scheduled for later in October, 1991!

Out of many people gathered there, from diverse places, He singled me out, identified me as a Bombayite, gave me advice, instructions, to be watchful and repeat sincerely, in Bombay what "I am now seeing in Delhi."

This was a great source of encouragement for me to serve the cause that Parama Poojya Gurudev stood for. In every breath a teaching! A great source of inspiration! It just cannot be forgotten! You feel on top of the world!

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

Om UtsaahavardhakaayaNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

Enthusiastic accomplisher (Mahotsahaha) is one of the most appropriate names for Maha Vishnu, found in Vishnu Sahasranaama.

The Powers of creation, of sustenance and of annihilation- in their totality is the world of birth and death that we live in.The wonderful world cannot be sustained without the endless enthusiasm of this Mighty power. Looking at the ocean, through the waves, we come to recognise the ocean as the 'Sleepless Agitator"; similarly, looking at Vishnu through the ephemeral kaleidoscopic changes in the patterns of life available to us in our experience today, we call Him as the "Dynamic accomplisher"!

He is the one who excites or makes someone feel very enthusiastic and eager, increase (Vardhakah) the energy or activity in a physical or biological system.

This Dyanamic accomplisher exerts excitement (Utsaahavardhakah). Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu GururdevoMaheswaraha; GuruhSaakshatParahbhrahma, TasmaiSreeGuraveNamaha!

Our Humble Prostrations to that Master, who exhilarates, excites and exerts, even as He enthuses and energises our enthusiasm.

Looking at ParamPoojya Gurudev through our own experiences, His deeds and words, we come to recognise this dyanamic accomplisher in us, who makes everyone feel very enthusiastic, energetic and eager! He is a power bank! He energises everybody! Those who adapt and plug on Him, experience His mighty power!

Once He wrote to me “He alone is the sole giver and doer! All of us are His instruments whether we recognise it or not! Mere instruments!” Once our equipment is plugged to Him, He floods through! He endows us with perseverance and excites us to such an exertion that the entire Vasanas get exhausted!

Gurudev, as Viswakarma (celestial architect) and as Carpenter (Vardhakaha) chisels a Vigraha (extension or figure) out of our structure and shapes and forms a whole (poornah) par excellence!

In one of the letters, addressed to my wife, He wrote:

“Stop worrying over little things. Hold on to Him. He cares little whether you fast or feast. “Fasting” means not allowing all sense-organs stop consuming; so that the mental energies are preserved and conserved for deeper studies and higher meditations.

You are at the right track. Whatever happens is from Him. He alone is the sole protector and shelter for all of us. Be in His presence mentally always.

Love, Chinmayananda”

Om UtsaahavardhakaayaNamaha!

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Dr.M.Nagaraju, President, SuvarnamukhiSamskritiDhama, Karnataka, India, erstwhile CM, USA

Utsaha : means enthusiasm to act with firmness of mind and faith of intellect.

Vardhaka: the one who inspires this attitude in the mind

Sri Gurudev has been a master inspirer to us in many of our activities .

When a large community in Detroit were struggling for years to build a temple, a small community in Flint ,Michigan could do it 18 months in 1982. It was the 3rd temple in the whole of USA at that time and a manifestation to the world of what an inspiring personality he was.



Shri Nagaraju Marigowda and family with Gurudev

Of the many incidents in my life, the one that I want to bring to memory is that of "Promoting Interlinking of Great Rivers of India."

What he envisioned in 1989, we have begun to act on this year, 2015-16 during His centenary year!

"Take care of these little children (primary school) and teach them values. Maybe they will take up the project in 50 yrs....." These words of Sri Gurudev in 1989 at Uttarakasi Ashram kept burning in my mind and have continued to, ever since.

SuvarnamukhiSamskritiDhama inaugurated on 18th August 2015 by Swami Brahmananda ji, Head of Chinmaya Mission Karnataka, is a small effort in that direction

We were 3 years into promotion of the great project of 'interlinking the majors rivers' Ganga- Kaveri; interlinking for the prosperity of Bharat, India. It was Sri Gurudev's suggestion in 1986 when a demon drought struck the nation and many tragic events of death and disaster had submerged the country in despair.

It was at the camp in Michigan where some engineers from India had come to attend the camp; they had brought The Hindu newspaper, whose screaming headlines read: "Demon Drought!".

We were curious and got into a discussion about the problem of water in India. The engineers were

knowledgeable to indicate the solution for the national water problem. They told Gurudev about the Interlinking of national rivers as the best solution for the serious national disaster of water excess in one region and acute shortage in the adjoining region, both in India naturally, both causing national disasters year after year, which sometimes exceeded our investment for development of the country.

Gurudev was silent for a short time and looked at all of us campers and said, 'Why don't some of you think of promoting the idea?'

And it was like an order. When he said 'one of you' .... which one of us? I said to myself why not

All of us in the US.

I gathered a few delegates of the camp next morning for satsang discussion and Dr Raju Ph.D in communication was present and he is also a good friend of ours. The discussion was on Karma Yoga. It was the feeling of the group that we in USA could begin thinking about the water problems of our motherland and find some means to serve the needs of the motherland. A trust named "Ganga Kaveri Bhagirathi Trust" was registered very quickly, and a committee of interested engineers and committed members to serve on the Trust was organized. Another Trust was simultaneously created in India. A "JalaJagruthiYatra" (roughly, 'a Journey for Water-Awareness') was undertaken to travel the whole country to assess the problems of water and meet all water related national and state agencies both governmental and NGOs and private bodies that worked with water management.

My wife Renuka took off for 6 months, leaving the care of 3 school going children to me, who was already busy with my medical practice, and travelled the breadth and length of country with 15 people.

The JalaJagrutiYatra group met a great number of people and organizations all over the country including the National Water Development Council, Central Water Commission, groups of engineers related to water development in all states and at the Center and finally the Water Resource Development Minister Mr. Shankarananda.

After 3 years of meetings and travel all over the country, we found out we could not gather a momentum to get a group of people in India to form a registered body to function.

The strong support of many NRIs from abroad was not able to work without the functioning of local India based organizations. Consequently, the project work was rendered impossible.

Either the magnitude of project was too big for the Indian group to fathom or there was no real committed group to take on the challenge. It was clear to Sri Gurudev that the effort put for 3 years was not yielding the fruits needed. He asked us to abandon the project.

He looked out from the discussion room and found school going children walking

outside the ashram and pointing to them He said, "Look at these children teach them the Vedantic way of living by example. May be, they will take up this project in 50 years" , and He paused for sometime as if in thought.

That was the suggestion lingering in our mind eversinceand "SuvarnamukhiSamskritiDhama" established this year 2015, was dedicated to Sri Gurudev's vision. We hope and pray the institution will be blessed by Mother Sri Lalithaparameswari and Sri Gurudev, to serve the nation and world at large.

With That Utsaahavardhaka ever showing us the way and blessing our spirit, we keep working.

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH!

Om utsahavardhakaya namaḥ

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM- Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who Generates Enthusiasm

Utsahavardhakaya is one who creates enthusiasm or generates inspiration in the hearts of his devotees. Some provide motivation, some instigation but the best give inspiration. Ordinarily we would not do something really bad, because this is against our innate humane instincts. But if instigated or provoked, we may perform even low actions. Instigation pulls us down, motivation takes us forward and inspiration takes us up. Enthusiasm or inspiration inspires us to go to a higher plane. If one is tamasic, it inspires one to become rajasic. If rajasic, it inspires one to become sattvic. The sattvic, are inspired to go even beyond. The worldly are inspired to follow the spiritual path. Those on the spiritual path are inspired to take it seriously and attain God.



Swami Nikhilananda

Just being in the company of great saints like, Gautam Buddha or Mirabai, helps us develop the intense thirst and enthusiasm to attain God. At one stage, a strange desire arises in their minds, to give up even their life in order to attain the Supreme. This is the unique power of the Teacher. The Teacher is the one who creates this enthusiasm.

Gurudev used to tell the story of Plato's caves. There was a huge cave inhabited by a tribe that was born in darkness and lived in darkness. For them this was their world. One among them was an explorer. He set off to find a world other than this. He was discouraged by his family and friends, but regardless he went forth. Sometimes walking, sometimes crawling, he came to a place, where he felt a breeze. Also, in the distance, he saw a bright light. Not having had such an experience before, he was fearful and shaken. He hesitated, but taking courage and went towards the light. When he arrived at the source of the light, he saw a whole new world. He found sunlight, water, a gentle breeze. He was in ecstasy. Delighted with this wonderful discovery, he decided to go back to the dark world and bring all his brethren with him to enjoy this paradise. His heart was full of compassion and love. Stumbling and falling in the dark, he went back.

Full of excitement, he related his experiences, but his kinsmen were not moved. They thought that he was insane and should be treated accordingly. He tried to convince people but to no avail. Among the multitudes one young man decided to make the journey. Both of them now started on their journey to the land of light. Half way through the youth developed cold feet. He wanted to turn back and had to be coaxed and cajoled to move on. Eventually they reached the promised land and he was satisfied by seeing the joy on the face of the young man. Both of them came back to try and bring some more people out of their misery.

This is the path of great Mahatmas. They try and try to get people to live the glory they have witnessed and live in. But unfortunately there exists a huge communication and credibility gap between them. Ignorant people believe in ignorant people. They understand each other's language. We find it difficult to understand the language of those who have gone beyond. It is up to spiritual Masters to make the effort to

move us out of this lethargy.

Gurudev intuitively knew the level of each devotee and would inspire them accordingly. Some were told to perform karmas, some were given higher sadhanas, each according to their need. One young man came complaining to Gurudev, about politicians and the entire political structure. Gurudev inspired him to become a politician and change the political system. He inspired business people to run their businesses properly.

We have two intrinsic problems – starting trouble and stopping trouble. We take a long while to start something good and also a long time to give up a bad habit. Most find it difficult to take the first steps on the path of spirituality; we keep postponing the date.

To inspire the student, the Master even becomes humble if required. In theMahabharata, Lord Krishna, took on the lowly position and became Arjuna's charioteer.

Gurudev was a lone crusader. He came from Kerala and went to study in the Himalayas. After having gained the Knowledge, out of deep compassion he decided to come to the plains and liberate the masses. Even his Teacher was not convinced of his plans. He told him not to go because he felt that no one would listen to him. People are so caught up in the world that they are not available to listen to this Knowledge. Gurudev persisted and TapovanMaharaj gave him his blessings. His inspiration was infectious. Millions heard his message and were transformed. Even now we are being inspired by his vision.

In the world we see huge transformations have taken place on the strength of one individual's vision. All the great religions of the world were started by one individual - one Gautam Buddha, one Jesus Christ, one Mohammed. Our own country there have as mothered so many great Mahatmas and powerful personalities. Recently 25 lakh people from different religions, castes and nationalities gathered together in Bangalore to felicitate Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. In the congregation, many were in high positions, at the pinnacle of power. Even our President and Prime Minister were among those present. This is the power of spirituality. One person can motivate millions. Swami Ramadev has taken the practice of yoga into every household.

OM UTSAAHAVARDHAKAAYA NAMAH

276. OM EKASMAI NAMAH

07-02-2016

Om EkasmaiNamah

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda

*The intention is to convey rarity, uniqueness. Every century produces maybe one like him. Gurudev was truly a yugapurusha!

* The Ekasmai rises out of the Aprameyapurusha that he was. Imagine...how the whole movement began, his whole life story as it unfolded, from when he first started as a freedom activist in 1945 and from there you suddenly see the bursting forth of a mission and very soon a vision that saw a world full of people in bondage and a determination to teach them that they are free afterall... Have we seen another like that in this era?

* Gurudev understood that this fallout of a convent education is an important learning point for us. That we have to do something which is equal to the convents, ie, build schools. That was what we lacked! We had not built educational centers!



Gurudev knew that the schools he would build, will take their own time to unfold to his vision,but that did not deter him, for he was not building schools for profit, but for a permeation of a vision where wisdom would ride high. So he said, at least build the infrastructure -- someday someone somewhere will come by and take it to the acme of my vision!



And the kind of school Gurudev wanted: it must have the right kind of staff, the right kind of administrators to govern the school. That is not easy!

And? He set up 75 schools in a span of 10 years all directed towards the same vision of, 'Know India, Be Indian...' that is rare!

Imagine establishing 75 schools! What a person, what a rare one!

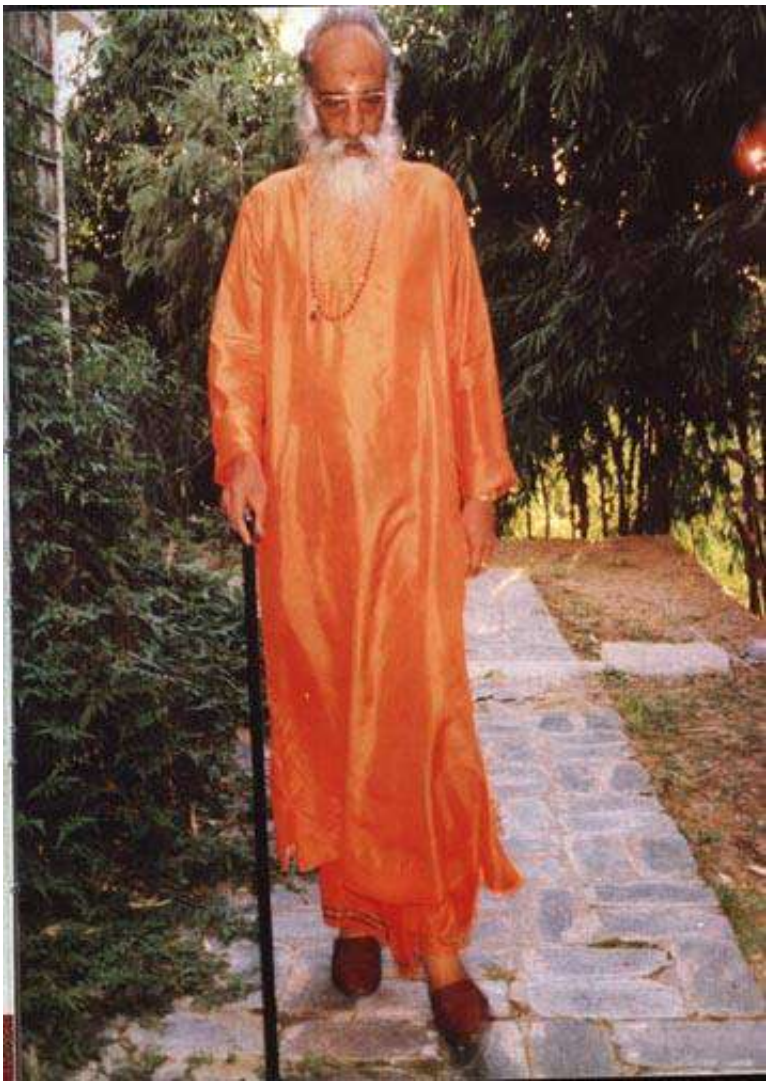
OM EKASMAI NAMAH

Vishnusahasranaamam:Ekah Om ekasmaiNamah



Sree Narayana the Brahman, can only be the On without any otherness

No doubt His form includes all that we perceive, and He has taken so many avatars, and He is pervading all creation which is made up of a variety, but the simple thing is, He is just One. We don't need to reject anything we see or know, for they are all Brahman. So even if we said He is Shataanana (naam 724), Shatamoortih (naam 723), anekamoortih (naam721)....those are just forms that we see at different times... but He is One.



Credits: ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM EKASMAI NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu(Hemu ji),CM-Chennai

Salutations to the One Supreme

Parama Pujya Sri Gurudev has emphasised wherever needed that, realising Atman in one self is not complete without knowing the Self in us is the same Self everywhere.

Gurudev gives an example: once we know the rope behind the snake there cannot be even a bit of snake left on the rope. Similarly, once we know Brahman in that experience there cannot be a bit of the pluralistic world there. What remains is the One non-dual Brahman. EkamevaAdvitiyaya Brahma. Sarvamkhalvidam Brahma.

None of us are at any time different from That. Yet this cannot be claimed by one who is attached to the BMI. Gurudev in His state of Brahmagnyana is This Non dual Brahman. EkasmaiNamah.

VedantaMananam Publication, Centenary Series: page 251

I saw Gurudev had the same power Jesus had to calm the waves -- the waves of the mind. The religious principles taught from childhood, but which had remained merely beautiful ideals or concepts, I now could see embodied completely in Gurudev. He also showed us that He knew us more deeply than we know ourselves! He effortlessly lived the truth that "the Self in Me is the Self in All ".

Every Breath a Teaching – CMW Publication, page162 /163

As the car moved through the crowd, He rolled down the window, and with folded hands, He said to the people walking by:
"Krishna, Krishna, I am very sorry to disturb you all. Sri Krishna may forgive me."
He turned to us, the host family and myself, who were seated in the back seat, and said ‘Every one who was listening was Sri Krishna Himself. He is the One in all. Who else speaks? Who else listens So?

Every Breath a Teaching – CMW Publication, page 249
"No more cutting of trees. These trees are my own arms and legs. You cut my tree, I will cut you "

Every Breath a Teaching – CMW Publication, page 317
"I am Siva,I am Krishna, Jesus, Devi, Buddha, Mohammad--and much, much, more".

What more needs be said! Salutations to the One Supreme!

OM EKASMAI NAMAH

Om EkasmaiNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM- Mumbai

The One! The One - without-a second". "Ekamevaadviteeyam" (chaandogya. Up.6-2-1). As the Infinite is without any of the three distinctions, ie without distinctions of Genus (Sajaateeyabheda), without distinctions of Species (Vijateeyabheda), and without any distinction within Itself (Swagatabheda), He, SreeNaraayana, the Brahman, can only be the One without any otherness!

One Who, though the one, yet plays in the bosom of all living creatures. Just as we are one entity, but our thoughts are many, the Supreme Consciousness SreeNaarayana, though One, His reflections as "Jeevas" play in all mind- intellect equipments. Because He is thus seen to be manifested in the world of plurality, He is "Not One."

Again, "The One" is a definition, a quality. The Lord is Indefinable, quality-less. He is "The One", when the pluralities are all merged, at the same time He is "Not even One." For, to conceive "The One "is to conceive the Truth with our Intellect—He is to be experienced on transcending the Intellect."

The One" has a meaning only with reference to the many." The One" is a relative statement. Thus, just to show that the Infinite is to be "experienced" by the "becoming "and not by "knowing", the negation, "Not even One"!

Here comes the Master Pole-Vaulter! Gurudev says:-

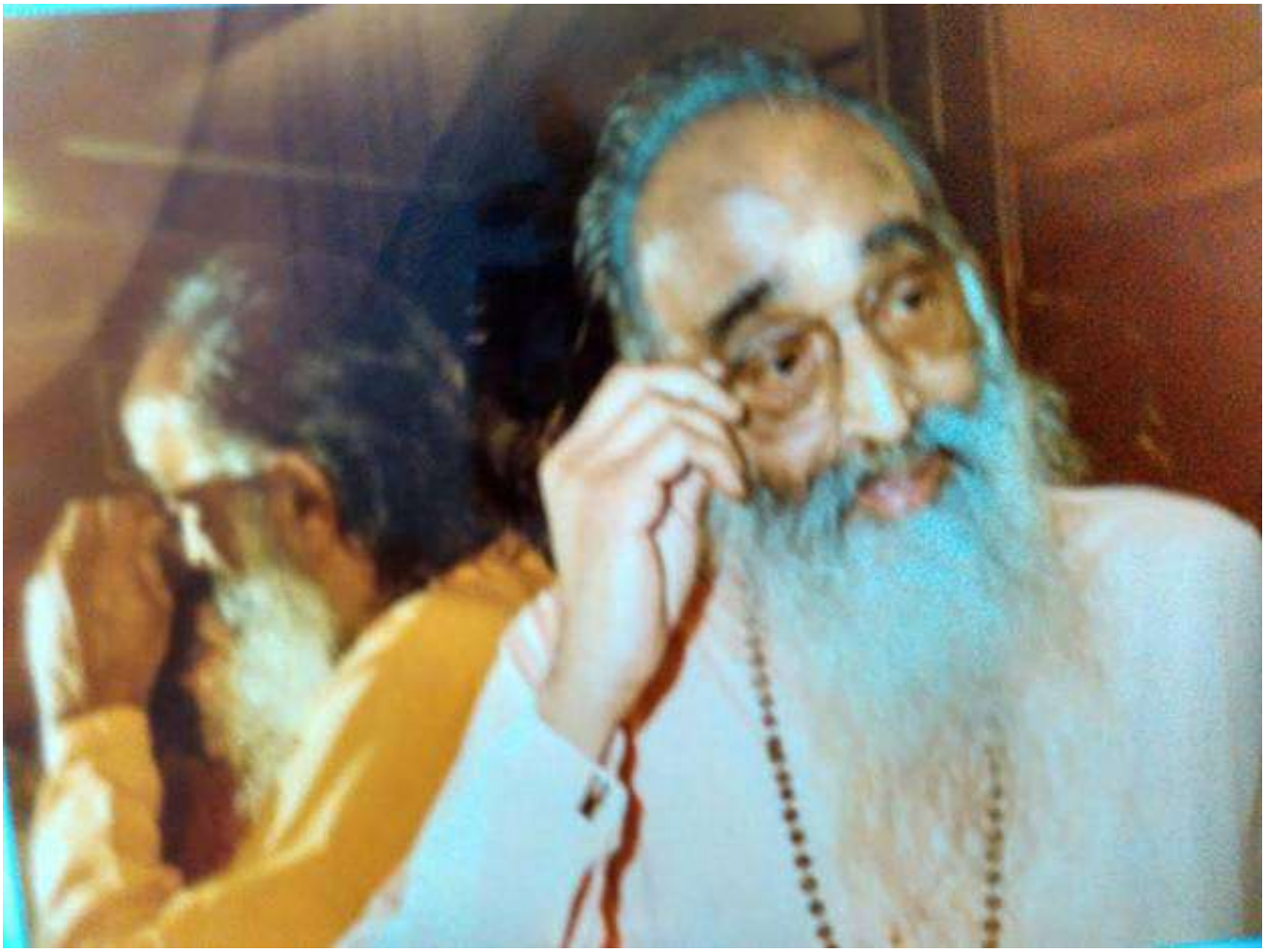
"The seemingly contradictory statements like the above ones "The One," "Not One", "Not even One", gives a shock treatment to the questioning intellect, that is in the shape of a question mark (?) and the curve straightens and become a pole. This pole (straightened Intellect) has to be further seasoned with reasoning, faith and extended though contemplation, so that it is made extremely long and flexible. Then this becomes an aid for the pole vaulter.The pole vaulter takes a stance, holds the pole at the upper end, runs up with great speed, hits it against the pit and plants it deep and firm into it and aided by the strength of that very firmly established pole, he heaves himself up above the bar with the support of the pole (which does not let him down but holds him in good stead) and once he has gained quantum height, he makes the leap of faith, casting away the pole, for he needs it no more! A free fall is guaranteed on the other side! If the pole or the body dislodges the bar it is a foul.

Sruti says, "The Lord sports with many forms by His Maayaa!"

This moment, I am tempted to address Poojya Gurudev, as Naarayana, who is Chinmaya and offer my Prostrations to Him!

Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, a 16th Century Vaishnavite poet- scholar of Kerala, who was fondly in love with the Advaita philosophy, composed Hari NaamaKeerthanam in Malayalam. And through this, He prostrates to Naaraayanathus:-

"OnnayaNinneyihaRandennuKandalavilUndaayorindalBathaMindavatalla Mama,
PandeKanakkeVaruvaan Nin KripavalikalUndakayenkalihaNaaraayanaayaNamaha!"



"Thou, who art One, is seen distorted here as two and this has caused a lot of miseries-misapprehensions, which, is beyond my words! Oh! Lord of Compassion, Naaraayana! Kindly bestow Thy Grace on me and restore me back to the right apprehension existed before:-THOU ART ONE! My Humble Prostrations to Thee Oh! Naaraayana! May this Shadow 'I' merge with Thee! SaashtaangaNamaskaaram to Thee who is "The One" without a second!

Gurudev, during His discourses, used to quote the above, and Invoke Naarayana!

To that Eloquent Existence, my prostrations!

OM EKASMAI NAMAH!

Om Ekasmai Namah

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM-Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One

My salutations to the One. The Supreme Reality is indicated as being one without a second. The multiplicity we see is an expression of that One. The One alone with its intrinsic power appears as many. The ignorant who see this multiplicity and are unable to recognise it suffer in the world. This duality causes fear, bondage and sorrow.

A Realised Master is one who has realised this oneness. The one who sees the one Truth in all – in the elephant, the cow or a human being, has realised the Truth. Hence there is unconditional love towards all beings.

One also means unique. Pujya Gurudev had realised this oneness. This made him unique and special. In this state of Realisation he identified with all and worked for everyone's welfare.



Swami Nikhilananda

Chanting of the names of the Guru or God is a meditation. Unconsciously we know the meaning and related thoughts come to the mind. Even if we pray or chant without full concentration, it does not matter. The names associated with Gurudev's paduka puja will bring a feeling of reverence to the mind. Sadhana is the practice

of bringing the name along with the associated feeling to the mind, again and again. All we have to do is to put the thought into the conscious mind. In time it becomes a part of the subconscious and then we do not have to make any effort. Every time we take the name, the mind becomes pure and single pointed. This is dhyana.

One girl learnt dancing from her mother and became a very talented dancer. People heard of her fame and wanted to see her dance but her mother refused to let her dance for anyone other than the king. Though nobody had seen her dancing, her fame had spread and everyone wanted to see her. Finally her reputation reached the king and he also wanted to see her dance. In the presence of the king, the girl danced to a packed hall. Her performance was excellent and the king was overwhelmed. In his joy, he offered her money, wealth and even the kingdom. He was ready to fulfill any of her desires.

The girl hesitated and said that the king may not be able to give her what she wanted. The king persisted saying that there was nothing that he could not give. The girl finally expressed her desire. She wanted none other than the king himself. The king was stunned but since he had made the offer, he married her and she became the queen.

This story only tells one that by working for someone or asking from the world one gets what one wants. But if one only asks from God, one will only get from God. What we ask, we get. This is the unfortunate part of asking for worldly things. If we do not ask for anything other than God, then we will get Him also.

OM EKASMAI NAMAH

277. OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH

08-02-2016

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH

Offered by Swamini ji Supreetananda ji

Om Shri SadguraveNamah

Om OmkaravideNamah

A+U+M = Om

The sound Om is produced out of the combination of three letters A U and M. The sound Om signifies the universal Godhead, the Brahman or the Paramatman. His essential nature is in fact soundless, intangible and formless. 'ashabdamasparshamarupavat cha' declares the Upanishad. The sound of 'a', the basic letter stands for the ground of existence, the paramatman. This is part-less and whole. This is the all -pervading single whole. The sound Om is also called 'pranava'.

In the technical field of tantrashastrait is designated as an incantation called 'bijamantra'. It is so fundamental a sound that it is used to designate the very foundation of existence and therefore it is called the 'mulamantra'. Sound is counted as an attribute of space in our shastras. Just like heat in the fire, movement in the wind and wetness in water, sound is the characteristic feature of space. Entire Veda is in the form of the sound of the mantras. The shastras embody dharma, the law or the principle that sustains the universe. Upanishads disseminate jnana the emancipating spiritual illumination. The sound 'Om' or the pranavais the basic syllable that is at the foundation of all these literary forms.

"om ityekaksharambrahma" declares the Gita. Om symbolizes the Brahman. This is a unified symbol of 'trimurti-s' Brahma Vishnu and Shiva as well. It is at the root of the creation and maintenance and destruction of the entire universe. Brahma Vishnu and Maheshvarafunction as the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the universe. The three letters A U and M respectively represent origin sustenance and the dissolution. All the states of existence of all beings, viz. the waking, dreaming and the dreaming, also get signified by the three letters A U and M.

While pronouncing 'A' both our lips open apart. While pronouncing "U" the lips get rounded. It represents extension and holding of breath. While pronouncing "M" lips are closed. The breath is withdrawn. Thus we also can feel that the letters indicate the creation sustenance and destruction of the world. Clarity of vision depends on the transparency of the intellect acquired on the basis of the development of

sattvaguna. ‘om’ iscalled ekaksharimantra. ‘namahshivaya’ is called panchakshari mantra. om namahshivayais called shadakshari mantra. Om is an important and basic syllable that makes the Sanskrit alphabet complete. Om is the basic sound not only in Sanskrit but it can be said that no alphabetical system of any language is really complete without its existence.

‘Om’ represents the manifest form of this universe. Om is the syllablethat serves as the symbol to meditate upon the Supreme Godhead. It is the term through which we pray to the Supreme Lord. It is the word we use to address Him. Om indeed is the manifest form of the Supreme God the Paramatman. It is ‘mulamantra’ for our utterance.

Pujya swami Chinmayananda had realized the significance and the truth of Omkara. He always remained in an unbroken blissful state of mind experiencing the joy of this sound, which is called shabdabrahma and nadabrahma. He used to share the joy of his inner bliss with others also. He strived for the wellbeing of the entire world. He travelled throughout the world emerging as a famous messenger of peace, an emissary of human values and as a preacher of spiritual enlightenment. He deserves our praise andHe is prayed to by the mantra OmkaravideNamah. Let us all pray to him. Remaining eternally at the feet of Sadguru Sri Chinmayananda.

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda (with permission)

SALUTATIONS TO THE KNOWER OF OM



*What is OM, is sometimes very difficult to understand. But he is Omkarvid, one who knows what is OM! Such a one who has experienced Om, says to our beseeching, 'how do I understand that?' "You keep doing your sadhana; OM will shine out!"

*From the standpoint of Vedanta we know Om, but the kind of awareness he created on OM, that is unmatched. Gurudev's unforgettable signature, the Omkar, he would sign every letter with his seal of Om, how many times he would have made us repeat that word Om! Om shantih, shantihshantih! Thus ended every of his talks, every of his yagnyas, every of his camps.

*Our Mission greeting and salutation 'Hari Om'! Because the word is powerful, the more you utter it, the greater the possibility of the mind becoming silent! Because such a sound syllable with its deep mysticism, sheer chanting renders the mind immediately silent! Imagine the most agitated mind; the moment you chant, that very moment it becomes quiet.

*What does Om indicate? Infinity! That which is beyond sound, silence! You have

to keep this in mind: out there, there are different kinds of people. They regard mantras or names as form. They will even tell you, 'I don't believe in form, I look to the formless God! Now, a person who wants to worship a formless God, what will he focus on? What will he anchor in and grow?

Om...! It's one of the best!

*Such Omkarvid he was, such a perfect knower of Om he was, to him, our salutations!

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH!

Om OmkaaravideNamaha!

Offered by Shri Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Poojya Gurudev, who is the knower of Omkaar, says:-

*"Harihi Om! Om, the word, is all this! A clear explanation of it is the following. All that is past, present and future, verily, is Om! That which is beyond the three periods of time is also, indeed, Om! All this is verily Brahman. This Atman is Brahman. This Atman has four quarters (Mandukya up.1-1 &1-2)".

*" The goal (word) which all the Vedas speak of (praise) , which all penances proclaim, and wishing for which they lead the life of Brahmacharin, that goal (word) I will briefly tell thee. It is Om! (Katho Up. 1-II-15)."

*"Uttering the one-syllabled 'Om' -the (symbol of) Brahman and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains the Supreme Goal! (Bh. Gita.ch 8-13).

This is a promise!



It is a wonderful sight (darshan) of Poojya Gurudev, pointing the pointed –Om, through the BMI – PFT—OET with the aid of His Pointer! His pointer was a foldable one for convenience. It had four parts, as it were, like telescopic tubes that each collapsed into the previous one, with a pompom on the fourth and final one. This was the outermost end of the pointer that did the pointing and touched the pointed --Om!

ParamaacharyaChandrasekharaSaraswati of KaanchiKaamakoti once remarked: -"Chinmayananda uses Brahma Sutra as a Pointer to untie the knot in the heart (hridayagranti) as Saraswati emerges out of Him!"

Brahma Sutra has four chapters and incidentally Gurudev's pointer also had four parts with a pompom on the fourth! After narrating the three quarters (Padas) of the Consciousness (Prajna) - The Supreme Brahman, as Viswa, Taijasa, and Praajnya, identifying in their respective spheres of activity, Waker, Dreamer and Deep sleeper, Gurudev extends His pointer to the fourth state-Turiya, with the pompom touching it! These three quarters (paadas) or these three measures (maatras) merge with

the fourth quarter (Paada) or the fourth measure (maatra), it becomes One - The Whole - the state of Turiya- the Fourth!

Poojya Gurudev, after a Paada Pooja, flings coins (usually One Rupee coins) and it used to reach the deserving, wherever one sits!



Once, Gurudev casually said to me in Malayalam: - “You have already got three ‘naalanas’ (or four annas, a quarter of a Rupee), when you get the fourth ‘Naalana’ (quarter), it will become One!”



Once I was travelling with Gurudev to Siddhabari by Jammu Mail and the train reached Jalandhar station, early in the morning. He opened the curtain and looking through the window He said “Get me four teas.” I went to the vendor outside and got Him four teas in four glasses. He drank from all the four glasses, leaving a quarter in each glass, poured the tea from three glasses into the fourth and gave me! He said, with His usual Graceful Glance: - “Have it. This is Mandukya!”

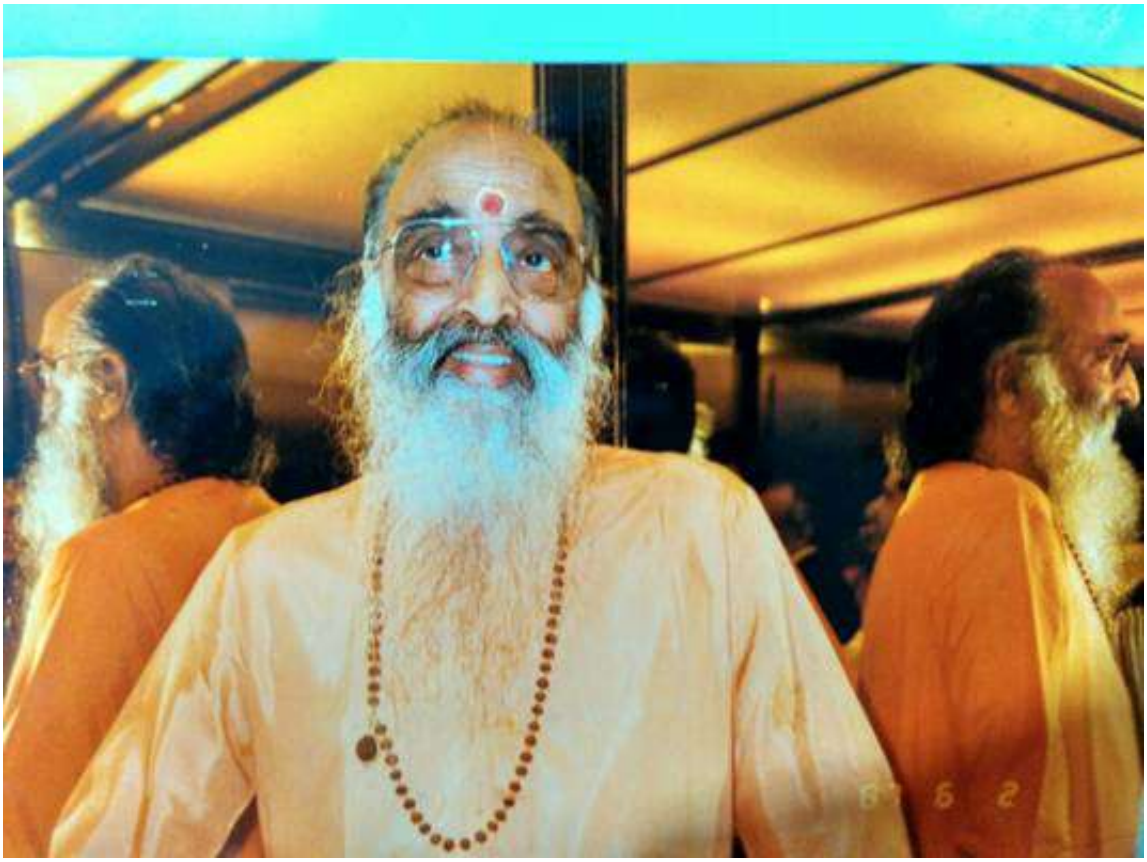
“IkkOnkar!” Gurudev said, snapping His fingers, looking at Swami Swaroopananda! “My Swaroop! Start!”

And Swaroopa started! This took place during a Sat-Sang session, at the residence of an ardent devotee of Poojya Gurudev at Chandigarh! He was jokingly playing with Punjabi pronunciations and words, “See, how your ‘Ikk ‘(Ek is pronounced as Ikk in Punjabi) precedes Onkar!” (Omkaar Is pronounced as Onkar, with a pronounced nasal emphasis) and....one... or two words (as if trying to remember) “Yes... Your Asi,

(from assi,tussi, etc) follows Tat Twam (as in Tat TwamAsi)!"

Then He expounded:-"Onkaar (Omkaar) is the symbol that represents the One Supreme Reality! 'Ik' means one and only one who cannot be compared or contrasted with any other- The Supreme Reality-Brahman!"

I prostrate to that Knower of Omkaar, who is Naarayanathus:-



omkaaraporulmoonnaipirunjidaane ... The Absolute, whose symbol is AUM, seems to have forked into Three, a Triputi or Trinity

OmkaramaayaPorulmoonnaipirinjudane, AankaramayathinuThaanthanneSakshiAthuBhodhamvaruthuvathinaalaayininnaParamaachaaryaRoopa Hari NaraayanaayaNamaha!

Brahman, The Essence, The Absolute, whose symbol is AUM, seems to have forked into Three, a Triputi or Trinity! A (Jaagrat-Waker) U (Swapna-Dreamer) M (Sushupthi-Deep Sleeper). I perceive these three-forked activities everywhere! And I play as Perceiver, Feeler, and Thinker! Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer! When I say I perceive, I am the witness! My Salutations to That Naraayana, who is also Hari, who took the form of a Paramaachaarya, who helped apprehend the Truth, by

nudging beyond misapprehensions and non-apprehensions, and instil the firm conviction that I am the Sole Witness of this three forked activity! When there is nothing to witness, I remain as One, I am! My Humble prostrations to that one who is The Knower of Omkaar!

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH!

OM OMKARAVIDE NAMAH!

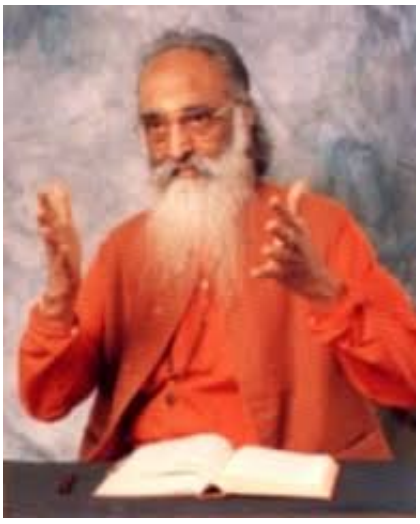
Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,Chennai

Omkara is all inclusive it includes the supreme Brahman the creator, the Jiva, the world etc.
A Brahma Gnaniis a knower of Brahman in all His aspects, hence knows Omkara in all its dimensions. Gurudev makes us Know Brahman mainly in two ways. One is seer and seen another through avasthatrayasakshi.

All through Mandukya emphasis is on avasthatraya and Turiya .

Till Sri Gurudev's health had a setback Gurudev was sitting with folded legs during his talks. During this period Gurudev used to chant Om three times, the Om loudly reverberating the entire atmosphere. Thus devotees were prepared through meditative mood before the talks.

This was called long vibrant Om.



Gurudev on OmkaraKathopanishad 1-2-15

In the technique of self-perfection as conceived by the Rishis of the Upanishads, the symbol Om is at once a formula indicating the goal and a pratika(an idol of Brahman, a symbol verily) for purpose of worship and Saguna (with form) meditation. However,it is also interesting to note that the word Om is not found in the Rig Veda or Atharva Veda, but occurs in the Taittiriya Samhita of Yajur Veda. This along with the statement below shows the range of Gurudev's knowledge of Omkara.

Katho 1-2-16
"Om" is used in the earliest Veda as a psalm "yes so be it", meaning just as the Amen of Hebrews. Later this Amen was converted by St.John as the name of the Lord. "The amen the faithful and the true witness". Similarly did Om slowly grow to its prominence-is a European theory not acceptable to those who have tested its vibrational effects and the Divine nature.
Here in this mantra we have unequivocal declaration that the very formula Om is Reality just as the very Sivalinga is to a devotee,the very Sivatattwa or as we have in our world,the very crown − even when it is without the bald head of any King − is a symbol of might and Reality.

Gurudev's commentary on Mandukya is known for its thoroughness.

Since this article has already become long I just shall confine to two statements.

Mantra-1.

Just as millions of mud pots are all in a sense nothing but mud so too there is Divine eternal factor out of which pluralistic world has risen. The pots have been made from mud, again must after their destruction, go back to mud so too the pluralistic world of phenomena has no other substance for their sustenance of Truth. That fundamental Truth the Ultimate Eternal, the all-pervading conscious principle,is pointed out to the student as "Aum".

Thus "Aum" represents its symbolism as well as in its syllabic- significance,not only the manifest world of plurality but also its substratum the Unmanifest Non Dual Reality. Subjectively "Aum" must necessarily then represent not only the matter envelopments in us,but also the Spiritual centre behind it all. How it is so, is the very content of the said twelve mantras which constitute the entire Upanishad.

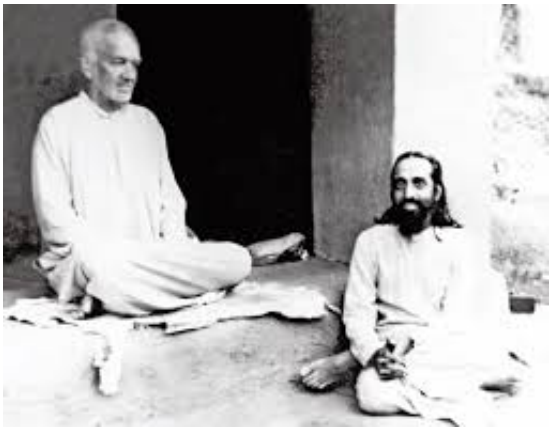
Only an Omkarvid, a knower of Om, Brahman, could have spoken thus!

To that Omkarvid my prostrations.

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH!

Om OmkaravideNamah

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM-Delhi & NCR



Salutations to the Knower of Om

Salutations to the Knower of Om. Om is the indicator of both nirguna and saguna Brahman. It is the subtlest support to realise Brahman, which expresses in the four states of experience – waking, dream, deep sleep and turiya. This is indicated by the sound symbol Om. The sound 'A' represents the waking, 'U', the dream and 'M' the deep sleep. The silence is the turiyaavastha or the state of meditation. One who meditates on Om gains enlightenment.

The Teacher is the support with which the student reaches the state of Om. Pujya Gurudev gained some knowledge of the scriptures from Swami Sivananda, who was his diksha Guru. However the ultimate Truth was revealed to him by Swami TapovanMaharaj, for whom he had great reverence. Swami TapovanMaharaj was the Sadguru, revealing Om, the Supreme Reality. When we develop love and reverence for our Teacher and he in turn has reverence for his Teacher, our love is channelised to the Supreme. It is like a connection or a pipeline.

Suppose there is a pipeline passing in front of your house, which reaches RashtrapatiBhavan. If your pipe is attached to this main pipe, then whatever is sent through that pipe goes to RashtrapatiBhavan. Directly we may not be able to comprehend the Supreme Reality but we can understand that same Reality in the form of the Teacher. So the love, devotion and sincerity for the Teacher,

automatically gets directed to God. The Teacher does not keep anything to himself. It is an electronic transfer, it happens instantly.

When we prostrate to an ordinary person, the namaskara remains there. But the humility of a great person is that the namaskara is transfered to the Guru, who in turn passes it on to God. So the namaskara reaches God. Following these dynamics, our emotions and actions get a wonderful flow.

Om is a name for the Guru or the Supreme Reality. When we associate with a name associated thoughts come to mind. This itself is our sadhana. It is an upasana. To describe something, we have to use various words but just one name is enough to bring the whole picture to the mind. It is like a password. One name opens up the whole file. If we associate these names with the Reality and understand their meaning, then without any effort meditation takes place. A name taken, consciously or unconsciously brings all the associated feelings to the mind.

Chanting the names of the Guru or God is a meditation. Even praying or chanting without full concentration is beneficial. The names associated with Gurudev's paduka puja bring a feeling of reverence to the mind. Sadhana is the practice of bringing to the mind, the name, along with the associated feeling, again and again. All we have to do is to put the thought into the conscious mind. In time it becomes a part of the subconscious and then no effort is required. Every time we take the name, the mind becomes pure and single pointed. This is dhyana.

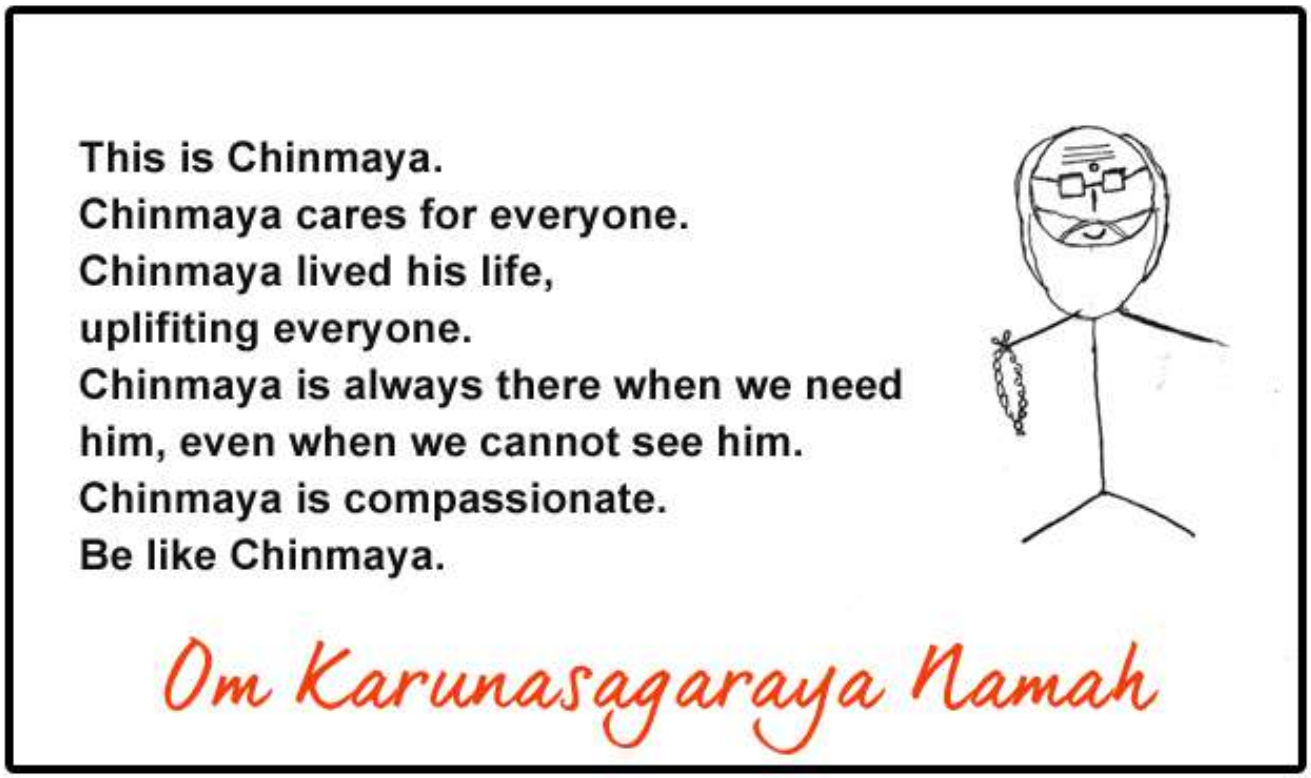
Name has an association and when we give up a name, everything associated with that name is dropped. A childhood pet name conjures up associations with that name. When a girl gets married, her name is changed and she acquires a new identity. All past associations are dropped. The new name cannot be associated with her childhood memories. In the gurukula system, when the student went to the teacher, he was given a new name to ensure that old associations and thoughts are dropped. The student is then open to be associated with new ideas and new thoughts.

To the One we associate as Om, the Knower of Om, our prostrations.

OM OMKAARAVIDE NAMAH!

278. OM KARUNASAAGARAAYA NAMAH

09-02-2016



Om Karunaasaagaraaya Namaha

Offered by Shri Guruswamy Prakasam,Tamil Nadu. In 1993, when he wished to do the Vedanta Course at Sandeepany, Shri Prakasam took voluntary retirment from his post as Commissioner of Income Tax.

Salutations to Him who is an ocean of compassion

One meaning of the word Guru is eerati iti – One who swallows. The Guru swallows imperfections and impurities of disciples, out of compassion.

In Tamil there is a saying 'Adikkira kai than anaikkum - 'The hand that disciplines (adikkira kai) alone (thaan) is the hand of embrace / love / care / compassion / be with you even during hard times (anaikkum).'

Gurudev exemplified this statement. He ensured discipline in us and held us with His compassion.

In one of the Sidhbari camps, a brahmachari student while partaking food, went up to add some salt. For few successive sessions, Gurudev would bring in salt in the course of his discourse and express anger to its full. The very next day, he was full of love for him. Gurudev, a realized master is one who has conquered the 6 inner enemies of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy. His expression of anger is for our inner cleansing.

In 1982, there was fire in our house just before the camp at Sidhbari. Gurudev started His discourse with 'If house is on fire, try to put it out. Else stand apart and enjoy'. He taught us to have a right judgement and evaluation of situations, thus reducing agitations in our mind.

In 1988, on return back of the entire family to Chennai, from the marathon Vivekachudamani camp at Sidhbari, my wife was skeptical whether Gurudev was a realized master – 'say yes or no,' she asked. A family photo of ours, taken with Pujya Gurudev, was received the very next day and was shown to Gurudev by our youngest son aged 8 years. Gurudev turned to my wife and indicated to the shiva lingam seen above him with the beam of light. This picture is reproduced in 'He did It'. Unquestioning faith in the Guru is required and Gurudev took efforts to even instill this faith in the hearts of his devotees. He recognized peoples' insecurities and rushed to reassure them.

During the 1993 yagna of Pujya Gurudev at Tirunelveli, I sought permission again to join the Vedanta course in Bombay. Pujya Gurudev conceded saying 'Now, I recommend'. On applying for the course which started few months after Pujya Gurudev's Samadhi, Pujya Guruji accepted me saying 'When Gurudev has recommended, why doubt ..?' In his compassion, he wanted all of us to possess the wealth of self knowledge, in the face of which, the worldly wealth is nothing.

Gurudev took time off to touch the fragile hearts. He effortlessly took efforts to express His love for us. Every time that he applied tilak on my forehead, he said 'For you and your children' and on communicating this to the family members on return, they would be excited and would wait to see Him again.

Gurudev loved seeing us grow several inches in stature before His own eyes. He appreciated His devotees' efforts in public and private. We had put efforts to make

our children learn by heart various Sanskrit hymns, the Bhagavad Gita and a few Upanishads. Gurudev appreciated them in public by giving tangible gifts. Also he called them as vedic sisters which name is etched in their memory for all times to come.

Compassion and love means remembrance. Once in Coimbatore Chinmaya Gardens camp, a devotee showed Gurudev a receipt for an amount of Rs. 0.25 sent by Pujya Gurudev many years back. Gurudev recalled and then enquired of the devotee about each of his family members.

In Neyveli, I requested Gurudev for a paduka of His. Immediately, He wrote out a note to the manager - Sri Ranganathan 'Please issue a pair of paduka free of cost'. He said 'Send this to Bombay through Balan. They will send'. On return from a foreign tour a few months later (to Bombay), knowing that the paduka was not sent yet, He sent the Paduka through Sakuntala amma. Thus Gurudev came to live amidst us.

The moment paduka was placed in the puja room, there was a brilliant light which sent me a few yards back. Remembrance is compassion.

Compassion results in accommodating all within ones embrace. In 1988, our son Ramana aged 7 yrs would sit in the first row along with the brahmacharins during the camp. Someone might have asked him to go and take a seat at the back of the hall. He did, and thus came to come along with Pujya Gurudev when he entered (the yagnashala) and thus everyday he sat in the front row. When a question was raised by a devotee whether he understood anything at all, Gurudev said 'Whenever I crack a joke, he is the first one to laugh'. He was fed with love by Gurudev during the bhiksha vandana-s offered to Him.

The symbol of compassion is service which comes around full circle. True service inspires service, which completes the circle. Gurudev worked tirelessly for making us view life from the spiritual standpoint, working on the hardest of hearts and inspiring them to serve by creating a field, wherein whatever your interest, you can participate. His life and work is a vivid expression of His compassion.

OM KARUNAASAGARAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH

ॐकरुणासागरायनमः

Offered by Brni.Anupama Chaitanya,Jamnagar,Gujarat

Salutation to the compassionate One.

The Lord is the ocean of compassion, says the scriptures. It is only through great saints we can understand what it means to be the ocean of compassion. Just as the ocean is vast and endless, so too the Lord's compassion is also endless. Hence the comparison.

Gurudev's personality was so dynamic that His soft and compassionate heart used to get hidden, but each and everyone who came in contact with Him, has experienced this flow of immeasurable compassion.

A devotee I met recently, shared her experiences with Poojya Gurudev which held me spellbound.

After listening to Poojya Gurudev the first time, she was mesmerised. Once after a lecture she quickly tore a piece of paper and wrote a message to Gurudev that she would like to have a 'Naam' to do the 'Japa'. She gave this to Poojya Gurudev.

Gurudev wrote to her a letter telling her to come meet Him and take the naam, along with other instructions. But she could not go meet Him, owing to some reason.

Then Gurudev wrote to her once more - to come and take the Naam from Him. This time again she was unable to go honor His request.

Once when she was performing the Paada-pooja of Poojya Gurudev, Gurudev gave her the name with which to do the naam japa. This time though she got the naam, she was unable to do the japa itself!

Another chance came her way. She was fond of taking aytographs of mahatmas. So too she asked for Gurudev's autograph on the Holy Geeta. Gurudev asked her to read two verses from the Gita, everyday. She could not follow this instruction either! One more opportunity came her way: Gurudev signed on one more text on another ocassion and gave the same instruction with His signature on this text. This time too, she failed.

After all this, when she wanted to join the Dharma Sevak course, Gurudev encouraged her to do so. On another occasion she wanted to join the Vedanta Course (without leaving her job). Gurudev agreed to that as well.

Inspite of not following the instructions given to her, He kept on showering His grace again and again and yet again. Such was His compassion for devotees!

Till today she keeps receiving the grace of Poojya Gurudev in one way or the other.

He never stops being compassionate, because that is His essential nature!

Om KarunasaagaraayaNamah!

OM KARUNAASAGARAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Hemantini Bhatia,Mumbai

Samastajanakalyanae Niratam karunaamayam'

(He who full of compassion was ever engaged in the welfare of all people.)
That was my Gurudev.

Karuna is compassion, sagar is ocean. Gurudev was indeed an unfathomable ocean of compassion,which accepted all of us with our loads of filthy vasanas. He rejected none who came to him seeking help. There was no ‘otherness’ in his compassion.



Hemantini ji with her study group

For him, all of us were manifestations of Brahman, equals in His magnanimous care

and concern. He was full and complete, expecting nothing, wanting nothing. His was a pure and unadulterated 'love that asked no questions, love that stood the test and laid down upon its altar the dearest and the best'.

I write about Pujya Gurudev from my own experiences with him. I came to know him and love him through his letters. He accepted me unquestioningly as I hesitantly made my way to his holy feet. In an age where letter writing is almost extinct, he tirelessly answered every single letter of mine in his spacious, sprawling handwriting on the most elegant stationery! Each letter would be brimming over with his 'love'; his vocabulary overflowed with 'kindness' ,'gracious' and 'thanks' – words rarely used these days. And each letter had a hidden message, an advice which I have lived by all these years.

His deep love and concern for me and mine was warmly expressed in the little details of ill health or success in an exam or some project. Every problem he smoothened out, every celebration he rejoiced in. Whether it was my slipped disc or Narottam's heart surgery or instructions for Shri Trilokinath at Sidhbari, he cared for it all. He rigourously monitored my studies and advised me, "it will be wonderful if you join the senior dharma sevak course", and appreciated my "taking classes and trying to guide others towards what you now understand and enjoy." And he joked in his inimitable way "you must realise that all these years your grey hair was false. Now body is also getting grey!"(1992)

His most loving gift was a post parcel of his vastra which has always been my invaluable treasure. All this, when he quietly admitted, "it's now getting impossible to spare myself for even rest!!" I was wonderstruck how he managed to find the time to express his compassion and love, despite the mountainous work that he was dealing with.

His selfless, causeless compassion saw him in the military cantonment hospital in Sidhbari. That was in the year 1991, because of 'overexhaustion', and later in Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai. With inexpressible gratitude, I simply say:

''For the love of me he came,

How can I look upon his face,

For shame, for bitter shame?''

OM KARUNASAAGARAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARUNASAAGARAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Smt.Neeru Mehta,CM-Ahmedabad,Gujarat

Om Sri Chinmaya Sadguruve Namah!

Every naam of the ashtottara is a ray of light indicating the "eternal chaitanyaghaNa" (or mass of eternal consciousness). Param Pujya Gurudev's swarup - Om karunasagariyanamah- I surrender to the one who is the nature of Om and is an ocean of compassion.

In Indian tradition karuna, kindness or compassion is regarded as the highest virtue. One sees all living beings as part or extension of one's own self.

Our Swamiji is an ocean of compassion. This spontaneous experience happened on the day of my acceptance by Swamiji. I thanked Swamiji with tear filled eyes for graciously coming to Ahmedabad on 5th February 1973, first to Param Dham for shilanyas (khaatmahurat - foundation stone laying puja) and then the same puja for our new home (named 'Ashreya') being built at Navrangpura in Ahmedabad. While he laid the first brick of our home, He simultaneously initiated the foundation of my spiritual life too. He looked with moist eyes full of compassion – eyes which are imprinted in my heart forever. He gave me back the notebook where I used to write my thoughts and feelings after hearing the first few discourses in SandeepanySadhnalaya- Powai.

On that book, He wrote the following words -

"As I have accepted you, your doubts are my responsibility. I love you as you love me, this is what a Guru does to a disciple. The action and reaction are equal, but not opposite. The only trouble with me is, I am without time. All the hours are in the sewa (service) of all devotees. They multiply- but you are a special one I don't know why.

"I had tears in my eyes. Swamiji looked towards me with such compassion and affection, no words could possibly describe such a look. Sitting across the table from me, he said "I will divert the course of this current, the obstacles and situation against you. Don't worry; together we will spread the message of true dharma (essential truth) throughout the world." Swamiji showered grace, his eyes an ocean of compassion enveloped me, purified me, charging the spiritual energy.

The beautiful verse in Vivekchudamani aptly describes my feeling at that time.

Swamin namaste, Nate lokbandhow

Karunya Sindhow Patitam Bhavabhdow.

MamudharatmiyaKatakshadrishtaya

RijwatiKarunyasudhabhivrishtayaa.

O master, o friend of those who reverentially surrender to thee, thou ocean of mercy I salute thee, save me, fallen as I am into the sea of change, with a direct glance

from thine eyes which rain nectarine Grace supreme.

Later throughout in life his compassion has been a blessing for me.

Once in Mumbai I was delayed in the traffic for a few minutes. I began praying in my heart that Swamiji may not leave before I arrive at Powai. As soon as I reached and did pranam, he pointed to himself and said "ocean of kindness."

I quote here a para from my diary that I maintained during my travels with Swamiji. "Walking with Windows of Light" – as it has been named, is being published on Swamiji's 100 birthday, on 8th May 2016.

An excerpt dated 29 June 1975

During a satsang in Montreal, Canada, speaking about Masters, Swamiji said "Some masters sit on dry soil and call; some masters dive back into samsaar, and wet their clothes because of infinite kindness, compassion". Like when parents teach small children they come down to their level, in the same way, infinitely kind is the merciful teacher who has to come down to the level of the disciple to communicate the Truth.

Such is the compassion of our Gurudev. Prostrations to Him,

Om KarunaasaagaraayaNamah!

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,Chennai

In Srimad Bhagavatham there is a definition of the word ‘Sadhu’. In that, three words are very important.

*Titikshavah-- those who endure their own pain and problems.

*Karunikah those who are sensitive and compassionate to others’ pain and problems.

*Suhrudah sarvadehinam-friend of all embodied ones.

Gurdev's endurance of his pain, and compassion towards others’ pain, is known to

everyone who knew Him, watched Him, worked around Him. Out of compassion to humanity He hurt his health, ignored His body and worked till He cast off the visible body.

Today, He continues to work invisibly amidst us.

Once in Hyderabad, I was present when a devotee asked Sri Gurudev, “Is there a short practice for those who cannot go into the depths and rigorous sadhana of scriptures?”
Sri Gurudev said live for others. Paropakararthamidamsariram.

Gurudev lived totally for others. He started several schemes for the downtrodden like Hari Hara Schools, Cord Hospitals,Training Centres and so on.

Every Breath a Teaching, page 58and59 –

Shobha Joshi had lost her only son. All the time she was feeling very sad, she had lost all her confidence.

One day,she went to meet Swamiji for the first time at someone's home. She was standing among a group of devotees when Swamiji came out of His room.

The minute she saw Him she said to herself, "Here is a person who loves all humanity. "

"You have come, Amma (mother)?” said Swamiji, “I knew you would come. I am happy."

And at that moment,she felt for the first time, happiness stirring inside once again.

Gurudev healed many other hurting and frightened hearts with just the right touch and right word for each person who approached Him in need.

Every Breath a Teaching page 66

In the airplane, Swamiji had sat next to an elderly lady who seemed very nervous about her arrival in Phoenix, Arizona, which was also Swamiji's stopover before His connection to San Francisco. The lady was anxious because of an apparent heart condition.

"Who will meet you in Phoenix?" asked Swamiji.

"I don't know " she answered.

So when they arrived in Phoenix, Swamiji accompanied the lady to her relatives’ home in a taxi and then returned to take his flight to San Francisco. However, His scheduled flight had already left without Him. He was put on another flight, but no one in Chinmaya Mission knew about the change. When He finally did arrive in San Francisco, nobody was at the airport to receive Him. He had to call the organisers to arrange a ride to His residence.

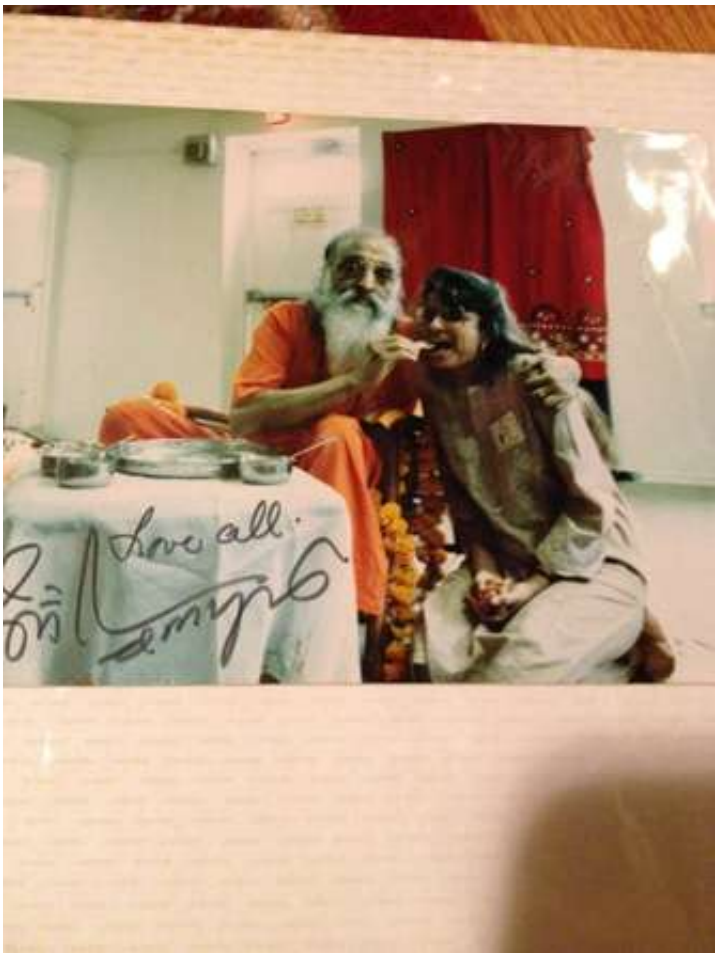
To such a compassionate One, my prostrations.

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARUNAASAGARAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Ashlesha Madhok, Founder of CM Twin Cities, USA. Currently serving on the Board and teaching Balavihar.

I had quite a few questions about life when I was doing my medical internship at the Brown University in Rhode Island, in 1986. I was going through a difficult time where I was working very hard taking night calls every third night and was separated from my family and loving friends. I did not have time to connect with my co-workers because at least initially we were working too hard and had no time to make friends.



Gurudev's Compassion

During this hard time, some how I felt that I could find my answers in Bhagwad Gita and started reading Gita on my own. However, since once needs a Guru to understand Gita (which I came to know later on), I could not understand Gita on my own.

When I finished my internship and came back to Washington DC, I joined Chinmaya Mission Gita Study group, thinking I would find my answers and I did not.

Then one member of the study group, put pressure on me to attend Gurudev's camp at the American University in Washington DC in 1987. At first I resisted her pressure quite a bit, because again I was busy with a job and part time school. However I gave into the pressure and attended the Camp which transformed me forever.

I was sitting way in the back of Gurudev's lecture hall which was full and there were about 150-200 people. I was a thirsty person, who must have been thirsty for knowledge. Gurudev's lectures quenched my thirst. In addition I felt totally

complete and full as I was bathed by Gurudev's "VachanAmrit"....I do not remember what the lecture was about, but I will never forget how I felt.

I felt so complete and full. I had no desire to meet him talk to him or go near him, but another study group member put some pressure on me to meet Gurudev. She took me Gurudev and introduced me to him as a study group member who had lots of questions. Gurudev looked at me and called me near him and said "Give me a sample of your doubt". As I went near him, I was nervous and shaky and had no doubt. So he asked me to sit near him. I just sat there quietly and soon devotees brought Bhiksha for Gurudev. As he started to eat, HE fed me with his own hands. After the Biksha, he allowed me to do seva of his feet.

After this camp, I continued to feel his presence, a sense of completeness and fullness for quite some time afterwards. All my questions either dissolved, or got answered or became irrelevant.

The love he showered upon me by feeding me with his own hands and giving me the opportunity to do the seva of his feet was a pure act of compassion.

To that Gurudev, the most compassionate One, my prostrations.

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH!

Om KarunasaagaraayaNamaha!

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,CM-Mumbai

Swamin Namaste Natalokabandho, KaarunyasindhoPatitam Bhavaabdhau!
Mamudharaatmeeya KatakshaDrshtyaahrijvadi Karunya Sudhabhivrishtyat!

“O Master! O friend of those who reverentially surrender to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I salute thee, save me, fallen as I am into this sea of change, with a direct glance from thy eyes which rain nectarine Grace supreme!! ((Vivekachhodamani – V-35)”

This is a verse that provides with a perfect prayer addressed to the Guru! Thus I prostrate to you, Poojya Gurudev, who is an ocean of mercy and compassion! Thy mere Kataaksha (Graceful glance) launches a creature (jantu-jeeva) to the Creator! This is a trick of “stooping to conquer”, as you said! But one falls within the sight (drishti) of a Satguru, only by the Grace of God!

It is said in Sandilya Bhakti Sutram, often quoted by Tapovanji, “Mukhyamtasya hi Kaarunyam! (The prime factor is verily His Compassion)!

Bhagavaan Ramana says:-

" Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru's grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken! Sometimes in his life a man becomes dissatisfied and not content with what he has, he seeks the satisfaction of his desires through prayer to God. His mind is gradually purified until he longs to know God, more to obtain His grace than to satisfy his worldly desires. Then, God's grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee, teaches him the Truth and, moreover, purifies his mind by association.

The devotee's mind gains strength and is then able to turn inward. By meditation it is further purified and it remains still without the least ripple! Since God and Guru are in truth not different, the source of compassion is from Brahman only!"

I was on a pilgrimage to Sabarimala Temple, a forest shrine in Kerala, for Makara Vilakk (Makara Samkranti) in January 1977, for the first time. There I happened to meet, by chance, a person, who explained to me and narrated the ideal behind the idol of The Lord Ayyappa (Dharmasaastha). He expounded the significance of Chinmudra -the sign of Chit (the Consciousness). I had a good darshan of the Chinmudra of the Lord on that Makara Samkrama Muhoortham! I returned to Mumbai.

After two months, I happened to go for a picnic to the Powai Park (Mumbai) and was guided to Sri Jagadeeswara Temple, and further to SandeepanySaadhanaalaya! Thus the Chinmudra nudged me to Chinmayaananda and I fell within my Master's sight!God took the form of my Gurudev and appeared in front of me!

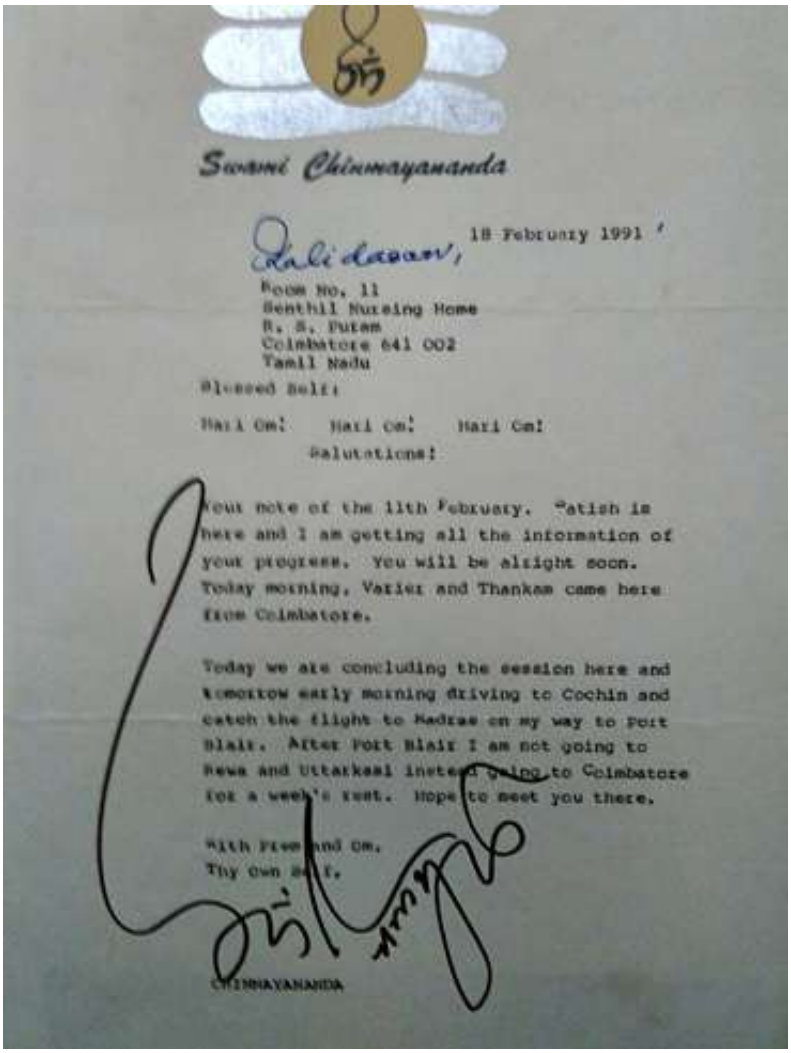
MukhyamTasya Hi Kaarunyam (Prime factor is verily His Compassion) like His Gurudev quoted!

There have been many instances of His compassion towards me and my family. The following is one such instance.

Once in 1991, I had a slipped-disc and was admitted to a nursing home at Coimbatore. It was a severe one and I was flat on the bed. I received a letter from Poojya Gurudev:-

"Your note of the 11th February. Satish is here and I am getting all the information of your progress. You will be alright soon. Today morning, Varier and Thankam came here from Coimbatore. Today we are concluding the session here and tomorrow early morning driving to Cochin and catch the flight to Port Blair. After Port Blair I am not going to Rewa and Uttarkasi instead going to Coimbatore for a week's rest. Hope to meet you there."

With Prem and Om, Thy Own Self, Chinmayananda



Swami Chinmayananda

18 February 1991

Lalidasan,
Room No. 11
Senthil Nursing Home
R. S. Puram
Coimbatore 641 002
Tamil Nadu

Blessed Self:

Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!

Salutations!

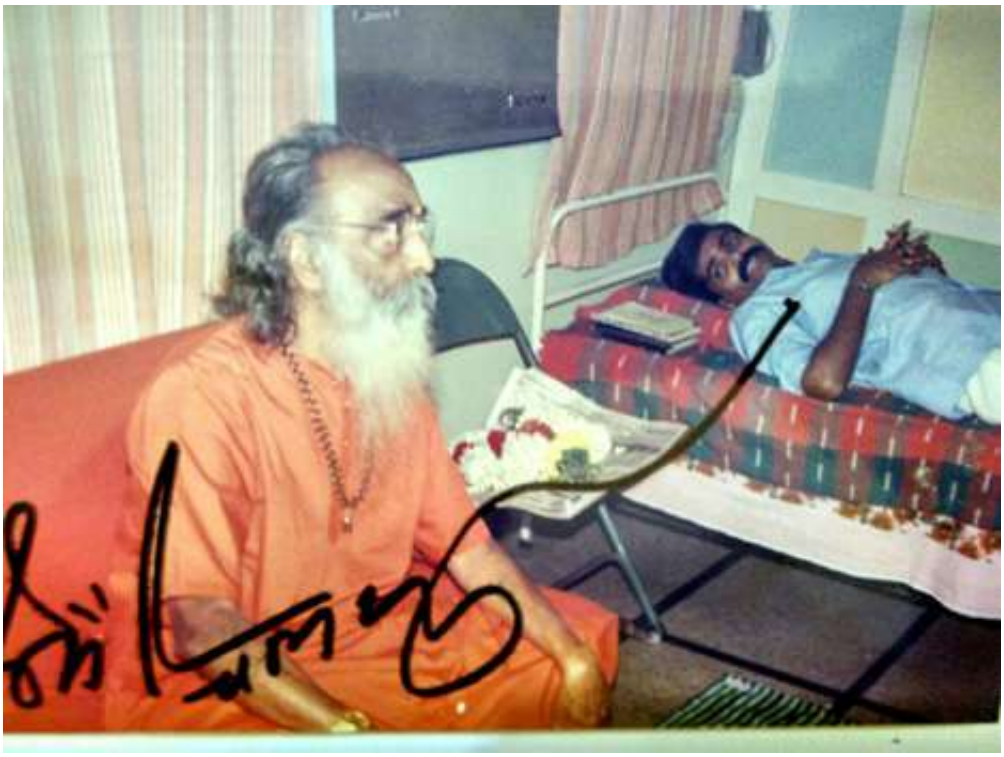
Your note of the 11th February. Satish is here and I am getting all the information of your progress. You will be alright soon. Today morning, Varier and Thankam came here from Coimbatore.

Today we are concluding the session here and tomorrow early morning driving to Cochin and catch the flight to Madras on my way to Port Blair. After Port Blair I am not going to Rewa and Uttarkasi instead going to Coimbatore for a week's rest. Hope to meet you there.

With Prem and Om.
Thy Own Self,

CHINMAYANANDA

The letter



Kalidas ji with Gurudev during his slipped disc

Look at His Compassion and mercy! He even cancelled a retreat to His Guru's abode Uttarkasi and came to Coimbatore for a 'week's rest'! He came to the nursing home, met me, sat beside me, got me out of that condition and made me mobile! I still remember, when He came in, I was out of my body sense! I felt no pain! I received Him with the PoornaKumbam! When I attempted to do the Paada Pooja, He said "No, let your mother do it." And she did! I was asked to lie down on my bed while the padapooja was going on. Later own when I looked at some photos He signed, I realised, that a transmission was going on, as if some therapy was taking place in His divine presence! His Compassionate extended signature reached my body! To that ocean of mercy and compassion, how won't I prostrate!

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARUNAASAAGARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM-Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Ocean of Compassion

My salutations to the one who is an ocean of compassion. Compassion is love expressed in action. This is the most beautiful quality of the Teacher. It blesses even those students who are not qualified to receive the blessings. It may take a lifetime to be remove our defects and impurities and become fit students. The Teacher out of compassion overlooks our imperfections and blesses us. The compassion is causeless and infinite like the ocean.

It is easier for the Realised Master to remain absorbed in the bliss of the Self, free from the worries of the world. It is only deep love and compassion that makes him leave this blissful state to come down to the level of the world and bless mankind.

Gurudev's deep compassion led him to undertake this extraordinary journey. He set himself a gruelling task, to reach out to maximum people in minimum time. Each day of every month and each month of every year was dedicated to the service of humanity.

In the early days, Gurudev conducted long jnana yajnas, extending to over a month. In the morning, he would speak on an Upanishad and in the evening on the Gita. During the day he would speak at different forums and attend bhikshas (take food) at the homes of devotees. Sometimes early morning he would conduct meditation classes. Often he would take a walk or yatra through the town, to generate enthusiasm and create awareness in society.

He had his talks transcribed and distributed as yajna prasad. In Delhi, in the early days, he publicised his own yajnas. Wearing a vest he would get on to a cycle rickshaw and announce his yajnaa , over an old-fashioned loud speaker. Saying that a famous swami was in town, he would invite people to the lectures. In the evening, he would wear his sannyasi robes and speak from

the podium.

When he left a city after a series of discourses, people felt lost. They shared these sentiments with him. To remedy this, he began a scheme of study through the formation of Study Groups. Likeminded people were able to come together, study and reflect on what they had heard. Later, he began Bal Vihars, YuvaKendras and Devi Groups. The crusade of a single man is today this huge organization called Chinmaya Mission, with more than 350 centres worldwide.



Swami Nikhilananda

It was his idea to have guru dakshina envelopes with the names and addresses of the donors. This helped him to keep in touch with his devotees. After attending bhiksha, he would write to his hosts, send them his blessings and inquire after all of them by name. He built up this huge empire by interacting compassionately

with people and taking care of them. His main purpose was to spread the message of the scriptures.

He went to various places, across the world and even spoke to people in clubs, while they were busy enjoying their drinks. The Indian ethos is different from what you find in the west. Despite this, his compassion took him to various countries. He reached out to people with different value systems and habits.

Sometimes people have no compassion even for the Master. They make outrageous demands. When people build new homes or work places they want the Teacher to go there and bless the structure with their presence. There were times, when he was ill and could not even walk properly but on the insistence of devotees, he would go and visit the room or building they wanted him to bless. Once he told someone, who wanted him to bless his home, “Why do you want me to bless those bricks? I am blessing you, is that not enough?”

279. OM KARMAPARAAYANAAY NAMAH

10-02-2016

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vilasini ji, Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC), USA

Om KarmaparaayanaayaNamah:

Salutations to the one engaged in action (service)

In 1970, Swamiji had a very serious heart attack in Mysore, India. His devotees and doctors were worried about preserving his health. They would try to monitor his diet, his exertion, his medicines, and of course, especially his travel schedule! But after a very minimal rest period Swamiji insisted on resuming his travels and getting back on the yajna trail. Swamiji would get winded during his classes because of his vigorous and dynamic style of speaking. So his doctor relented, and said, “If you insist on giving discourses, at least keep a tank of oxygen nearby.” Before and after the talk, Swamiji would breathe oxygen from the tank. But it didn’t slow him down in the least. He always loved giving talks that tens of thousands of people would attend daily for ten days at a stretch. Swamiji was least concerned about preserving his health he



would tell us. “My work is to serve Him. Keeping me alive is God’s work. He will keep me here as long as He wishes.” “Thy Will, not my will!”

In 1980, a medical exam revealed that Swamiji’s arteries were severely blocked and he would have to undergo immediate by-pass surgery to avoid a potentially fatal heart attack.

Up until this time, in spite of anginal pain, Swamiji had followed his entire schedule of yajnas and camps. After hearing that his heart was so compromised, he commented, “I never noticed I was tired at all until you gave me this news! I’m amazed how tired this body feels after hearing this!” That is probably fortunate that Gurudev observed the frailty of his body, otherwise he might very well have refused the surgery that made him cancel his next few months’ schedule but surely added years to his life.
To that indomitable spirit that worked and worked, our prostrations

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAY NAMAH

Offered by BrniAnupama Chaitanya, Jamnagar, Gujarat

To reach the state of perfection, one needs all 3: Gnyaana, Bhakti and Karma.

However, in every life one of these is found to be dominant. This has found to be dependant of the persona of an individual.

We see this so vividly in our guru parampara. Our paramguru Swami TapovanMaharaj was knowledge personified, exemplifying Gnyaana Yoga. Gurudev’s dynamism shone bright in His activities (karma). And Pujya Guruji’s bhakti is so vibrant and visible. These were the predominant aspects we saw about them.



Gurudev's dynamism has been sought to be explained by many in different ways. Some saw His discipline (Anushaasanapriyah); some saw His language skills (Aanglabhaashavidduttamah); and so on. Whatever aspect was made visible to us, what comes through is His devotion, dedication and discipline towards duty and work. He also left some scenarios for us to enjoy, such as this one:

At Every Breath a Teaching, PG 22

Desk Puja

Gurudev had just arrived at Shimoga in the state of Karnataka where one of His yagna was to be held. He inquired of the organisers, "Is my puja saamagri ready?" (the Sanskrit word samagri means 'material used' and refers to the items used by priests in worship, such as, conch, bell, lamp, sacred rice and so on).

The devotees were puzzled. Gurudev quietly explained, "Are my table, writing pad, pen and table lamp ready? – that is my puja samagri!"

***

Gurudev's life was dedicated to spreading the Knowledge of the scriptures to maximum people. After He came down to the plains in 1951 and until 1993 when he left his body and even thereafter, was completely and entirely dedicated to the scriptures in one form or another – either teaching, or writing (letters and books) , or lecturing or guiding anyone who came in contact with him. Through his actions – be it thought, word or deed, he served.

To such a KarmaparaayaNah, our prostrations.

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAY NAMAH!

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAY NAMAH!

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananada, with his permission



Swami Mitrananada

*Gurudev had great respect for the work that people were doing around him. Not just people around him, but also other organizations that were working around him. Gurudev's vision was so vast that everything came 'within' his self. In his vision Chinmaya Mission was one more organization among all others.

*Gurudev did not look at the Chinmaya organization alone as the object and direction of his effort and energy.

*Work was the highest, even above the organization. Even individuals came later.

* To know the vision of Gurudev and how he worked: The individual is the front and the messenger. If he does right, then it is the message in the Gita the Upanishadas, that people would appreciate; if the message misfires, then it is the individual who bears the brunt.

*That is the stand, that is the vision he had and that is why we say salutations to him who was constantly engaged in work. Work was his highest priority; he did not engage in promoting his acharyas or swamis or the Mission. He knew his work lay in spreading the scriptures and all the disciples were a part of the same mission. That is what Chinmaya Mission is!

*Eknath Ranade, a great visionary of this country, had this vision that we need to build a national monument for Swami Vivekananda, that would be an inspiration for people. The place he chose for this was a rock, 500 meters off Kanyakumari, India's southern most tip. It was to this rock that Swami Vivekananda had swum to in 1892 and spent 3 days in meditation, seeking enlightenment for India's future.

Gurudev gave a sum of Rs 1 lakh to Ranade so that work could begin. He did not simply dip into his coffers and hand out Rs 1 lakh; that would have been simple and easy as well. Gurudev chose to collect Re 1 from every individual he would meet to propagate this! One rupee per person means he would personally meet 1 lakh people and tell them about that project. It was not merely collecting money; itwas informing 1 lakh people about the need for theVivekananda Memorial, what it can do for people!

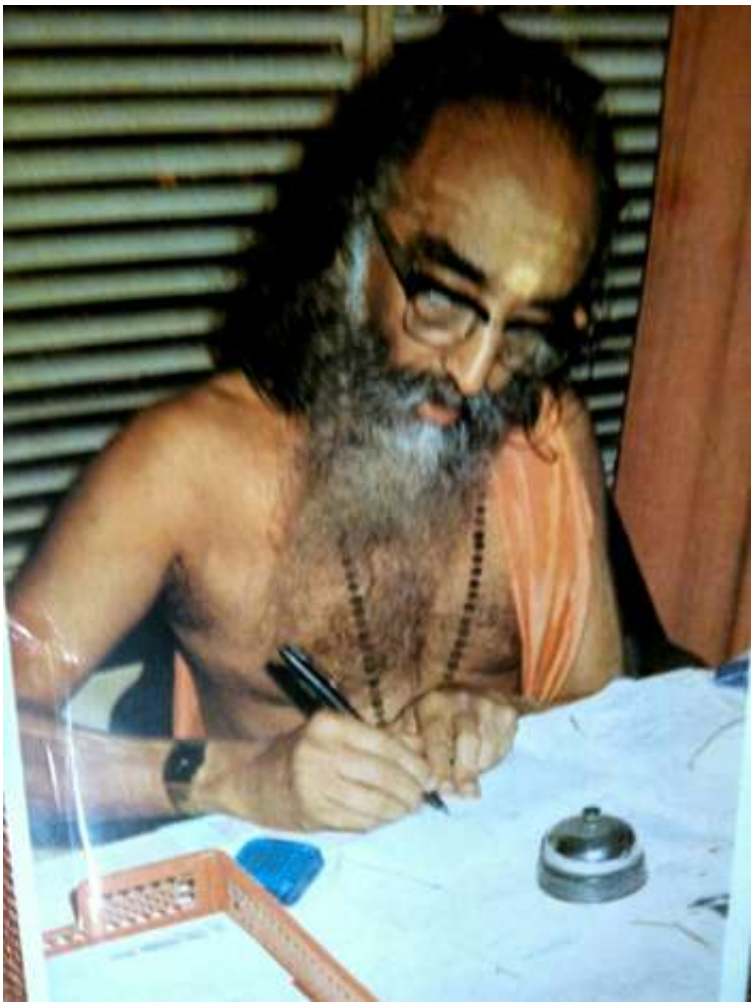
To that dedicated One,

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

This morning I woke up with the thought of Hanumanji. And when the newspaper arrived, I opened to the Editorial page and instantly spotted "The Speaking Tree "in The Times of India. And there He is. As if coming down from the Simsupa tree. A Model, amazing example of inspirational leadership.



Brahman at Work

This was followed by a fine print “Swamiji will discourse on Hanuman Chalisa, February 11-16, 6.30-8pm, at Chinmaya Mission, Lodhi Road.”

“Plan out your Work and Work out your Plan,” thus said Gurudev.

The above plan was worked out in such a way that the speaker on Hanuman Chalisa, introduced Hanumanji a day before. See how meticulously, Gurudev, who is the planner and doer in all of us, planned His work and worked out His plans through Swami Swaroopananda! This was a prelude to tomorrow’s talks. Exactly how Gurudev worked -- always in the Present!

Poojya Gurudev writes, “Lord alone is the sole giver and doer. All of us are His Instruments whether we recognize it or not. Mere instruments.”

Brahman, the Supreme Reality is One without a second who is the Paramaatma and the Paraayana (Supreme Goal), who is Naraayana Himself. Karma Paraayana is the one engrossed in Karma Yoga (The Path of Action) while totally absorbed in Brahman.

Karma Yoga is a means to an end, not directly, but only as a preparation to the Path of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga); whereas the latter, which is attained by the Path of Action, leads to the goal directly without extraneous help. Karmayogi is the one going through the scheduled spiritual discipline of the path of action. I quote PoojyaGurudev :- "Putting the Mind where the hands are working is the Greatest Yoga." Therefore, for a Yogi, who is "yoked" to The Supreme Truth − Brahman, whose "sole refuge or shelter" is Brahman, all His Karmas (activities) are also absorbed in Brahman. Gurudev is such a Yogi. He is Brahman, the in-dweller in us.

When I renounce my doership He remains. He is the only doer totally engrossed or absorbed in Karma (Karmaparaayana). "An 'ignorant' acts from [out of] attachment to action, but the "wise' act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world, desirous of guiding the world."

To such a Great Siddha Yogi, the Yuga Purusha, who is working in society for the service of mankind, our Humble Prostrations.

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAY NAMAH!

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,Chennai

In the context of Sri Gurudev karma parayana means blessing the world all the time with nonstop tireless work. Though a sanyasi is above work, Gurudev's work is like Sri Krishna's where He says in Geeta BG 3:22.



Gurudev at the site of Delhi School inspection

Na me PARTHAsthikartavyamthrishulokeshukinchana.
Nanavapthamavaptavyamvarthaeva chat karmani.

It is for lokakalyan, lokasangraha, ie, welfare of the people, welfare of the (collective) world.
Sri Gurudev says in I Love You – (letters)‘you can't say you love flowers and not water the plants!’

How poignant!

Thus Gurudev an embodiment of unconditional love worked relentlessly. He said I will die with my boots on. And He did just that.

Gurudev's life is a commentary on karmani akarma and akarmani karma. (Work in action and work in inaction).
as well as BG 3:25 sakthahkarmaniavidvamsahyathakurvanthikuryadvidvan Tatha asakthah.

At Every Breath a Teaching page 28and29

Once while doing His correspondence,Swamiji was cutting out an article to send to a devotee. It was getting late for his rest time,but Swamiji was talking His time to do it perfectly. I was getting anxious for his rest time, so I offered to cut for Him,and He gave it to me. Since he was still sitting there watching me,I tried to do it fast so He could go for His rest. In my hurry, I was not meticulous as He had been. He took the paper from my hands and started cutting Himself once again.

As He was cutting,He said very lovingly "Always remember for Whom we are doing all this work".
Even today, I try to remember that all the work I do is done for Him,the Lord.

At Every Breath a Teachingpage 32-33

Before the last day of the yagna,the cover over the grounds collapsed under the weight of the rain,destroying the dais. Immediately,arrangements were made to hold the last talk inside the college auditorium next to the grounds. And so it happened. The last lecture was held inside a closed hall lit with petromax lights,and thus the yagna went on uninterrupted.



Gurudev on site: Chennai Vidyalaya construction

In a letter following the yagna,Swamiji wrote, "I am so happy that the yagna went on --despite all storms!"

A similar dedication to continuing the planned programs,no matter what the obstacles,is reflected in a letter Gurudevwrote, dated January 25,1958:

“Here 23rd a fire broke out and gutted the entire pandal (an awning for holding an event),just 30 minutes before the lectures. Thank God ...only some 20 people were there at that time. Before the fire brigade could come,every bit was down. So we held the discourse on the opposite road--an island under the tree--under the street lamp. It was marvellous!”

Some ten years later, in a letter to a devotee in California,He said:
“The work goes on. When we work selflessly,as an offering unto Him who dwells in all hearts, there is a bursting joy suffusing our entire being. To be under the halo of this joy is to be in spiritual unison with everyone and everything around us.”

In these pictures of Gurudev at work,we see Him exemplifying that spirit.

To that Karmaparaayanah, my prostrations.

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH!

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head,CM-Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Dedicated to Work

Work should be undertaken with dedication. Gurudev was steadfast and devoted to the work he undertook. Not only did he create enthusiasm for work in others but also followed it through in his own life.



Swami Nikhilananda

A Realised Master is not compelled by any past impressions. He works out of love and compassion. He has nothing to fear or gain or attain in this world. In the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan Krishna says,

न मेपार्थास्तकिर्तव्यंत्रषिुलोकेषुकञ्चिन|

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यंवर्तएवचकर्माणि|| ३. २२||

name parthastikartavyamtrishulokeshukincana,

nanavaptamavaptavyaavartaeva ca karmani.

There is nothing for me to gain in the three worlds. Bhagavan works for the welfare of the world and the cosmos, out of love and compassion. Work that is rooted in love is forceful and extremely effective. Everyone in the world works and in fact, nowadays people work even more.

Our vasanas or impressions force us to work, taking us towards the work we are suited for. We overcome past impressions with the use of effort, the power of judgement and will power. People work in a variety of ways and with differing attitudes. Some develop seva bhava and consider themselves sevaks or servants of the Supreme Reality.

There is no one yardstick to measure the results that come to us. Also there is no

connection between effort and the fruit of that labour. Some people work harder and for longer than others, yet the results that accrue to each are different. Sometimes we even feel that the result is not commensurate to the effort.

From the lives of great Mahatmas we learn, that though they worked for only a few years and spent fewer hours, their work had a tremendous effect. We find people worshipping their work and following in their footsteps, so that they too may be benefited. Places where Mahatmashave lived or travelled to, become places of pilgrimage and worship. Established in the Supreme, their work is a sadhana for others to gain the Ultimate Reality.

Words of great Masters are quoted for centuries together. The Vedas given out in moments of inspiration serve to guide spiritual seekers, till today. Jesus Christ's 'Sermon on the Mount' is even now remembered. Often we quote from the discourses of Swami Vivekananda, delivered during the course of his travels in India and abroad. Since the work comes from a very deep level, it has great significance. Even mundane actions like walking or speaking a few words can greatly influence lives.

We often meet people, the course of whose lives were changed by just one sentence from Gurudev. In our case, even though we say so much, nothing seems to happen. The words and works of a Master have a tremendous impact on society. Once Gurudev was asked, "Why does a Realised Master do japa or meditation?" He replied that they undertake sadhana, not for their own sake, but for the welfare of others. The Master sets an example for others to follow. They act so that others may be inspired.

Jivas are dedicated to action. Through right and sublime action the Teacher sometimes guides an entire generation. In some situations Masters may even have to go against the flow and this can be difficult. Pujya Gurudev, broke fresh ground by starting Bal Vihar classes for children, study classes for adults and conducting jnana yajnas. These ideas caught on. Other organizations have also followed the same pattern and it is today a great movement. Mahatamas have great ideas, the implementation of which changes the lives of millions.

Pujya Gurudev worked tirelessly till his Mahasamadhi. His itinerary was planned the whole year, though he left the body on 3rd August 1993. When asked for details of his programme for 1994, he joked that orders for the next year had not come and so he could not plan anything.

Many people are dedicated to action and can be called workaholics. There is a difference between addiction to action and dedication to action. The rare few Mahatamas who work without a sense of doership are applauded and the world follows them.

Prostrations to That Dedicated One,

OM KARMAPARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

280. OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH

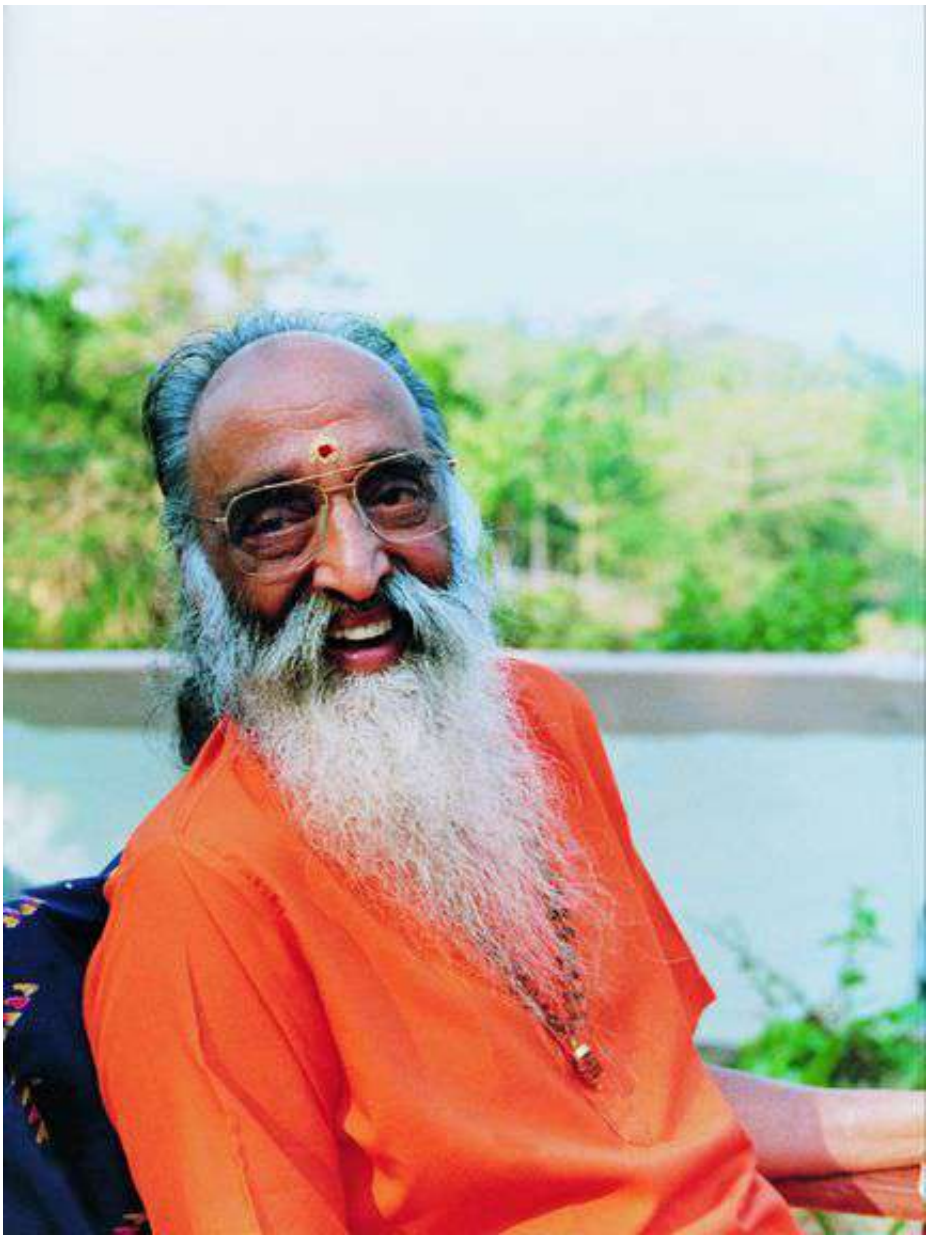
11-02-2016

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni.Shruti Chaitanya,CM-Puduchery

Salutations to the One beyond Time

Pujya Guruji observed in one of his discourses that in English the three periods of time are called Past tense, Present tense and Future tense. Thus most of us are tensed almost all the time. The generality of people brood over that which is gone, imagine and have fear about the future as to what may happen, and in present get bound by situations.



Salutations to the One beyond Time

Pujya Guruji observed in one of his discourses that in English the three periods of time are called Past tense, Present tense and Future tense. Thus most of us are tensed almost all the time. The generality of people brood over that which is gone, imagine and have fear about the future as to what may happen, and in present get bound by situations.

Gurudev is Past Relax, Present Relax and Future Relax. Time in which changes

happen does not bind Him. Srimad Bhagavad Gita (2.13) too indicates a Jivanmuktapurusha as one who isnever baffled by any change.dhirastatranamuhyati

Gurudev had promised to Anjali Singh 'I promise I will never leave you'. With ventricular failures occurring over and over again, an emotionally shaken and anxious devotee reminded Gurudev's promise to Him through a note sent to the adjoining room. He wrote back, 'if I leave you, where is 'you'?'

Gurudev is the very Existence – Sat. If we attune our minds to Him, we can feel His presence guiding us.

Practical implication:

a. Practice not to be bound by time: We sometimes wonder whether 'the time is bad' for us to start work and postpone work. If we can remember Gurudev, who is kaalaateeta, any time is right time.
Gurudev gave a watch to the 1st secretary of Chinmaya Mission, Chennai with an instruction to put it on his right hand. This is to remind oneself that whatever time I see is the right time for doing the noble work in hand.

b. Never be afraid of Time / change: On one occasion, when an anxious devotee approached Gurudev fearing about future fall of Chinmaya Mission, Gurudev answered 'So what? The mission was established to serve a purpose. If that purpose has been served, what's to cry about it?'.
In Gurudev's own words 'Be ever ready to 'face' all situations. Learn to meet all challenges and yet keep your inner balance. This is easy to one who is a devotee who can see everything as arranged by Him.'

c. Use Time as a standard to test ourselves: Gurudev kept up to his time. He would start the omkaara at the yajna sessions at exactly the time announced. Even the practice of sticking to time schedules, is a strict spiritual discipline in itself. 'Being on time' to being 'beyond time' is ajourney for us. Let us put forth Efforts to be on appointed time and Effortlesslywe will glide to Pujya Gurudev – Beyond time.

OM KAALATEETAAYA NAMAHA

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with permission

I was invited to talk at Vivekananda Vidyalaya on its 25th anniversary celebrations. In the inaugural speech, the Secretary of the school mentioned that 25 years ago, the foundation stone was laid by Gurudev.



But there was a story to tell. It seems, the stone-laying was fixed for a Sunday as they had learnt that Gurudev would be in town that day. Nothing would be better than calling Gurudev to lay the foundation stone at the bhoomipuja; and they conveyed all this to Gurudev.

Being a Sunday, the schedule was even more busy for Gurudev. There was samashti bhiksha that day, a trust meeting, after which the evening lectures. All 18 hours of Gurudev's working day was filled. So he said to the school organizing committee , 'OK I will come on my way to yajnashala; The Yajna begins at 6.30 pm, so you may fix the event for 5 to 6 pm. We will have the foundation stone laying ceremony and then I will proceed for my yajna. I don't have any other time.'

The organizers were thrilled that Gurudev had agreed to come. But when they went back and shared this, the others said, "No, no, ask him to come earlier!"

But what was the problem? Why was 5 pm not acceptable? Because, Sunday 4.30 to 6.00 pm is rahukalam – 'inauspicious time'. Now who will have the guts to start a school during rahukalam? A project like this, needs support from all sources (adidaivik, aadibhautik and aadhyatmik) and here was rahukalam, and there was Gurudev saying 'I will come at 5 pm.' So when will the pooja be done? Peak of the rahukalam! Foundation stone will be laid at the peak of rahukalam!

The organizing committee was divided. Some said, 'We cannot go back and ask for

another time; he has given a time, we will accept it. A rishi like him coming for this occasion is enough!' Others said, 'No no! Request for another time, may be 6.01p.m, all the dynamics would have changed by then. But finally the head of the organizing committee decided he was staying with Gurudev's time slot.

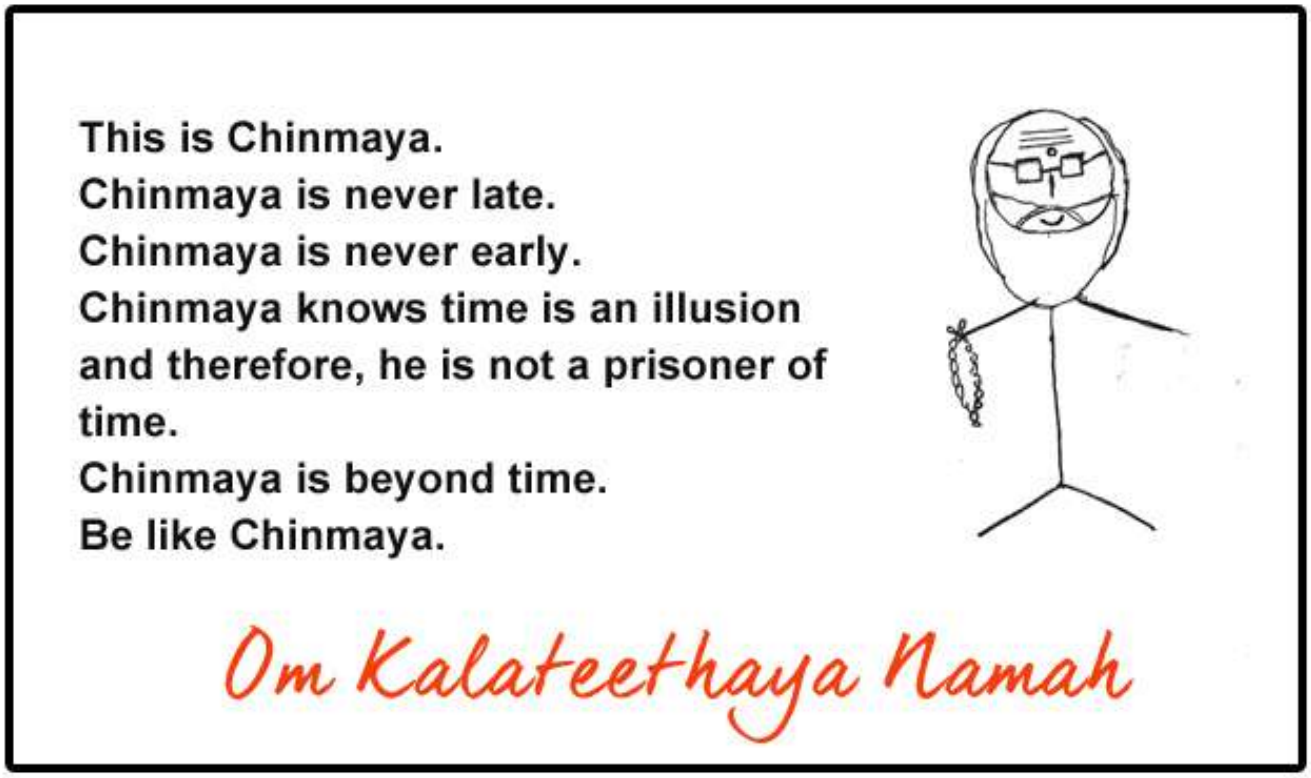
Aware that people were talking like this, Gurudev arrived at the inauguration site and just before the stone could be laid, he delivered the opening lines of his talk: "I have asked rahu to wait outside; you don't worry, he is not here."

I have asked rahu to wait outside. Recounting this, the secretary of the Vivekananda Vidyalaya said, "That's how it was.. and today we are 25 years old!" And the school is brilliant, one of the very good schools in the town, run with our kind of vision."

It is the purity of His intentions. Here was a person with such purity, such pure sankalpa, that if he invokes the Supreme, 'let there be no obstacles, let good happen,' then his shud sankalpa is realized.

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!



OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,Chennai

The first manifestation of creation is time, which is also in another dimension, Space. It is surprising that the relativity of time and space has been clearly dealt with in SrimadBhagavatam long ago, even before Einstein made a mention.

Thus anything which is a product of time and space is finite.

A brahmajnani goes beyond time-space causality, objectivity, etc. He becomes the very presence in whom all appearances manifest. Time belongs to the ego. Brahmajnani has transcended ego.

There is a famous statement "You can't pluck a flower without troubling a star. (Francis Thompson, English poet)" Sri Gurudev has also quoted this, referring to the interlinked complexity of life. Everyone has touched someone's life which will have a cascading effect in the future, much beyond one's life time.
If this is the case of an ordinary person, then what about Sri Gurudev who has touched the lives of lakhs of people, who has left a legacy of hundreds of acharyas to carry out His work, number of books that carry His messages and teachings, uplifting countless people in times to come!

At Every Breath a Teaching page 289-290

After His first ventricular failure, He made me a solemn promise "I promise I will never leave you. Remember that!"

Two years later, after more ventricular failures, I reminded Him of that promise on a small note I sent to Him while he was in an adjoining room, as I did not have emotional

strength to talk about it face to face. He put His reply down in writing on my note:

"If I leave you, where is 'you'? I am the very Existence --Sat (the all-pervading existence of Brahman, the Supreme Reality)."

Vedanta (Mananam Celebration Series) page 83

Who is born will die one day. Now where is Bhagavan Buddha and BhagavanSankara? Even Avatars have to leave the form. Where is Rama or Krishna Avatara? So never be discouraged by seeming death of the great Master. He is always with you. His presence is always there. Fearlessly, all of you go on the path He has shown you. Now the Mission is in the hands of worthy disciples. It will prosper manifold. (Swami Chidananda, Gurudev's gurubhai and former President of The Divine Life Society)

Gurudev himself told us, "The farther I go, the nearer shall I be to reach each one of you. This is a promise!"

To Him who is Beyond Time, our prostrations.

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya, Jamnagar, Gujarat

|| ॐ कालातीताय नमः ||

Salutation to the one who is beyond Time...

To go beyond something means to master it. Gurudev had mastered time. To become a master of anything one needs to give love and respect to it. Only by tons of love and respect alone you can win over something. Gurudev loved and respected time so much that people used to correct their watches looking at Gurudev's entry on the stage/Yagnashala. Never was he late even for a minute.



Even today during JyotiYatra it was noticed that everywhere His Paduka reached on time. No obstacles could stop them from reaching on time!
To such masters, time bows, is obedient, subservient.

Such was His control over Time That Lord death was ready to wait for him.

At Every Breath a Teaching, PG 25

"I Have Told Lord Death To Wait"

Many years ago, when I was still a Brahmachari posted in Pune, Gurudev had his first heart attack in Mysore. Devotees around Him panicked. On hearing the news, I went to Mysore. Everyone was worried. After two days, when Gurudev regained consciousness, he said, “I have told Yamaraja (Lord of Death) to wait. I have lots of work to finish.”

Our Prostrations to such a master who had conquered Time.

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,Mumbai

Time (Kaalam) is purely an intellectual concept, a span between two thoughts! Time does not exist unless it can be measured. The unit of time ‘second’ takes one to the first thought and then beyond to ‘no thought zone’ ie Timeless! Therefore, the one who transcended the Intellect has gone beyond Time or left Time behind! He knows that He is ahead and recognizes that Time is always behind! Time is the mighty factor that plays in the ‘recycling’ of the entire creation- the Jagat! Time ‘personified’ is Kaala (Yama) –The Dharma Raja! He is the constant companion ever since birth.

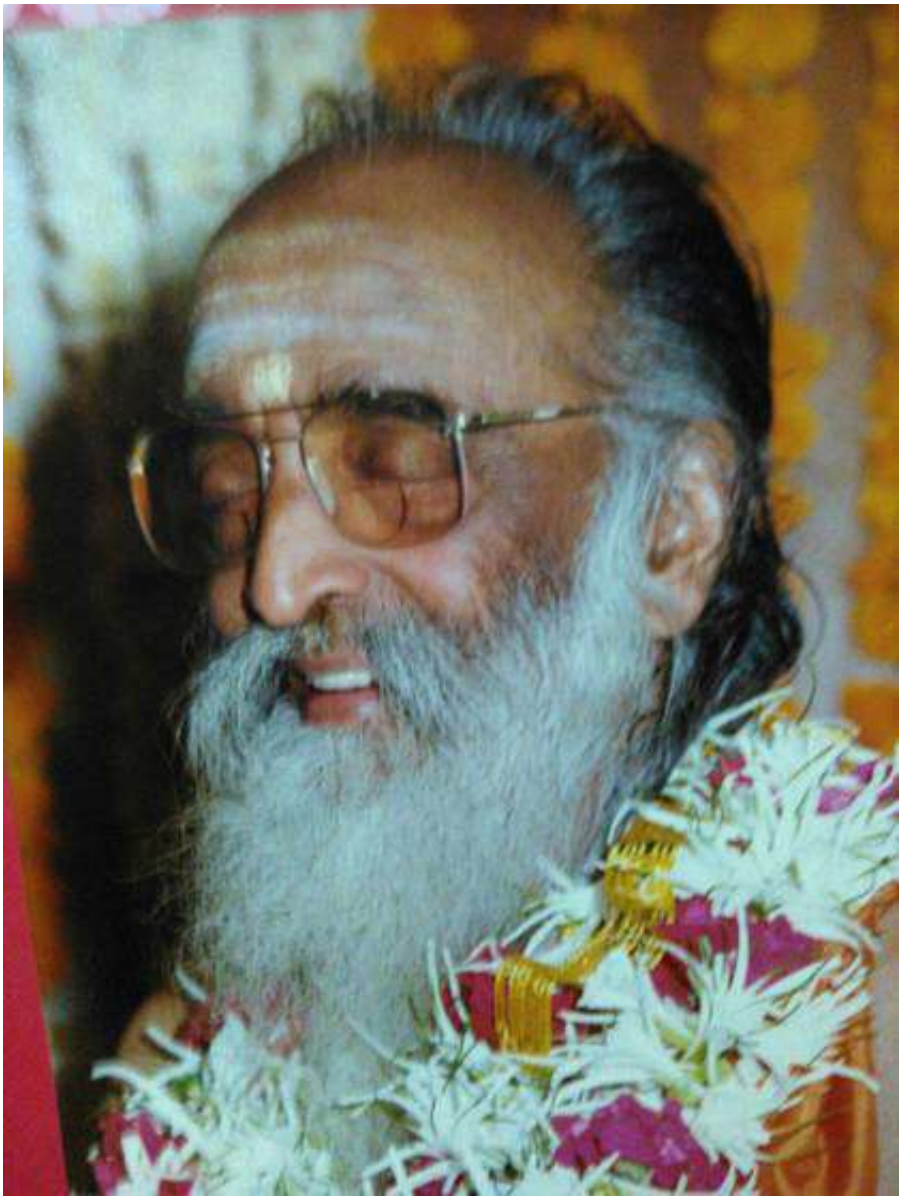
Poojya Gurudev reminisces what Tapovanji told Him in Dec 1956:-

“Chinmaya! When we are born death is born with us. He gave me so long a chance to live and experience. Now He, who was waiting so long, is coming to meet me. You say I must now run to escape Him? How mean? Here how I quietly lived; cannot I quietly die, hearing the Eternal Music of my Mother Ganga. Don’t weep. You go and continue the work…….come…….!” (Poyittvaru- in His Mother-tongue-Malayalam)! Thus He catapulted Gurudev beyond Time!

Poojya Gurudev, once during an interview, answered a question relating to death: ‘’When you move out of this body with everything that you have—all your equipment, your faculties –the condition of the body is called death. Everybody must die but nobody can die. This life of yours is one incident in your external existence. You will appear again in another body – in fresh pastures with a new body with a new wife, new children, and new profession --Maja hai marneme --- ye to hum dekh liya: phir naya jagat dekhega ‘’

Poojya Gurudev, once in 1992, came out of His room in Chinmaya Kedar (Tri-State-Center- Langhorne) in USA, holding on to Dr Patel (who later removed His cataract), singing away “Kim KarisyativaiYamah” (What can Yama do?) ! Guruji, who was next to me, narrated the story of Sage Markandeya, hugging on to Lord Shiva, asking “what Yama can do?”!

Swami Chidaananda His ‘gurubhai’ who arrived at Sharp Memorial Hospital, Sandiego on 1st Aug 1993, visited Gurudev, who was in the ICU on a ‘life support’ machine, met with His devotees and asked them to chant ChandrasekharaAshtakam, One of Gurudev’s favourite, every verse ending with “ Kim Karisyativai yamah”! This made His devotees very peaceful and calm!



Kaalaswaroopa ... ever established in Brahman

I quote His Gurubhai Swami Chidaananda, words spoken to Dr Shailaja Nadkarni. He said: - “Swamiji is Brahman. It is Iswara Darshanam to see Him. He is beyond the body. He has dived into and merged into Self.”

My Humble Prostrations to that Kaalaswaroopa, who always remained beyond Time -

established in Brahman - who came down, with in the realm of time and space, to take us beyond Time!

Om KalaateetaayaNamaha!

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Acharya Rahul Maini

Acharya Rahulji started attending Chinmaya Mission Dallas at the age of 6. After graduating BalaVihar, Rahulji became involved in CHYK and later attended the Vedanta

Course in SandeepanySadhanalaya with his wife Priyaji from 2011-2013. Priyaji and Rahulji served at Chinmaya International Residential School as spiritual teachers for one

year and are now serving at Chinmaya Mission Somnath in Northern Virginia



Acharyas Rahul ji &Priya ji

Acharya Rahulji started attending Chinmaya Mission Dallas at the age of 6. After graduating BalaVihar, Rahulji became involved in CHYK and later attended the Vedanta Course in SandeepanySadhanalaya with his wife Priyaji from 2011-2013. Priyaji and Rahulji served at Chinmaya International Residential School as spiritual teachers for one year and are now serving at Chinmaya Mission Somnath in Northern Virginia

Out of great compassion for the world, Pūjya Gurudev spread the message of Vedānta. He spread that knowledge, knowing which, everything is known; he spread that knowledge of the Supreme Self, knowing which one becomes the Supreme Self.

From 1951, when he came down from the Himalayas, until his Mahasamadhi in 1993, he brought this knowledge to the masses every single day without taking any vacation, without stopping for a break, in every corner of India and all over the world. He did so even in a state of fading physical health. By the early 1990s, the cardiologists told Pūjya Gurudev that he had only the use of 17% of his heart.

Even still, Pūjya Gurudev would go on those long physically demanding international flights, and have a jam-packed itinerary, giving lectures, meeting devotees,

inaugurating centers and having only 5-6 hours to sleep every night. Under these kind of conditions, most people would be bedridden. Where did Pūjya Gurudev get the energy to consistently and vigorously serve?

Pūjya Gurudev is a superhuman, who cast off identification with the limited body, and tapped into an infinite supply of energy. This infinite supply of energy resides in the infinite Ātman.

And Pūjya Gurudev is none other than this infinite Ātman. One name for Ātman is one of Gurudev's 108 names: kālātītāya - the one who is beyond time.

How can something be beyond time? Everything we know and everything we do happens against the backdrop of time. Everything happens in either the past, the present or the future.

Yet, Ātman is unique. It has a special quality that it ever remains the same in the past, the present and the future. Whatever may be happening, Ātman never changes. Everything else in the universe changes over time, yet Ātman is completely changeless; it never grows and never decays. It remains as it is.

Now, when something is the same in the past, and is the same in the future as it is now, is there really such a thing as past and future? Past and future are only a way to measure change. So when there is no change, there is no such thing as past and future. Where there is no past and future, we are left with only the present time.

But the present is only the present with respect to the past and the future. So where is no past and future, there is no present also. So for Ātman, there is no past, no present and no future.

That changeless Ātman is completely beyond past, present and future, and is beyond time itself. Ātman is timeless. The self is timeless. Pūjya Gurudev is kālātītāya - beyond time.

OM KAALAATEETAAYA NAMAH!

Om KalatitayaNamaḥ

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One Beyond Time

Kala is time and kalatita is going beyond time. The Sikhs greet each other with Sat

Sri Akala – the Supreme Reality is beyond time. We are all bound by time. We live through the present, past and future. The body moves from past to present to future. Our thoughts are within the framework of time. Time is the basis of everything. Science is also based in time. We learn about what happened in the past and what will happen in the future. Nobody can go beyond time. Emotions like fear belong to the future, while sorrow has its genesis in the past. Even the fear of death is because of time. Time threatens us all the time!



Swami Nikhilananda

Even our questions on spirituality are based on time. We want to know about the past and the future. According to science, time and space are related. If you are asked, 'How far do you stay?' You may say, 'I live 10 minutes away.' This establishes the relation between time and space. According to the scriptures the Reality is beyond time. So we come to some pertinent questions: What do you mean by beyond time and what is time? We experience time with respect to our thoughts. Time is the interval between two events. It is the awareness of sequence kramasamvit.

With reference to just one event, there is no experience of time. It is only with reference to the second, that we experience time. In deep sleep there is only one experience and hence no awareness of time. In the dream and waking states we are aware of time. Time is directly proportional to the thoughts in my mind.

Time is very strange phenomena. 'Time and tide waits for none,' they say. Every second is important. A second can make the difference between winning the race or not. In the normal course, we do not consider two or three seconds as being

important, but you may remember the three seconds that the earth shook you out of your equilibrium. Some seconds can make a deep impression on the psyche.

According to the scriptures the Supreme Reality is beyond time. The play of time is the play of thoughts. The whole play happens on the screen of the Supreme Reality, which is beyond time. Experience of this Reality, frees us from the bondage of time. The Teacher is one who has gone beyond time. If we are able to concentrate on the gap between two thoughts, we will go beyond time. The body or personality appears in time, as though plays in time and again merges into that which is beyond time. It is like a rainbow, which appears for a time, gives joy and then disappears. Mahätmäs are like rainbows. They appear, play their part and disappear in time.

Towards the end of his life TapovanMaharaj, fell sick. Gurudev wanted to bring him to Delhi for treatment. TapovanMaharaj had lived all his life in Uttarkasi and now that death was approaching, he did not want to hide or show disrespect, by going to Delhi. He wanted to meet Lord Death in Uttarkasi itself.

'In a moment is eternity and in the sand grain is the entire cosmos.' This holds the key to the mystery of life. When we become aware of a moment, we become aware of the whole range, till eternity. When we are not in the moment, our mind goes into the past and the concept of time takes birth. In the past and future, we become aware of time. Becoming aware of the present, we are freed from the bondage of time. 'Now' is the portal, which opens up the road to eternity or the state of timelessness. It is like patience, if we do not have patience, we become aware of time. But one who has infinite patience becomes free from time.

Once while traveling to Vaikuntha, Narada met a tapasvi meditating under a tree. Hearing that Narada was going to see the Lord, he told him to find out when he would get moksha or Realization. Further, he met two other tapsvis, who made the same request. After a few days he returned and told tapasvi 1 that he would gain realisation after 10 more lives. The man was upset and frustrated. He lost all interest in his sadhana and returned to the material world.

Tapasvi 2 also met a similar fate. Narada's message for him, also resulted in his becoming sad. Then he turned to Tapasvi 3. He was eager to know whether God knew about his tapas and what He had to say. Narada assured him that God was aware of his practicing austerities and it would take him as many lifetimes as there were leaves on the tree to realize his true nature. This man jumped up and started dancing in joy. He was ecstatic that at least God knew of his existence. He accepted the whole situation completely and that very moment gained realization.

Time is a very strange concept. When examined deeply, it vanishes. Like fog it disappears and instantly everything becomes bright and clear. The Teacher is one who has gone beyond time. Yamaraj, the Lord of Death is called käla because death is really nothing but the bondage of time. As soon as we break the mystery of time, we are released from its bonds. We have a great fear of death, time and object. Without this imagine what we would have done. We have restricted our desires, because of this fear. Without this fear of death, we would have leapt from the mountain tops, dived into the depths of the ocean or walked into blazing fires. This fear acts as a restraint, even though we know that death comes regardless, with or

without fear.

Paradoxically, we accept the existence of time and meditate on that which is beyond time. Time is a great mystery and one who solves it becomes free. To go beyond time, one must be able to understand the present moment. To break the code of space, we need to be ‘here.’ Most times we are everywhere except here! The mystery of the object is solved by understanding oneself in this present body.

281. OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

12-02-2016

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya ShailajaNadkarni, CM Orlando



Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, was a yugapurusha, divine embodiment of pure love, compassion and divinity.

Once during the inauguration of his gnyanayagna in India, in Tiruvannamalai, Swami Cidananda – then head of Divine Life Society – was visiting. During the inauguration, Swami Cidananda said, 'Swami Chinmayananda is embodied Vedanta, walking and talking Vedanta.'

In the presence of Shri Gurudev, one completely forgot his own identity. Each and

every one of us felt that Gurudev loves us the most, even if he just glanced at us. This can only happen in the presence of God. He truly knew the heart of each and every devotee and took care of everyone.

After each bhiksha, devotees got his handwritten letter with a signed photograph. You could adjust the time in your watch according to Gurudev's entrance into the lecture hall.

At the time when he was admitted into the hospital, before his Samadhi, we all gathered in the hospital waiting room with heavy and sad hearts. After everyone left after multiple prayers of the Mahamrityunja mantra, in the night I stayed back. My heart was very heavy; my mind could not focus; I was tired, sad, and answering multiple phone calls that poured in enquiring after Gurudev's health.

At about 3.30 to 4.00 am, a call came. I got up and the voice on the other end said, "This is Cidananda. I have come from India to see Swami Chinmayananda. How is he doing?"

I answered, "Sadly Sri Gurudev is in critical condition."

Swami Cidananda said, "Guru is never 'critical'. Take your shoes off, go to his room and bask in the presence of Brahman!"

Anyone who had even a glimpse of Swami Chinmayananda in their life, had total IswarDarshan! My heart was light, my mind was clear, I felt like a butterfly. The stone on my heart was lifted.

I went to the 3rd floor to the critical care room. I felt and basked in Divinity. I realised Gurudev is none other than Brahman. It is not the way he walks, nor the way he talks, but how he understands and makes me know myself. I take refuge in him, he knows my heart and guides me on the path.

He is a yogi, he is a sage, he is my guru!

Om Tat Sat!

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,Chennai

SALUTATIONS TO THE ONE WHOSE NATURE IS ABSOLUTE ONENESS

The world that we know is a combination of the eternal and the ephemeral.
Brahman seen through names and forms is this finite world.
Seen through them He seems to be subject to their limitations.
We know ‘existence of’……’consciousness of’……’happiness through’ …. --- these are finite. To see existence, consciousness, happiness without any associations, is to experience the Absolute state. Where "That alone is" This is Kevala.

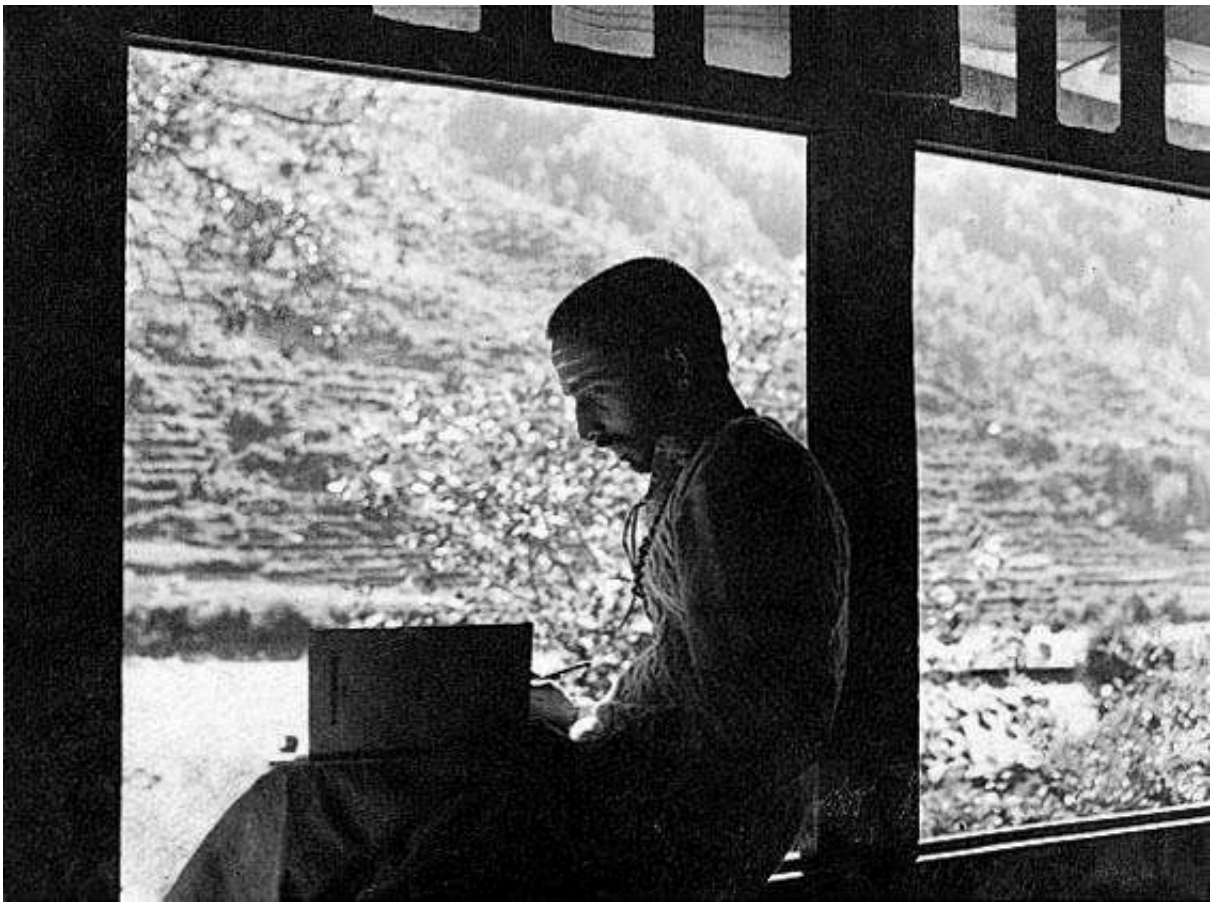
Gurudev was a Brahma Gnani who lived in His Swaroopa.
We will see some comments from Gurudev from Kaivalya Upanishad. Last verse.
"Kaivalya in Samskrita means "mere". Kaivalya is noun form of Kevala and, therefore, mereliness – meaning, homogeneous oneness. Thus when an individual transcends all vehicles and awakes himself to the fourth-plane-of-consciousness -- there the infinite Self alone "IS".
This experience of the One Truth (Bhuma) is indicated here as the "Kaivalya Padavi."

Naturally, the result of Kaivalya is the total awakening from all delusions and delusory sense of limitations.
Gurudev quotes His experience:

He Did It page 48
“Wonderful! No words to describe the inner peace I enjoyed, the concentration I achieved, the entire world forgotten. Forgotten are all worldly contacts, for I have come to live in myself. For the first time I tasted a bliss in meditation.”

At Every Breath a Teaching page 228
"The shirt may have gotten burned, but the Swami did not! Never mind. What does it matter?.

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!



Where That alone is .....

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,Mumbai

BrahmanandamParamasukhadam KevalamJnanamurtim Dvandvateetam GaganasadrishamTatwamasyaadiLakshyam EkamNityam VimalamachalamSarvadheesakshibhootham, BhavateethamTrigunarahitamSatgurum Tam Namami

“My Humble Prostration to that Satguru, who is, Eternal Supreme Bliss, bestower of Supreme Joy, merely an embodiment of Pure Consciousness, beyond Duality, Omnipresent and all-pervading like Space, indicated by That Thou Art (Tatwamasi) etc., One without a second, Eternal, Pure, immovable, the witnessing Intelligence of the Total-Intellect, beyond being (Existence and Non-Existence) and beyond and

without the three attributes (gunas)!"

Poojya Gurudev, abides in this "KaivayaPadavi" –The Status of Soleness andMereliness (Kaivalyam), whose true nature is Sat- Chit- Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss)! He is truly a mere embodiment of pure Consciousness-(Kevala Jnana Moorthi), a pure Consciousness- Concentrate (Chinmayam)!
Thus ChinmayamVyapiyatSarvam- All this is pervaded by thatConsciousness-Concentrate (chinmayam)!

Poojya Gurudev elaborately explains "This" and "That" in the phalasruti, (concluding verse) of Kaivayopanishad: -

"AnenajnaanamaapnotisamsaraarnavanaasanamThasmaadevamviditvainamKaivalyamphalamasnute----Kaivalyamphalamasnute iti "

"By this one attains the knowledge that destroys the endless experience of change (repeated transmigration). Therefore having experienced this, one attains the fruit of liberation (Kaivalya); indeed one attainsKaivalya."(Kaivalyopanishad.)

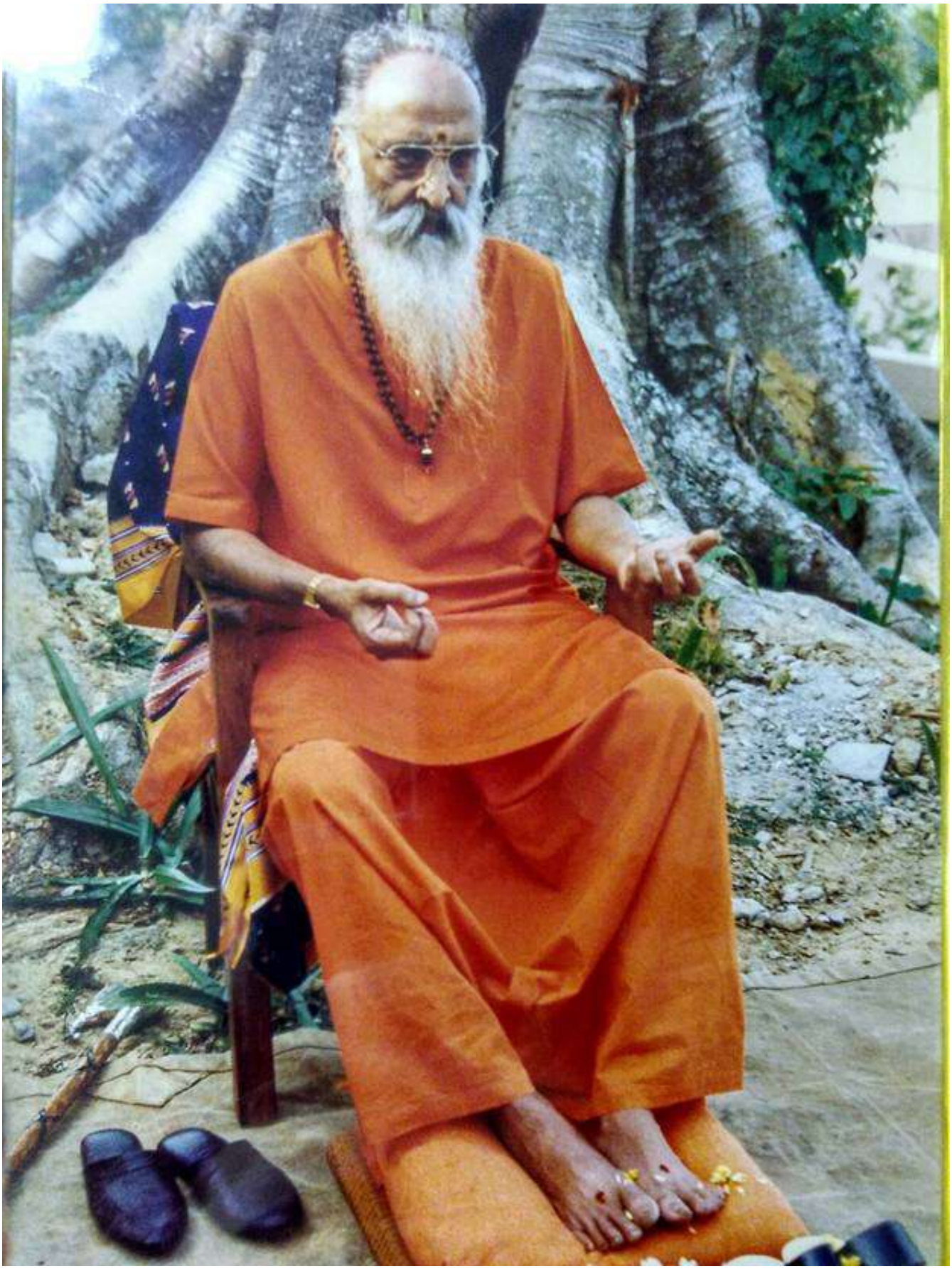
Gurudev nails this idea and reveals: - "This last phrase is repeated twice, which is the traditional style of Upanishads. It not only indicates that the Upanishad is over but also it confirms a statement which has no other arguments except the experience of the Masters"!

Poojya Gurudev elaborates: - "The Truth which was explained till now as"That" (Tat) is defined in this concluding stanza as "This" (Anena). In the language of the Upanishads it implied "the truth which was an object of intellectual appreciation only" "has now become a living experience, most intimate and dear", and hence the appropriateness here in using the pronoun"This" (Anena)."

Gurudev defines Tattvam as "The Reality"—That which is Eternal, the Essence! "That which one gains in subjective realisation is the Self"- SreeNaraayana!

And Tattvavit as "the One who has realised fully the Reality"—meaning the original essential nature of the Self. On realising the Self, the individual becomes the Self and, therefore, SreeNaraayana, that very Self, is the One Who has realised fully the Reality which is His Own Nature Divine!"

Poojya Gurudev, once after a music concert, looked at the Tabla player and remarked: - If a 'dead skin' reverberating 'Tat Tvam—Tat Tvam- TatTvam (mimicking the beats of a tabla) on a mere touch, can produce such a divine music, imagine the highs, a jeeva can reach, if this Truth reverberates constantly within him!



Our Prostrations to that Sole Satguru who abides in Soleness and Mereliness (Kaivalya), to that Tattvavit and Kaivalyaswaroopan who is SreeNaaraayana! Om Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha!

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One of the Nature of Solitude

Kevala means one, and the state of kaivalya is the state of being One. This is the state of solitude or oneness. There is none other than me. It is not the state of loneliness or frustration. A seeker need not feel sorry that others are having a good time, whereas he/she is alone. The experience of the Self is unique. If we were to walk into a room with mirrors, immediately we would see a crowd, but know without a doubt that the one being is reflected in all the mirrors. This state of oneness has a rare beauty.



Swami Nikhilananda

To achieve this state a seeker must be open and willing to ask - for Supreme Knowledge, for God, for the Guru himself. When we call out to Bhagavan or the Guru, we show our keenness to be the kaivalya that the Guru is established in. He is willing to give of himself. Unlike worldly teachers he does not keep anything back.

Humility is the key to the heart of the Guru. In Vinayapatrika, Tulsidas asks:

मांगततुलसीदासकरजोरेबसहरिमसयिमानसमोरे

mäìgatatulasédäsakarajore

basahirämaséyämänasa more.

Tulsidas with folded hands asks the Lord to reside in his heart.

In Ramcharitmanas he says,

?????? ?????? ?????? ?????????????

????? ????? ? ???????????????????

?????? ??????? ????????? ???????? ??

?????????????? ???? ????? ??

n?ny? sp?h? raghupate h?daye'smad?ye

satya? vad?mi ca bhav?nakhil?ntar?tm?.

bhakti? prayaccha raghupu?gava nirbhar?? me

k?m?dido?arahita? kuru m?nasa? ca.

‘I have only one desire. Please give me that nirbhara bhakti, where I am only dependent on you. Other than you I have no support.’ When we ask, we become receivers, we are open and we become small. We must want and ask for only the One. When the desire is so strong that even life is insignificant, we can achieve this state.

When we go to someone’s house, we find the door is locked. To have it opened, we have to knock. We have to show our inclination to enter and announce our presence. The Bible says, “Knock and it shall be opened. Ask and it shall be given.” First seek the kingdom of heaven and the rest will be provided to you.

Faith in the Teacher is of utmost importance on the spiritual path. There is one often related story about Sri AdiSankara and his disciple, Totakacharya. One day when Sri AdiSankara was about to begin his discourse, he noticed the absence of Totakacharya, who was a simple person totally devoted to the service of his Teacher. He would attend to all the menial tasks in the ashram and was, therefore not held in great esteem by his fellow students. They had amused expressions and wondered why Sri AdiSankara was waiting for him. They believed that his absence would hardly make a difference because he could not understand anything anyway. The Teacher intuited their thoughts and waited till the young boy arrived. He then ordered him to give the discourse for the evening. Totakacarya, without a moment’s hesitation bowed to his Teacher and began speaking. He spoke of the Highest Truth and this story is famous even today. He had complete faith in his Teacher and knew that if the Teacher is asking him to do something, he must do it. His surrender made him a perfect tool.

OM KAIVALYASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH!

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

282. OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH

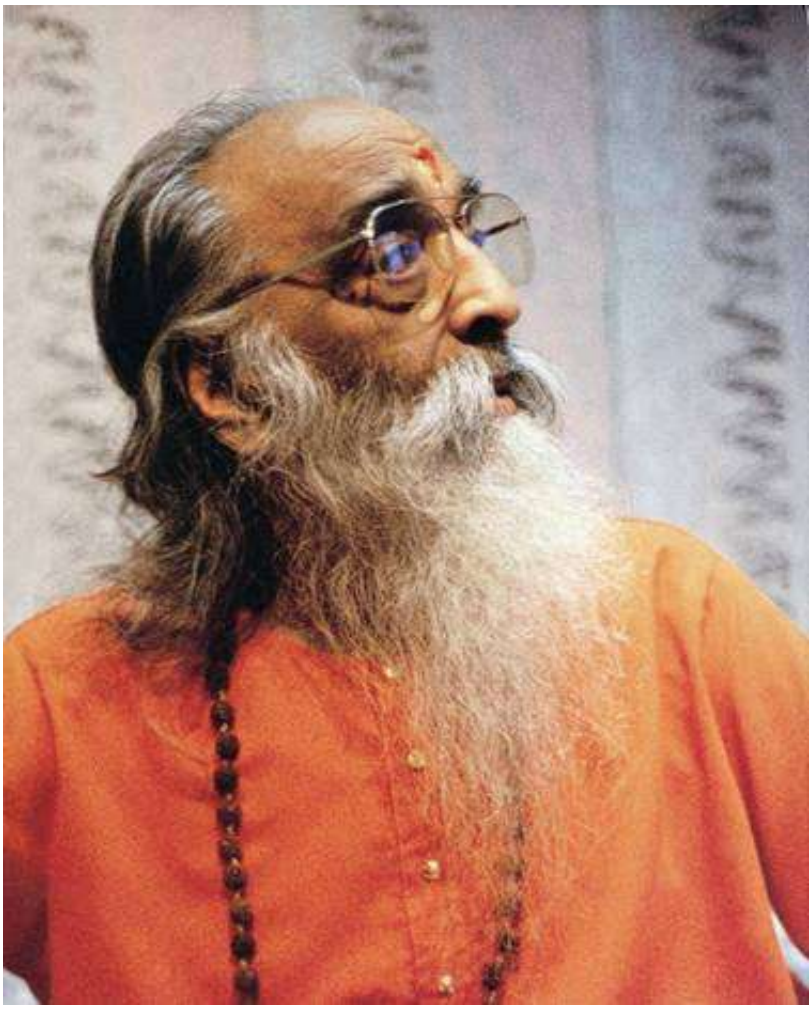
13-02-2016

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda

* Almost all the great masters/teachers be it Buddha, be it Sankara, be it Vivekanand, be it Gurudev…were all self-made. What does that mean? They started on their own, they evolved on their own, driven by the condition of society, the attitude which people had; they had a mission and a view and from there, these masters built up a movement, all by themselves.

* Who was there with Gurudev in this mission? He was a one man show, until the organization grew faster and larger so that Gurudev felt the need for a much larger team to sustain and continue his work.



One man one vision ……

* So where does he begin? Like Vishwamitra, Gurudev asked parents, “Can you give me your child? I have a vision to accomplish…. I have a plan, a plan called Sandeepany. I want people who will take up this work, can you spare your child?”

* More than 500 people did come forward! Over 500 families encouraged their children to study at Sandeepany.

Of those, 300 stayed back to serve Gurudev’s Mission; 200 took his training and teaching forward into the world.

* But go back to zero; when he started off in 1951, where was this 300? Yet in 35 years he had built an infrastructure where 500 people can come and study, who are inspired by the infrastructure’s confidence to train and teach, to uphold a mission and vision … how did that come to be?

* One man, one vision. He simply says, ‘just build the infrastructure, people will

come. Make the opportunity available, the right people will come!'

* He did it all by himself. Nobody told him you have to go and save this culture; nobody told him that you have to go and spread this knowledge. He chose the mission and the method and made it his own! This is jnana yagna!

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH!

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Brni Anupama Chaitanya

Salutation to the selfmade

You speak of Him and you feel inspired. He started the journey all alone. Alone He went on spreading the news of His lectures on the scriptures and texts, on a bicycle, stuck posters of His own lectures by Himself. The amount of love for the cause of the scriptures He had was so immense that nothing mattered to Him. When there is so much of Love for the cause, being small does not make any difference. Tirelessly He worked, day and night for the Cause that He was inspired by. What must be that inspiration!

Salutation to such a self made One.

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH!

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,Mumbai

Swami Chinmayaanada has been considered by many as the Yuga Purusha! He was an answer for the Twentieth Century! He treaded the path blazed by Swami Vivekananda in the previous century.

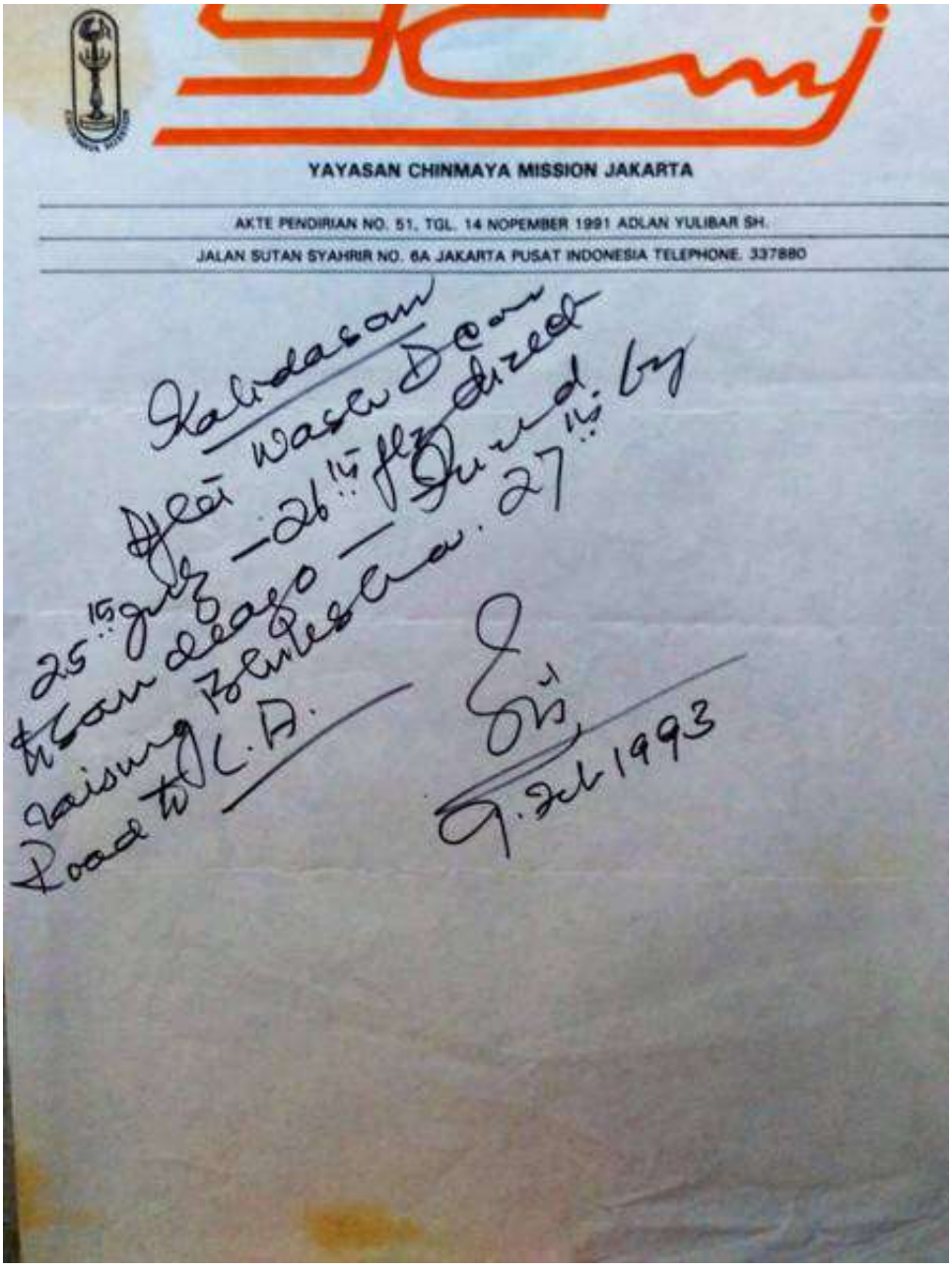
Swami Chinmayaanada emerged as the most powerful torch bearer of Indian culture during that century under whom the Chinmaya movement took birth, grew and permeated the Globe! The 'relay'stretches up to World Vision 2000 and beyond! Poojya Gurudev even had a 5 Min interview to a newspaper in Washington, on 'World Vision 2000' on the eve of His departure to Sandiego, on the 26th July 1993! This was while He was experiencing heart palpitations and skipping 20 beats (Pulse) per minute! He was scheduled to attend the inaugural function of World Vision 2000 on the 7th of Aug 1993! And at ' San die go' (as He called it) He left His body when He knew that it was not a utility anymore! He even despatched the "fund raised" (please refer the letter*) to Siddhabari, His Abode, before His departure to Scripps Memorial Hospital, prelude to casting away His body! Two dollar cheques were received; one each at Delhi and Siddhabari, before His mortal remains could arrive Home! The Saint is still 'on the go' and is going!—His Itinerarycontinues!



Bhiksha at 40,000 ft. With Kalidas ji

I received a letter* from Poojya Gurudev, written on the 9th Feb 1993 from Jakarta; it reads thus:-

"After Wash DC on 25th Jul –26th, fly direct to San die go —fund raising Bhiksha. 27th by road to L.A." Initialled Om!



YAYASAN CHINMAYA MISSION JAKARTA

AKTE PENDIRIAN NO. 51, TGL. 14 NOPEMBER 1991 ADLAN YULIBAR SH.

JALAN SUTAN SYAHRIR NO. 6A JAKARTA PUSAT INDONESIA TELEPHONE. 337880

Kalidasan
Dear Wash Dc on
25th July – 26th fly direct
San diego — fund raising
Bhiksha. 27th by
Road to L.A.

Om
9 Feb 1993

I received a letter* from Poojya Gurudev, written on the 9th Feb 1993 from Jakarta; it reads thus:-

“After Wash DC on 25th Jul –26th, fly direct to San die go —fund raising Bhiksha. 27th by road to L.A.” Initialled Om!

Krita (Done) is the first of the four periods contained in the great Yuga, when the genius of Truth and Right, in the form of bull, stood firm on his four feet, and man gained nothing by iniquity. In theMahabharata, the name 'krita' is used in a context where this can be translated to 'perfect' – the perfect age! The Yuga also is a concept of theIntellect. Krita, the genius- the perfect age is depicted as a bull, standing firm on his four feet. They are the Purushaarthas; (Self-Efforts); Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha. Purushaartha can be compared to a conveyor belt. Choice is yours; just to stand or walk. Anyway you will reach your goal, once you are at the first level- Dharma. The one who transcends three bodies; Gross, Subtle and Causal, arrives at the Fourth- State (Turiya) - Moksha! He, the Age-less, accomplishes that ‘perfect’ age and congratulates Himself “Well-Done!” Poojya Gurudev perfected that! Thus Our Prostrations to that Yuga Purusha, the genius of Truth and Right, who stood firm on His Fourth- The Turiya State of Consciousness! Om Kritaatmane Namaha!

Recently I came across a raster graphics editor called Krita! Krita is designed to be a digital painting application. This focuses on features more relevant to painting and drawing. Krita has a large set of options available to create a no- distractions canvas- only painting mode. Krita explicitly supports the Concept Art! Is it the application softwarePoojya Gurudev, the Master Painter – Artist used to paint the words in the moving canvas of the Intellectand to design His BMI chart?

Let us access the Dynamic RAM in us, The Dakshinaamoorti- the Lord of Medhaa Sakti (Memory Power), who is Poojya Gurudev! He will answer! Our Humble

Prostrations to that Incomparable Accomplisher

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH!

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu,Chennai

Sri Gurudev says in His commentary on Vishnusahasranama 788

"One who has fulfilled all His activities " there is nothing for Him to achieve. He is the Goal. He is the destination. In His Eternal perfection there is nothing more for Him yet to achieve. This sense of complete fulfilment is described in all scriptures as the state of Blissful Perfection."

This is the precise description of Kritatma.

In Geetha XV A Kritatma is said to be refined Self, meaning, free from ego and ego centric desires. Fulfilled, Self-achieved freedom from karma. Naishkarmya Sidhi.

In Tapovan Prasad August 2011 page 27
Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh later recalled this first meeting, describing his initial impression of Gurudev as "--very regal, very humble, very beautiful individual. Here was an individual truly contenTed. He was smiling and appeared friendly. I remember thinking that I can't live as I am while knowing there is somebody like this. I knew that whatever power I might gain, it would never be enough."

This state of KrItatma is the essence of Apuryamanam Achala pratistam in BG 2:70

At Every Breath a Teaching page 321

Gurudev: Your question is "why should he work?" Can you tell me why the Sun is illumining everything around it? Why fire is hot; sugar sweet; oceanic waters salty? Why birds fly; flowers bloom; mirrors reflect; air moves; earth revolves? Are they not expressing their essential nature? Can anyone of them remain without their essential property? The realised Saint is not responsible for what He is doing. He is one with Life. And Life expresses itself in action.

At Every Breath a Teaching,page 147

"My dear, you must learn to play with your prarbdha. I know the art. You don't."

He plays with the world having nothing to gain from actions or world. Kritakrutya.....!

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM-Delhi and NCR

Salutations to the Self-controlled.

The Self here means the body, mind and intellect. The whole personality, consisting of the physical, emotional and intellectual bodies is controlled. Sometimes the mind and body are opposed to each other. Each of them has their own agenda. The body wants to rest but the mind wants to indulge in pleasure. The Self is not restricted to a particular body but pervades all bodies. The Realised Master is in control of himself at all times and under all circumstances. On the surface, it may appear that his control has slipped but at the core, he is completely in command.

One brilliant swordsman, having learnt from his teacher, went on to win great acclaim in the world of fencing. He won many encounters but his teacher was still considered greater than him. Wanting to be the greatest, he challenged his teacher to a dueling encounter. The teacher readily agreed and the day and time were fixed.

The duel began with both teacher and disciple taking out their weapons. The student panicked when he saw that the teacher's sword was a little longer than his. He then requested the teacher to postpone the date. The teacher agreed and another date was fixed. The student got himself a longer sword and practiced in right earnest. Again they met at the appointed time. This time also the teacher's sword was longer. He again requested a postponement and on the agreed date, arrived with a really long sword. The duel began. It took him longer to get the extra long sword out of the scabbard. The teacher this time had the original small sword and so won the bout! Even though it appeared different, right through the teacher was in control of the situation.

To eliminate the ego requires an external force, which the Teacher provides. Some people say that they want to be their own Teacher. They strive by themselves without anyone's help or guidance. This in fact strengthens the ego. Without surrender to a higher power or superior authority it is difficult to eliminate this ego.

An incident from the life of Lord Rama will make the importance of surrender more explicit. Lord Rama went to Mithila for the svayamvara, along with many other princes, all of who had come to lift Shiva's bow. The bow represents the ego. Each one tried to lift and break it, because only the one who succeeded could gain Sita. Sita is the symbol of shanti and happiness. To break the ego or the bow on one's own, is impossible. Many of the hopefuls who tried could not even lift the bow let alone break it.

Lord Rama was a silent spectator to all this. If he had tried to lift it, even he would not have succeeded. Rishi Vishwamitra was also a witness to this spectacle. He saw Janak Maharaj becoming sad and despondent. He was concerned about Sitaji's fate. At that time Vishwamitra commanded Lord Rama to get up and break the bow. The Guru acted through him to break the bow. At that time, there was no ahamkara .

OM KRITAATMANE NAMAH!

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

283. Om Kritakrityaya Namah

14-02-2016

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Extracted from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda ji, with his permission

Salutations to himwho has fulfilled himself. The fulfilled one.

*Someone once said that walking the spiritual path is walking on the razor's edge. It's a brilliant statement. Truly it is a razor's edge.Few people choose to walk the razor's edge. It demands courage, it demands discipline, it demands commitment.

*For example say we take up a project. We are greatly enthused and desire to fulfill the work. But the desire itself can be so overwhelming that we can forget the goal! This is possible. When Shri Krishna says in Gita 'my maya is not easy to cross', don't underestimate it, saying ah,it's just the way he is saying it... No!It is exactly as Krishna says. His maya is not easy to cross. And knowing this, work with your goals.

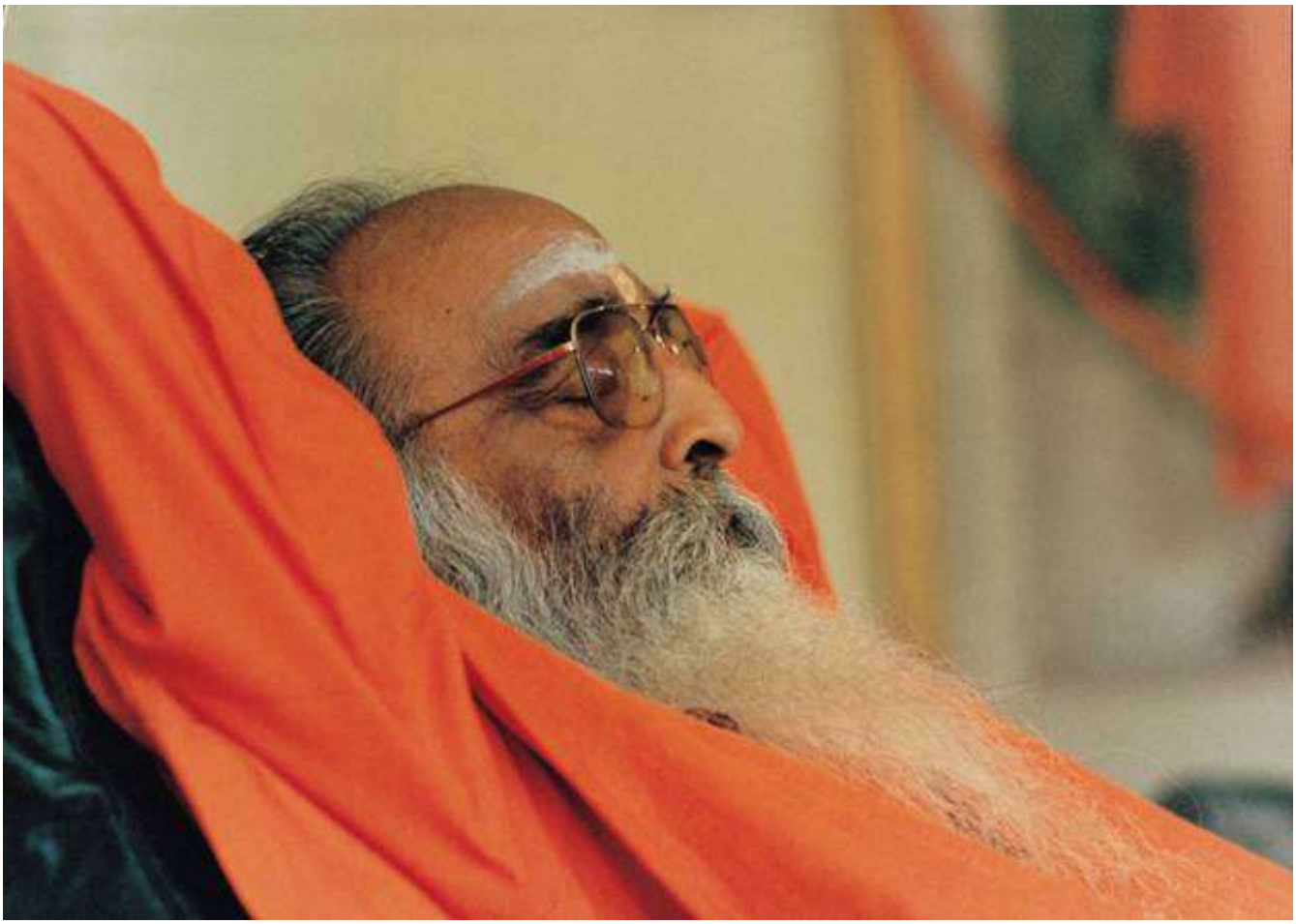


Sw.Mithrandha

* And this is where we need to differentiate between way of life and goal of life;Our ‘way of life’ is to spread this knowledge, to reach out, create a mass awakening, reach as many people – either through teaching or through practice. That is the ‘way of life’. Never mistake that to be the goal of life. But the vision should be on the goal of life. Engagement should be in and with the way of life. That is karma yoga;engaging the organs of action in work, controlling organs of perception.

*So what is Gurudev’s method? Self-unfoldment through study and service. The process is simple : study – serve- teach – study deeper. This brings intellectual clarity and service purifies the mind.

*About Gurudev we say Krtakrtyayanamah. He is a fulfilled one -- from the highest standpoint. His purpose of life is fulfilled. He has reached the goal, divinity.



Fulfilled accomplished perfect

And the effectiveness with which he worked at the process, with the ‘way of life’ --

that also was perfect fulfillment. So it's a fulfillment of the goal of life, with the perfect and appropriate fulfillment of the way of life. If we can find fulfillment in these two, truly we are also kritakritya. So fulfillment is to reach the goal, and that is had through a perfect way of life.

*His vision was such that he knew how to inspire the team to carry forward his vision and the system he had created. And the results, when they started coming, there must have been great fulfillment. People evolving, unfolding at various levels. Seeing lives unfold must have itself been a great fulfillment.

* That's how we must feel. Good, I have lived this wonderful life well, feel a sense of great satisfaction. The highest thing which we can do is, evolve. The second best thing we can do is, help others evolve. Anything else comes after that.

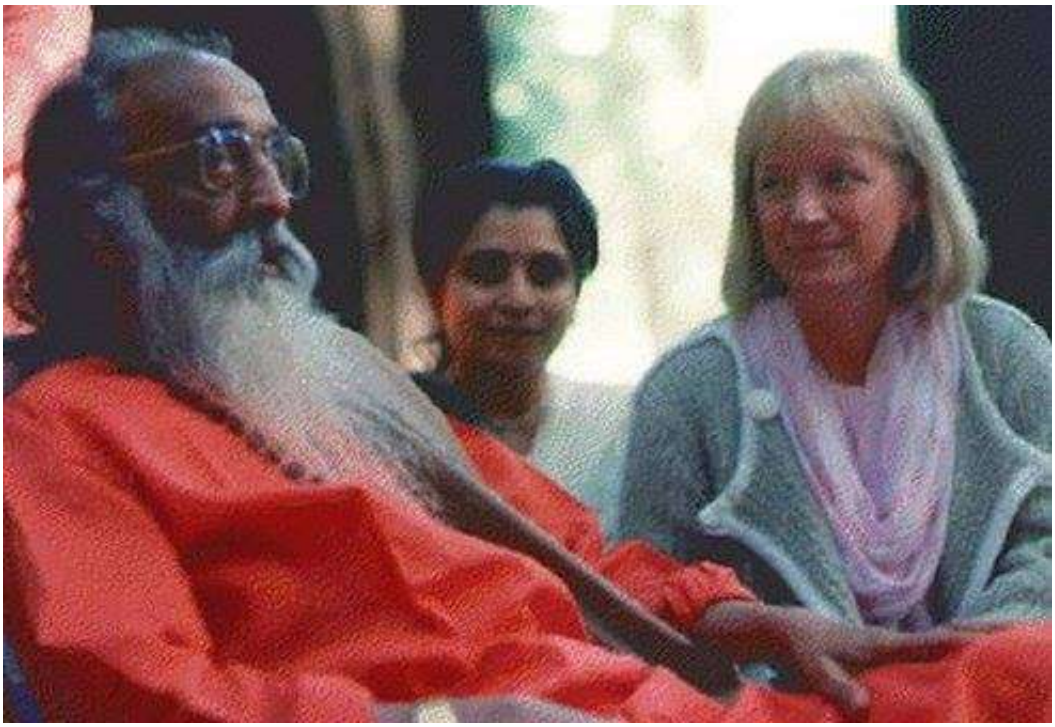
*Gurudev never depended on money power, never succumbed to money power. Once during a school board meeting, talk veered to fund rasing for a building. Someone offered to fund a whole block of seven classrooms but in return he wanted one seat every year! Gurudev declined and returned the offer of funds. As far as he went, at a spiritual level when you serve, your evolution is your benefit. If you seek any material benefit, then you are not evolving.

* This is how Gurudev was self made. Any funding that came with strings attached, he did not want. He knew God will support. With that kind of a faith in oneself – krtatmanah, he was also krtaktyah -- fulfilled, workwise, evolution-wise. We must strive to mould our life likewise.

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Offered by Ms. Rudite Emir, one of the longest standing devotees of Gurudev and author of the much quoted In Every Breath A Teaching, among other books.



Krishnalaya devotees love to talk about the Redwood Forests behind the ashram where Gurudev loved to take walks. Here is Rudite with Gurudev. She says, “Gurudev also held satsangs under those magnificent trees....”

Gurudev was ever content, no matter what the circumstances surrounding him. He did not need something outside himself to feel fulfilled, as he was already “the ever-fulfilled one.”

This was powerfully demonstrated to me many times, but one memory remains especially powerful. Chinmaya Mission West was experiencing grave organizational discord and turmoil. Those of us who were active in the organization felt the pain keenly, and the pain kept growing more intense by the day. During a Chinmaya camp at Krishnalaya (Piercy, California), I approached Gurudev in his kutiyaand knelt at his feet. With tears starting to flood my eyes and voice shaking,I told him how worried I was that the current tumult could endanger the very existence of Chinmaya Mission. His response was totally unexpected:

“So what?” he said. “The Mission was established to serve a purpose. If that purpose has now been served, what’s to cry about? If it’s His will, the Lord will provide us with another vehicle for work.”

To me, this incident has remained the ultimate proof of the incomparable degree of his detachment in face of what a normal mortal would consider potential failure of disastrous proportions. But, having risen beyond the ego, he was ever content, even

at the prospect of losing the organization that was the vehicle for his work.

He said, “The wise one sits happily, sleeps happily, moves happily, speaks happily and eats happily. He enjoys whatever comes to him unasked.” Gurudev demonstrated this again and again, in situations large and small. When the bed provided for him by his hosts was too small for his tall frame, no problem: “I slept along the diagonal.” When his hostess forgot to salt his panir, he said not a word during the meal, just dropped a joking remark afterwards when offered a second helping. When the main door to the building housing the lecture hall for an early morning class turned out to be locked, he proceeded with his lecture while sitting on the cold curb of the sidewalk in front of the locked building – and beckoned us to take our seats on the expanse of concrete in front of him.

One time a devotee asked him why he ate on a silver thali, implying that was not fitting for a sannyasi. He answered: “If the host serves me on a silver thali, I eat from a silver thali. If he serves me in my hand, I’ll eat from my hand. I have a comfortable bed now, but if it is not there, I’ll sleep on the floor.”

The Bhagavad-gita describes Gurudev’s equipoise in one succinct verse (IV:22): “Content with what comes to him without effort, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound.” Ever contented and happy, Gurudev’s equipoise was not shattered by the many pairs of opposites that life offers, be it heat or cold, praise or contempt, success or failure. He was ever fulfilled, ever content.

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,Chennai

Simple translation of Kritakrutyata is everything that has to be done is done. But the implied meaning is, one has found complete fulfilment within one self which does not depend on karma or karma phala. One who has transcended B M I.

In the case of Sri Gurudev this is true even with His blessings and contributions to the society or humanity.



Hemuji and his study group

All that He visualised and dreamt for cultural renaissance, in all details, covering all aspects, have been achieved in His own time.
What made this monumental service was His concern and total unconditional love for the suffering humanity. He wanted to share what He got. He had to face lot of opposition from the orthodox. In fact our Parama Sri Guru, Sri TapovanMaharaj had reservations and apprehensions.
The force of His love was more powerful than these.

Twenty-three years after His Mahasamadhi, we are continuing His vision and His initiatives. And His Mission.

Sandeepanies, postal lesson course, study groups,yuvakendras,balavihars,Harihara schools,publications,rural development health services, schools, colleges, C I F, Chinmaya international school..... the list goes on and so does His work. These accomplishments were in His own life time for all times to come!

This much can only be achieved only by a Yuga purusha.

To perfectly comprehend how a yugapurusha accomplishes we can only rely on the

various commentaries written by Gurudev Himself! We have some important passages from the commentary on Mundaka by Sri Gurudev.

Mundaka 3-2-2

In the vital moment of experiencing the Selfhood, the Godman,drops forever His unawareness of His own All perfect nature and,therefore,he cannot have any more desires in Him. In the words of the Sruthi he becomes thereafter a paryapthakami; it is indeed very difficult to find an equivalent in English for this term without hampering the vitality and force of it.

In the perfect knowledge that we have already with us all things that we desire for,to be desire less is certainly a much more glorious state of fulfilment and happiness than to entirely strive and struggle to produce and accumulate the changing demands of the mad and uncontrolled desires.

Mundaka 3-2-5
A complete sense of fulfilment would be reached when all our desires dry up and our plans end. This state of Kritakrutyata,yielding for us a steady satisfaction of having gained all that is to be gained,known all that is to be known,seen all that is to be seen,etc, is gained immediately at the ending of our ignorance about our Divine Nature.

Every Breath a Teaching page 41
"Swamiji, but your life's work,Chinmaya Mission, is itself in danger of being destroyed.!"
"So what?" was His answer."The Mission was established to serve a purpose. If that purpose has now been served, what is to cry about? If it is His will, the Lord will provide us with another vehicle for work."

Accomplished, fulfilled, Selfhood experienced.

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Offered by Shri Kalidas ji,Mumbai

Satyavratam Satyaparam Trisatyam Satyasya Yonim Nihitam cha
SatyeSatyasya Satyam rta SatyanetramSatyaatmakamTvaamSararamPrapannah

“Oh! Lord, We seek Thy Refuge; who, always adheres to Truth, is beyond Truth, is the Truth in Three- Trinity- all Three-forked activities, is the very womb of Truth,

dwells in Truth, is the Truth of The Supreme Brahman, has honest True Eyes, is the True In dweller." (Srimad-Bhagavatham 10/2/26)

.One of the thousand names of Naarayana is Yugaadi- Krit- One who is the creator of the divisions of aeons, described in our Puranas, as Yugas. These Yugas are four in number. Kritaa or Satya, Tretaa, Dvaparaa and Kali. In short He is the Lord of Time. By the term Aadi, it must be understood to indicate all other divisions of Time as Centuries, Years, Months, Weeks, Days, and Hours, Minutes and Seconds. He is not only the Lord of the Yugas but He is The Light of Consciousness that illumines the duration of each experience and the very interval between every pair of subjective experiences. ThereforeNaraayana is the perfect Krita- Kritya (Accomplisher). Om KritakrityaayaNamaha!

This Yugaadi-Krit – Sri Naraayana- is the One In dweller (Antaryaami) in all and is the Lord of Time. Since Time is an intellectual concept, the Time-Keeper is Lord Himself, who is the Intelligence riding on the Intellect! Hence these Great Yugas are in the Mind only. When one goes beyond Time, transcending the Antahkkarana (Inner Equipment), He arrives at the status "Sat-Sri-Akaal (Existece-Auspiciousness-Timeless)"! This is the status Kritaa (Perfect) or Satya (True)! The Accomplisher of this accomplished status is a Kritakritya (One who has accomplished his object). Poojya Gurudev is one! Our Humble Prostrations to that Master, who is Naaraayana, the Antaryami in all!

Poojya Gurudev, while narrating the concluding verse of Bhagavad-Gita Chap 15, named Purushothama Yoga says thus: - "The benefit accrued by contacting the Purushothama state of Consciousness is the enjoyment of a complete sense of fulfilment (Krita-Krityata), a complete and overwhelming joy that comes to a man when he realises that he has fully accomplished what is expected of him."

Swami Chidaananda, Gurubhai of Poojya Gurudev, who visited Gurudev at Sandi ego on 2nd Aug 1993 remarked: - "Swami Chinmayaananda's life has been the life of ten Masters. It would take ten people to accomplish what Swamiji accomplished in one life."

Sat (Existence) is the 'is-ness' and "are-ness" in Creation. Since this is our true nature, the speaker (Vaktaa) and the listener (Shrotaa) becomes one entity! This is called Sat-Sang! This is the status of "I am" in "You are"! The Infinite in finite is the Infinite one in all! The Guru, who is the Infinite 'within' put words in mouth for the Guru 'without' to respond, in some occasions because the Guru is both external and internal!



Poojya Gurudev, once in1988, had come for a bath and high tea at our residence in Mumbai for three consecutive days. On the third day, while we were returning, I happened to be alone with Him in the lift. Looking at Him, I couldn't resist, words came out of me "Dhanyoham (I am blessed)! "He replied with His usual Graceful Glance "Kritakrityoham (I am accomplished)!"

Kritaa means perfect! Gurudev is one who perfected the perfect- A Krita-Kritya! Poojya Gurudev is a Siddha-- One who is Perfection—not one who has attained perfection!This Siddha Yogi, who is perfection Himself, makes the Heart of a Sadhaka His Abode(Siddhabaari) and guides him in his Saadhana! He is "Bhakta-Hridaya-Aananda –Srotas! –a Stream of Aanada (Bliss) gushes out of a devoted Heart! Therefore He isFulfilled (Aapooryam) and is Accomplished (Krita-Kritya)!

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ (Isavaasya up. Mantra.17)

ॐ O Mind! Remember, Remember what you did! O Remember, Remember what you did! "

Poojya Gurudev comments Thus: - "A man after the realisation of his Self-will thereafter faces death as happily as he would face life and its changing vicissitudes. Thereafter, to him death is not a tragic culmination but, In fact, it is a joyous beginning of an Immortal Existence. Thus, his only cry would be that his prana should merge with the all-pervading air and that his body must go back to the dust

from which it had come. As regards his mind, he cries; 'May you remember that you have done in the past'....meaning, the Great achievement, the Supreme experience.

In fact, to a saint of realisation, all that he could remember at that time is the unforgettable experience of the Absolute which he lived at the moment of his own white heat of meditation. After all, our memory is always about our own most intense experiences. Thus, when the Rishi here says in the mantra, 'O mind, remember, remember,' it only means that even at the moment of departure, let not our mind be distracted by any other thought; let us get ourselves established in the continuous experience of that moment of fulfilment as a human creature."

"We Can; We Must!" Om Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha!

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Fulfilled One

Krita means done and krityaya means what has to be done. The feeling of fulfillment that comes when we have achieved the goal, is kritakrityaya. This contentment that comes at the completion of a project is short lived. On the heels of the thought of fulfillment comes another thought. It is akin to a box of tissue paper, pull one out and another one appears. It is very rarely that we feel or have the attitude that everything has been completed. Nothing remains to be done. If we feel that something still needs attention, then we have to return and take another birth to fulfill that desire.



Swami Nikhilananda

In one body, we may have fulfilled all the desires but may still desire to experience another body. Then, we would have to take yet another birth. All our desires are recorded and so have to be fulfilled. It is like dreams; one can dream an infinite number of dreams. The mind is constantly churning with desires. It is not satisfied because it is does not experience anything completely. Our attention shifts from one thing to another without reaching completion.

If we are able to experience even one moment completely, we would loose our desire to experience new things because what is there in one moment is there in every moment. One moment is there in all moments. The essence of all moments is there in the present moment, if we can go deep and experience it. The Teacher has gone to the core of all experience and is fulfilled. He feels there is nothing more to be gained or attained.

It is like the mountaineer on top of Mount Everest. Looking around he cannot see any higher peaks to be conquered. After reaching the summit, the only thing that remains is to walk down and share your experiences with others. There is nothing further to be gained, nowhere else to go. The Teacher has done what he needs to do; nothing else remains to be achieved. He now works out of love and compassion as opposed to a sense of incompleteness and lacking.

When we learn something from an experience…it is worthwhile…otherwise we will

have to learn the same thing in some other form. In school if you do not do well, you have to repeat the class. Likewise, in life also we have to repeat those lessons that we have not learnt. If we observe our lives, we will find that certain situations seem to repeat themselves...those are the lessons that we have not learnt. God is a great Teacher and has His own strange methods of teaching. He teaches through the various experiences of life.

Om Kritakrityaya Namah

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

284. Om G?t? – Jn?na – Yajna-Prach?rak?ya Nama?

15-02-2016

||oṁ gītājñānayajñapracārakāya namaḥ||

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya,CM Jamnagar,Gujarat

Salutation to the apostle of gītājñānayajña!



In Gurudev's words: I studied the Geeta – and it was a great help to me – therefore, I recommended to everyone.

Gurudev self-studied the Bhagvad Geeta which is the nectar of all the Upanishad-s. His clarity about the knowledge of Bhagvad Geeta was so profound that a great saint Swami Haridasji (disciple of Sri Gnyanananda Giri Swamigal) once said, "I used to wonder sometimes, he (Gurudev) must be that Arjun who directly got the knowledge from Shree Krishna."

The cultural fall was so deep that in Indian homes Geeta became just another idol to be worshiped and not any more a sacred text to understand and live the highest knowledge. He brought Bhagvad Geeta from the temple of homes to the drawing room. He made it available to the modern generation, in the language they can

understand and apply in their life. When we read or hear Poojya Gurudev's lectures on Bhagvad Geeta we feel that it is possible to live the Geeta way of life and it is not a mere theory.

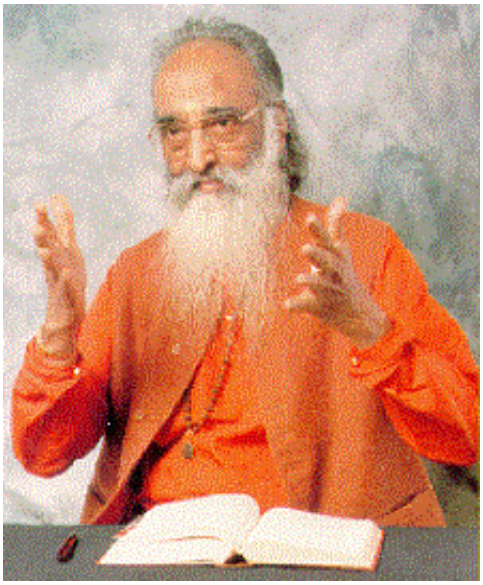
This, He has made possible by His depth of explanation and the clarity that He has brought us.

To such a Master, our humble prostration.

Om Gītā – Jnāna – Yajna - PrachārakāyaNamaḥ

Offered by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu,Chennai

The two words Bhagavad Gita and Jnana yagna have become familiar today to many, due to the untiring work of Sri Gurudev



Earlier barring a few, many believed that the Vedas, Upanishads,Geeta and revered texts such as these are India's past glory, not available anymore. That this is not true to-day, is thanks to Sri Gurudev. He brought them from the Himalayas to the common man, to his location, in a language and style that the commoner can appreciate, assimilate and apply to his everyday living.

Earlier educated people due to western education and influence were shy to admit they are studying these texts.Today people take pride in saying that they are students of Vedanta.

Sri Gurudev explained the concept of Gnana yagna.
In any yagna insignificant materials are offered into the fire, invoking a deity for a reward.In Gnyana yagna we offer our ignorance in the fire of knowledge. This is subjective yagna.

Vedanta (Mananam Celebration Series) page 96
In a Gnana Yagna, he said, the spirit of sacrifice and cooperation was retained,but instead of sacrificing grains in a physical fire,we sacrifice ignorance in the fire of Vedantik knowledge,and we surrender our ego at the altar of the Lord. The crowds at his Yagnas,at first small,grew quickly as his listeners welcomed his courageous and unconventional ways,even allowing women,for the first time,to chant Vaidika mantras.
He choose to speak in English,which the pundits at first considered an outrage.

A Muslim teacher,who attended his 7th Yagna for sixty-one days, wrote :
"Hinduism as expounded by Swamiji,was religion based,not on old wives' tales,but based on a practical and highly developed code of morality. To my great joy, I found that the essence of Hinduism and the essence of Islam were identical." Ms.Rahilla Ansari (Delhi)

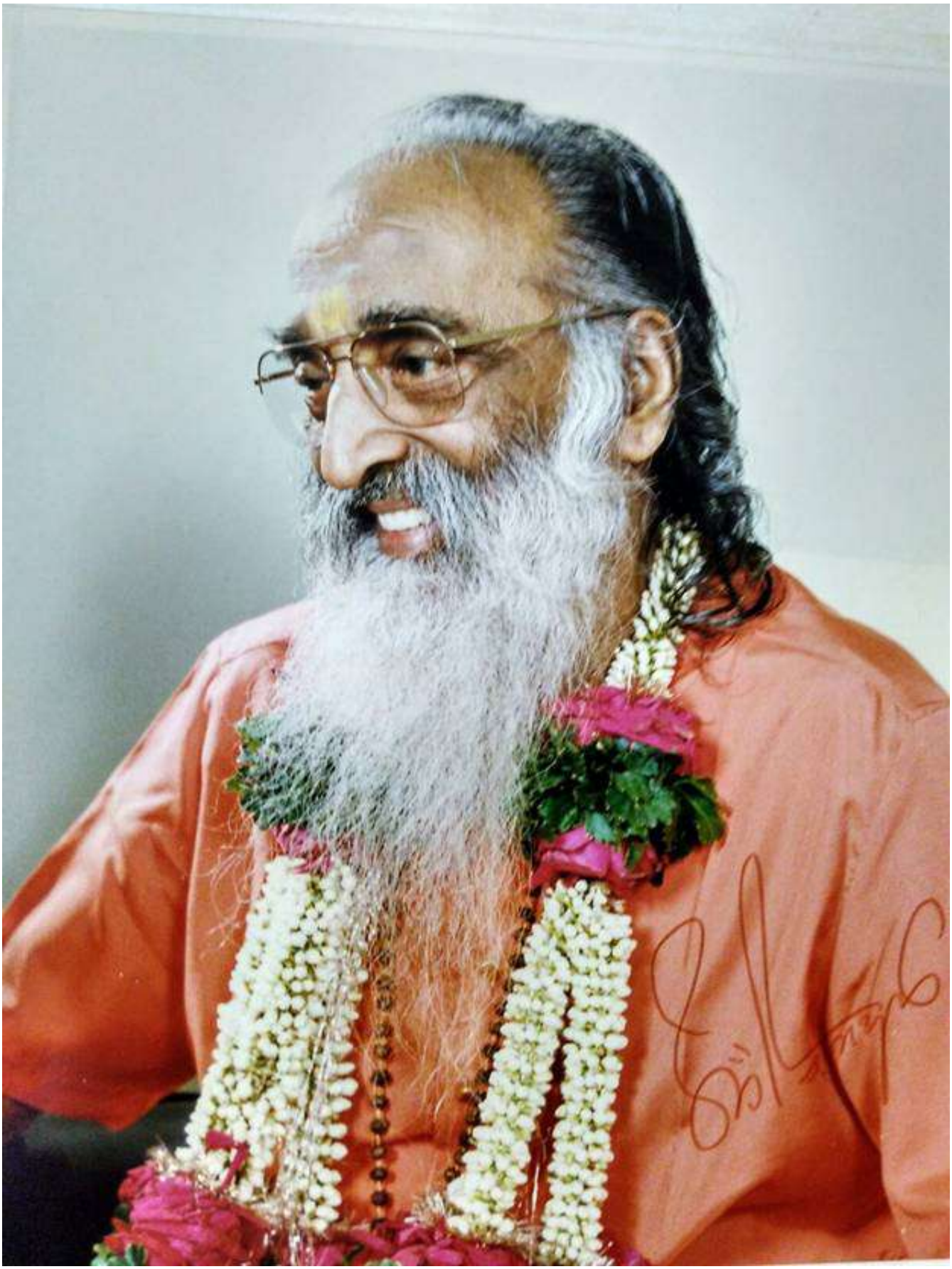
Swami Chinmayananda, As I know Him- Page 121

According to me, the "Bhagavad Gita" needs only a Chinmayananda,nobody else can take His place. Today,when one speaks of Bhagavad Gita, only Swami Chinmayananda comes to our mind and not Lord Krishna. He has spread the message worldwide. He has done mankind the great service.
Swami Haridas Giri, direct disciple of Sri Gnanananda Giri Swamigal

Om GeetaajnaanayajnaprachaarakaayaNamaha!

Offered by Shri.N.Kalidas ji,Mumbai

“Salutations unto Thee, Oh! Vyasa! Of mighty intellect, who has eyes as the petals of a full-blown lotus, by whom, was lighted the Lamp of Knowledge filled with the Mahabharata oil”



Namostute Vyaasa vishaalabuddhe.....

“Salutations to Krishna: Who is a ‘tree of fulfilment’, to all those who seek His Refuge, who has milked the Geeta nectar, the holder of Jnanamudra-(Chin mudra), the wielder of the cane in one hand with which He drives home the herd of cattle under His protection!”

“All the Upanishads are cows, the Son of the cow-herd is the milkman, Partha is the calf, men of pure intellect are the enjoyers and the supreme nectar of Geeta is the milk!”

Thus we heard from the Son of the cow herd, the Master-Milkman! Poojya Gurudev defines the term Yajna as: - “The work undertaken with a pure spirit of total dedication in complete co-operation with others, and for the well-being of all creatures and for the welfare of the world. The term Yajna connotes all noble and divine actions of service and love undertaken in a pure sense of God-dedication, selflessness and joy.” He further reassures: “Wherever there is such a co-operative endeavour with total selflessness, there is Sree Naaraayana in action through His creatures.”

Gurudev further states: - “SreeNaarayana is the most profound truth to be realised in all Yajnas. The Self is the most noble truth to be sought through ‘offering’ all the ‘Dravya’ (objects) into the “Consciousness” (Fire) in the body (kunda). This kind of subjective –Yajna is called in the Geeta as “Knowledge-Yajna”- (JnaanaYajna) -- the fire of newly kindled knowledge whereinto we offer all false values and our immoral tendencies for burning into the Effulgent Self, the divine.

Poojya Gurudev illustrates the art of kindling the fire of Knowledge, within, by narrating Mantra 11 of the Kaivalyopanishadthus:-

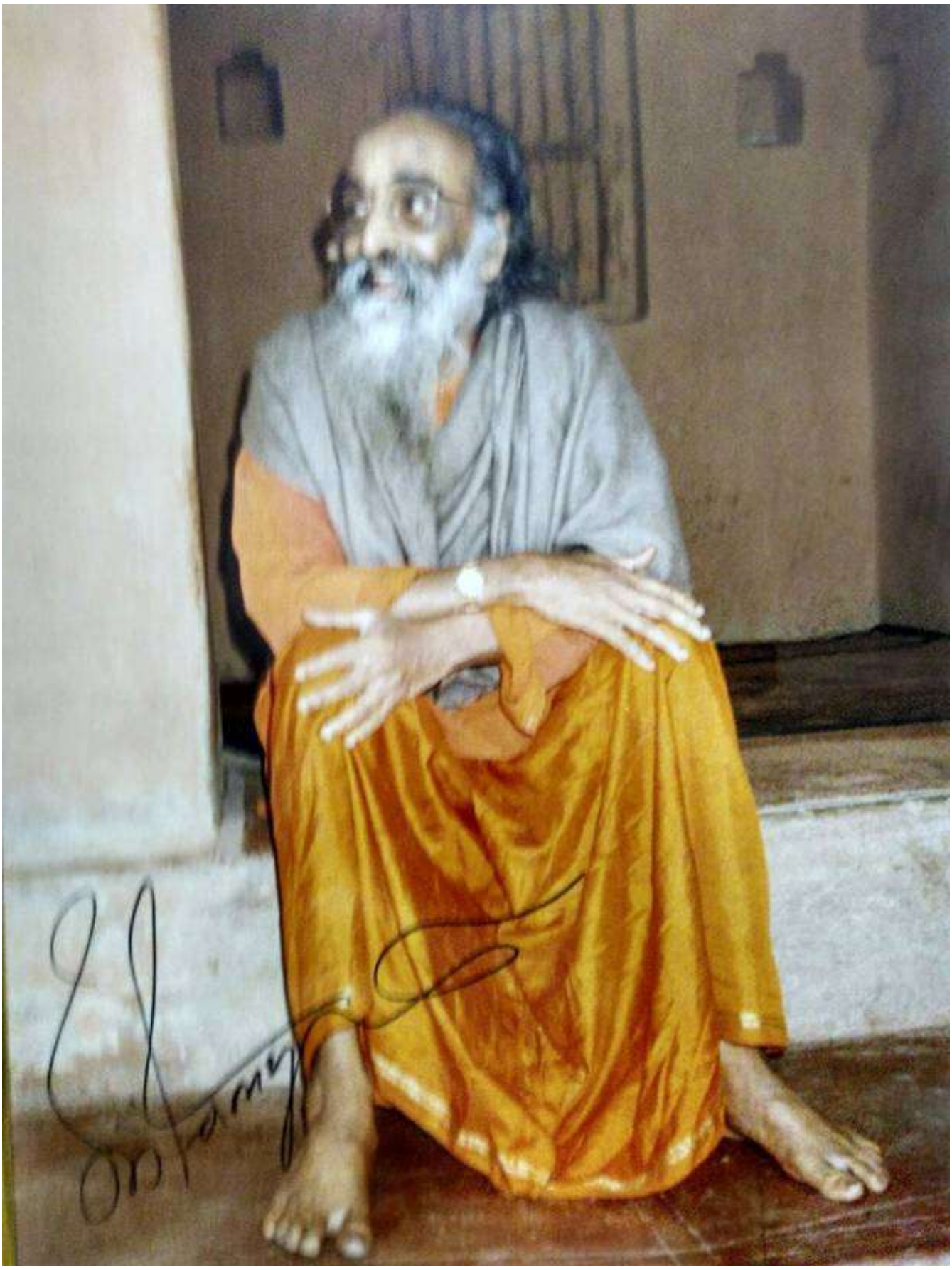
“Atmaanam Aranim Kritva Pranavam cha Uttararanim Jnana Nirmadhanaabhyasaat Paasamdahati Panditaha”

“Making the ego as the “lower arani” and Om the upper arani, by repeated churning through the practice of The Path of Knowledge, “Jnana NirmadhanaAbhyaasat” a wise man burns up all the chords of the bondage”

“Spirit manifested through matter is the ego (Jeeva) - the Infinite in finite!
This Jeeva is to meditate upon the nature of the Infinite, Sat-Chit-Aananda, that is his own true nature, that he forgot and assumed himself, as a creature (Jantu). Thus when an individual prepares himself for the meditation-flight, the Jeeva gets detached from the encumbrances of the mind-intellect and thereby comes to recognize its essential nature and gets attached to theBrahman.

Pranava is the sound symbol of Brahman, the supreme Reality. This repeated exercise or practice (Abhyas) of meditation is depicted as Jnana NirmadhanaAbhyas- the kindling of the fire of Knowledge. When this practice is undertaken for a sufficiently long time, the jiva comes to experience the higher possibilities in itself

and the Fire ofKnowledge so kindled in one's own bosom burns down one's chords of shameless bondage with the flesh. 'The wise man burns up the chords ofbondage". Thus Gurudev is guiding us through the flight path to Brahman.



Reminiscing .....

Reminiscing, Poojya Gurudev recounts about TapovanjiMaharaj: -"While he was planning to take the Bhagavad-Geeta, he developed an attack of cough, and whenever he made efforts to talk and explain, the attack would become severe. 'You study for yourself; if there are any doubts come to me. I do not think there will be any difficulties for you.' and my studies at his feet with text book in hand ended."

Thus Swami Chinmayaananda of Gangotri came down to the plains and started His Upanishad JnaanaYajna, on the New Year eve of 1952! The 'text in hand' was Kathopanishad and Kenopanishad! The New Year 1952 dawned with aMahaaGanapathiHomam (A MahaaYajna) and He Did It! Rest is His-Story!

Once, in Mumbai, an ardent devotee of Poojya Gurudev, an old mother asked Him: - "Swamiji, thodisi duaa deejiye". Gurudev replied: - "Ammaa! I am standing right in front of you, like a cow, with udder full of milk! Milk me as much as you can!" Poojya Gurudev was 'Upanishad' Himself!

Poojya Gurudev conducted His first GeetaJnaanaYajna at New Delhi (Indraprastha) itself, may be, as being home to the Pandavas, from 18th Sept 1955 to 28th Oct 1955 on Geeta Chapters I & II. NextYajna was immediately in Delhi (PuranaQila) from 30th Oct 1955 to 30th Nov 1955 on Geetha III&IV.

And the Master started His journey propagating Srimad Bhagavad-Geeta as a true 'PaarthaSaarathi! This indomitable, unique Master did carve out for Himself a slot in the pantheon of few credible missionaries that Hinduism has spawned. A jovial globe-trotter in saffron 'uniform', with flowing grey-black beard and deeply penetrating eyes, with broad forehead smeared with Kalabham (a mix of sandal wood paste with saffron etc), never pretended to possess supernatural powers or to perform miracles or clairvoyance to make predictions of fortune, He was best known for His devotion.

522 *Geetha Jnaana Yajnas* were conducted by Gurudev with in India alone. His **last** *Yajna* (**522nd**) was at *Siddhabhaari*, His Abode, from 25th May 1993 to 31st May 1993. The theme of His last *Geetha Jnaana Yajna* was– The *Yoga of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secret*- Raaja Vidyaa Raaja Guhya Yogah - Chapter Nine!

Om Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha! Om Tat Sat!

Om Gītā – Jnāna – Yajna - PrachārakāyaNamaḥ

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM – Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Propagator of Gita GyanaYagyas



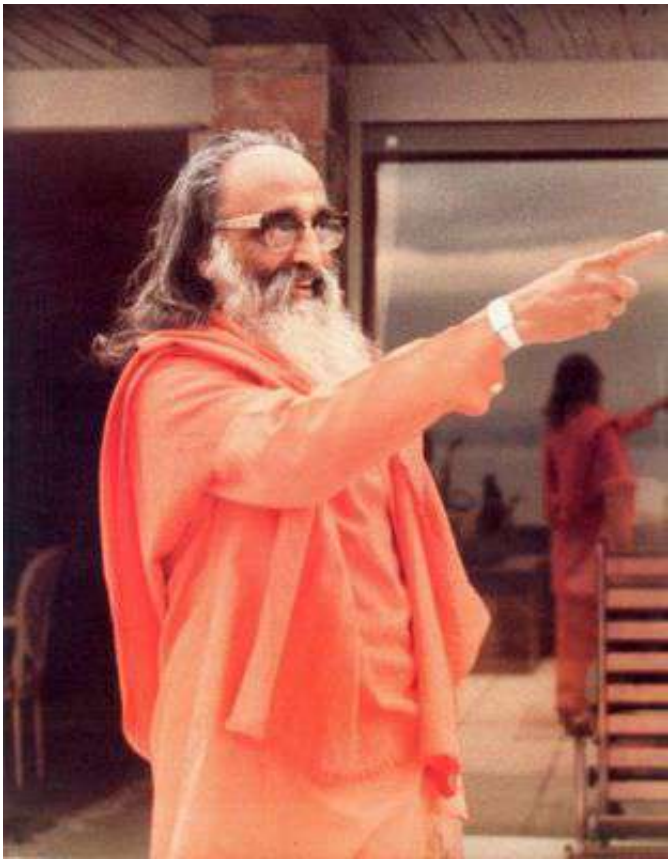
Gurudev studied the Scriptures under Swami TapovanMaharaj. He contemplated on them and realized the Truth. Thereafter, in his compassion he decided to share the message of the scriptures with the world. With the blessings of his Master, he embarked on his journey of sharing. His idea was to spread the message to the masses in English, the language most accepted at that time.

Gurudev became the propagator of Gita gyanayagyas ,normally a series of week-long discourses on the Gita.This title is used for Chinmaya Mission discourses. But being so popular other spiritual organizations also use it for their discourses on the Gita. Though he discoursed extensively on the Upanishads and the Gita, his name is associated with the propagation of the latter. The Bhagavad-gita is a complete text. It is said that if we are able to study and understand the Gita, we do

not have to study any other scripture.

Regardless of which town or city he was in, every evening Gurudev discoursed on the Gita. Then he started the SandeepanySadhanalaya, in Mumbai, an institution to train brahmacharis. After intensive training, this band of people went around the world expanding Gurudev's work of spreading the scriptures. Even today this great work is going forward and it is a fact that the people responsible for this have directly or indirectly been inspired by Gurudev. Many people left the Mission and started their own organisations. Gurudev was not in the least perturbed by this because, he was only interested in the work continuing and not the banner under which it was being done.

In his view, Vedanta is a science, which must be studied, reflected upon and practiced. Science has two parts, theory and practice. Theory is for philosophy and practice is for ritual. Both of them go together. We should know what to do and then we should do it. Doing without knowing, is superstition. If we know without doing, we will remain scholars. When both go hand in hand we produce great citizens of the world.



Once, a gentleman came to Gurudev with a complaint. He said that he had been through the Gita many times, but had gained nothing from it. Gurudev told him, “You have been through the Gita many times, now let the Gita go through you once.” Often when people came to him to autograph their books, he would write something like, “Read this book three times,” or “Read two shlokas everyday.”

In another incident, a devotee asked him what he could do for Gurudev. Gurudev told him to just read what he had received and pass on the message to others. The Gurudakshina or donation is not the price of the Knowledge. It is taken merely to support the infrastructure. In the good old days, people would sit under a tree and learn from the Teacher, but now we require buildings and air conditioned rooms to sit and imbibe the Knowledge!

Our Guru dakshina to Gurudev, would be to learn the scriptures and share this message with others.

To that prachaarak of the Gita, our salutations.

OM Gītā-Jnāna-Yajna-PrachārakāyaNamah!

285. OM GURAVE NAMAH

16-02-2016

OM GURAVE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Abhedananda.Swamiji has been the Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Centers in India and Singapore.Presently he is the Acharya of Chinmaya Mission,South Africa.

Confluence of “Anugraha” and “Shraddha”

Even though we may have a Guru, but the real love for him would not be there as long as we have the conviction that my relations, friends, qualifications, achievements etc can satisfy me. With the deep-rooted conviction that only my Guru can satisfy my search, Shraddha (faith) enters the mind of the disciple.

The Lord acts from two points. Firstly, He brings Shraddha into the mind of the disciple. He also brings Anugraha(Grace), in the mind of some Master or teacher. When these two meet, a new thing known as Deekshais born. „Deeksha□ is the child that comes from the marriage of ‘Anugraha’ and ‘Shraddha’, where Anugrahais the bridegroom and Shraddha is the bride.

The Essence, the Nature, and Qualities of a Guru

We have the 108 names of Pujya Gurudev, with which we perform archana at His Holy Padukas. These 108 names of Pujya Gurudev can be classified into three categories. One is ‘Swaroopa’, another is ‘Swabhava□ and the third is ‘Guna’. Everybody has all these three aspects in their personality. Swaroopacan be defined as the essence or the essential nature. It means, that which never wavers or changes even one bit. Swabhavais the nature or the feeling or emotion towards others and Gunameans qualities.

The Swaroopais common in every person. It can be called Sacchidananda, Brahman, or as Satyam GynanamAnantam. However, every person has his or her own Swabhava. While Swaroopais one, Swabhavaare many. Some people are sweet by nature, some are clever, and some are rude. Swabhavais the impression that a person makes while interacting with people.

Swaroopais like the light or the illuminating factor and Swabhavais like a rope, which pulls us. Gunais the interacting factor through which a person interacts. If anyone has pulled you towards him, then it is not because of his talent or swaroopabut is because of his swabhava.

AjayaNamah, AvyayayaNamah and AvinashineNamah, indicate the Swaroopa. Udarahrdayaya Namah, Karunasagaraya Namah and Vinayashilaya Namah refer to the Swabhava and Anglabhashaviduttamaya Namah refers to the Guna.

Seeing the Guru in God is one thing and seeing God in the Guru is another thing. When we see the Guru in God, we are neglecting the Swaroopa and therefore our guru would always be far from us and we can't see Him within, because the essence of the teacher which is the Self, is ignored. For the one who is only holding to the form of the teacher, the Guru will come and go with the coming and going of physical body. When it is said that the Guru is in a person, it is seeing the God in the Guru. The Lord appears as Guru for the seeker and not the vice versa!

Someone had once written in his letter to Gurudev that he wanted to keep only Gurudev's idol, as he wanted to worship Him alone. He said that he also did not want to worship any other God in his life, as Gurudev was his only God. The first line in Gurudev's reply was, "Never worship a living Guru. Today you will worship me and tomorrow you will drop me."



Therefore one must see God in the Guru and not the Guru in God. The Guru will take us to God.

Sanatana Dharma is not based on deities. Those who hold onto some form, they

become a cult. One must note that there is nothing important other than the Truth alone. God is always present with a person, but the Guru in form can never be with the disciple all the time. The Guru is with the disciple for only as long as the disciple needs Him. However, if words like Chaitanya, Shashvatah and Shantah were kept in the mind, we would always be reminded that our Atman is the Guru. One will then be able to see that the Guru is in essence very close. This is the Swaroopa of the Guru.

A devotee wanted to meet Gurudev in private during his stay over a seven-day yagna series. Until the very end he couldn't get a chance, but when Gurudev was about to leave, he asked Him if there was a chance of meeting Him anywhere else. Gurudev immediately replied with a "Yes" and said, "Let us meet in meditation". The best meetings with any person are in meditation, when the two have merged into one. Om Ajaya Namah refers to this Swaroopa.

The intellect's demand is the Swaroopa, mind's demand is the Swabhava and the demand of the body is Guna. The mind demands love and identification, which is satisfied by the Swabhava of the Guru.

Ever-increasing intoxication

The Guru□s love is very intoxicating. He loves the student so much that the student will not be able to get attached to anyone else. Using that as an instrument, the Guru would reveal God to the disciple. Gurudev once said in Sidhabari, "There are two types of people here. Some are devotees and the others are disciples. Who are the devotees? The devotees are the ones who think that Gurudev is mine. The disciples are those whom I think that they are mine". At that moment, everybody present wanted to be known as a disciple and not a devotee anymore!

The Swabhavaof the Guru is giving without getting anything in return. That is known as 'Udaar', which refers to giving more than the ones capacity. Devotion doesn□t come unless one receives more than what one deserves. The Guru gives so much that it possibly cannot be the fruits of action of the disciple. The fruit of action exhausts after a while, but the fruit of grace never gets exhausted. This is the Swabhavaof the teacher. We cannot go towards the Swaroopaunless the Swabhavapulls us, which is the binding factor.

Coming down to the level of the student is Swabhava and taking him up to His level is the Swaroopa. It is very difficult to come down at the level of a student. It can be thought of as a learned scholar teaching a kindergarten student. When someone who has realized the Self and teaches people like us, who don't even know what shlokas are there in the Bhagawad Geeta, with all the jokes and examples, it is the Swabhava of the teacher alone that is acting. Tulsidasji says in Sri Ramcharitmanas for Sri Raamji, "Sabke Priya, Sabke Hitkari!" (A saint is the beloved of all, as he always desires the good of all). The more we think about the Swabhava of the teacher, the more we would be pulled towards him.

Life with the Guru is a permanent honeymoon. His darshan is like the moon and the faith can be found in a devotee's heart as sweet and pure like honey. When these two meet, there then is permanent honeymoon. The more one is with the Guru, the

more he or she would feel His charm and devotion would automatically overflow towards Him. When we are with the teacher, our reference point becomes that of the teacher's. In every situation we face, before acting we think about how He would have reacted in the same situation. We try to bridge the gap between His experience and our experience. The bridging of this gap is known as devotion.

Our lives would be fulfilled even if just one or two out of the 108 names of Gurudev enter into our system. Gurudev once said in Sandeepany, "Make your life a single streak of laughter. Nothing is so serious enough to deserve your tears". He lived as an embodiment of what He said. Even the mere remembrance of His single glance or thundering laughter would make anyone forget his smallness. We must always remember, "Tasmai Shree Gurave Namah!"

Let us all invoke the grace of Gurudev to manifest in us and reveal more about Him to us. We would not be able to find out about Him, unless He would like to tell us about Himself. Tulsidasji says, "So Jaanai jei, dei janaaii!" – Whomever the Lord wants to reveal Himself to, only he can know about Him. Let us all pray to become His chosen one.

Om Shri Chinmaya SadguraveNamah!

OM GURAVE NAMAH

Offered by Savi Mull,CM-New Delhi

As a teenager, my mind was flooded with problems, with dichotomies; and for a specific one, I knew I was not doing it right. I needed to reach out to Him, my Guru, the one who had called me His Little One. I needed His Help to get me out of it. My Guru knew there was a problem and so I went to Him. It was in Sidhbari in May 1993, the Youth Camp, I kneeled down at His side when Gurudev was at the dining table in His Kutia. As I sat beside Him at His Feet, I saw Him inject himself with insulin – the jab was symbolic of my need for a jab of external help too. I said Gurudev, I need to see you; I have a problem. He did not immediately resolve the problem – He waited for me to come and surrender to Him fully. Only a Guru enables this act of surrender, of dridh bharosa. In that moment, I was aware that I had to hand over my difficulties, my so-called problems. It was Him, my Guru, who instilled the wisdom in me to come to His Feet, who gave me the Vedanta behind it all. Gurudev smiled back and said forcefully, 'Do not identify with the problem'. Only a Guru can deliver His devotee with that one simple, pithy sentence that resounds - I am NOT the problem and the problem is NOT me.



Photo: Savi in red sari being fed (in the sari) her young brother next to her in white dhoti (Gurudev had done his upanayanasanskar) and her mother next to her It was October 1992, Sidhbari in the Dining Hall during her Family Bhiksha. Uma Shergill is also in the photo.

But I was over-identified – so I prodded Gurudev. I got a teeny tiny meeting with Him after confirmation from Sivaramanji. Mustering up all my courage, I stepped into Gurudev's room, in His Kutia and was awestruck with the energies in the room. My problem seemed like so tiny, I felt stupid. He lovingly looked at me and said a few words. And from the day on, the problem was gone; totally destroyed as if it never existed. As my Guru, it was He who helped me climb over the obstacle, the problem that was once bigger than me, now smaller than me. Today that one incident lifted me and released me so much that now I can tell any problem how big my Guru is!

Glories to the Guru that has a mighty heart, who knows All! The Guru who understands the vagaries of this merciless human mind and delivers us from it in less than a split second.

OM GURAVE NAMAH!

OM GURAVE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, Chennai

Guru is one who removes ignorance and gives knowledge.

Gurudev said a guru's job is to teach how to surrender. The thing that holds our experience is the ego. Hence the thing needed for Gnana is to surrender ego. Hence guru teaches that. The Eternal Blissful Conscious Being we are, is covered by the ego. This ego has to be surrendered. Tyagena eke amrutatwamanasuh.

A Guru's love is total and unconditional. Sri Gurudev never even made His disciples feel guilty or embarrassed. When people ask why are people who are known to be unethical or immoral around you. Gurudev used to retort nobody asks a doctor why are sick people around you. Why do healthy people not come to you. Therefore, Guru is for these fallen people. Even parents reject children who have gone astray. A guru gives them total unconditional love.

There lots of beautiful glorifications of a Guru specially in Guru Geeta.
Just to quote one of them: If God gets angry Guru can pacify, but if Guru gets angry God will not interfere.

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Him - Page 49
He has brought the knowledge of Vedanta to lay people in a simple and interesting style. That is what I admire most because it is the most difficult job. He is very strict and yet as concerned and caring as a mother.

Every Breath a Teaching - page 111
Many devotees experienced an overwhelming impact when they first heard their teacher, Swami Chinmayananda. For some the impact was immediate; for others, more gradual, but similar stories have been repeated often. How throughout the lecture Gurudev seemed to be talking just to them, to their particular life problems, as though the entire lecture were directed specially at them. Many remember how, especially in the early days of listening to Him, they would walk away from a lecture filled with new, life-saving insights, yet found that the ideas they had heard, created a whole new set of questions that burned in their minds. Invariably, at the very next lecture those burning questions would be answered by Swamiji.

Vedanta(Mananam's Celebration Series) page 15
Each time Gurudev began a new lecture series, He always had a chart stationed at His side, the now famous BMI Chart. And so it was also at the first lecture I heard by Him. I heard it explained then and have heard it explained at many other lectures I have attended since then.
Do you see the Om at the top? Om stands for the Real. We can call it Truth, Reality, God, Consciousness, Self, but it is only One. It is Timeless and does not change. This changeless factor, which illumines all changes, is the Consciousness by which we experience this world of ever-changing phenomena. What we call relative reality is everything other than Om, and it is this everything else which is bound by time and is subject to constant change.

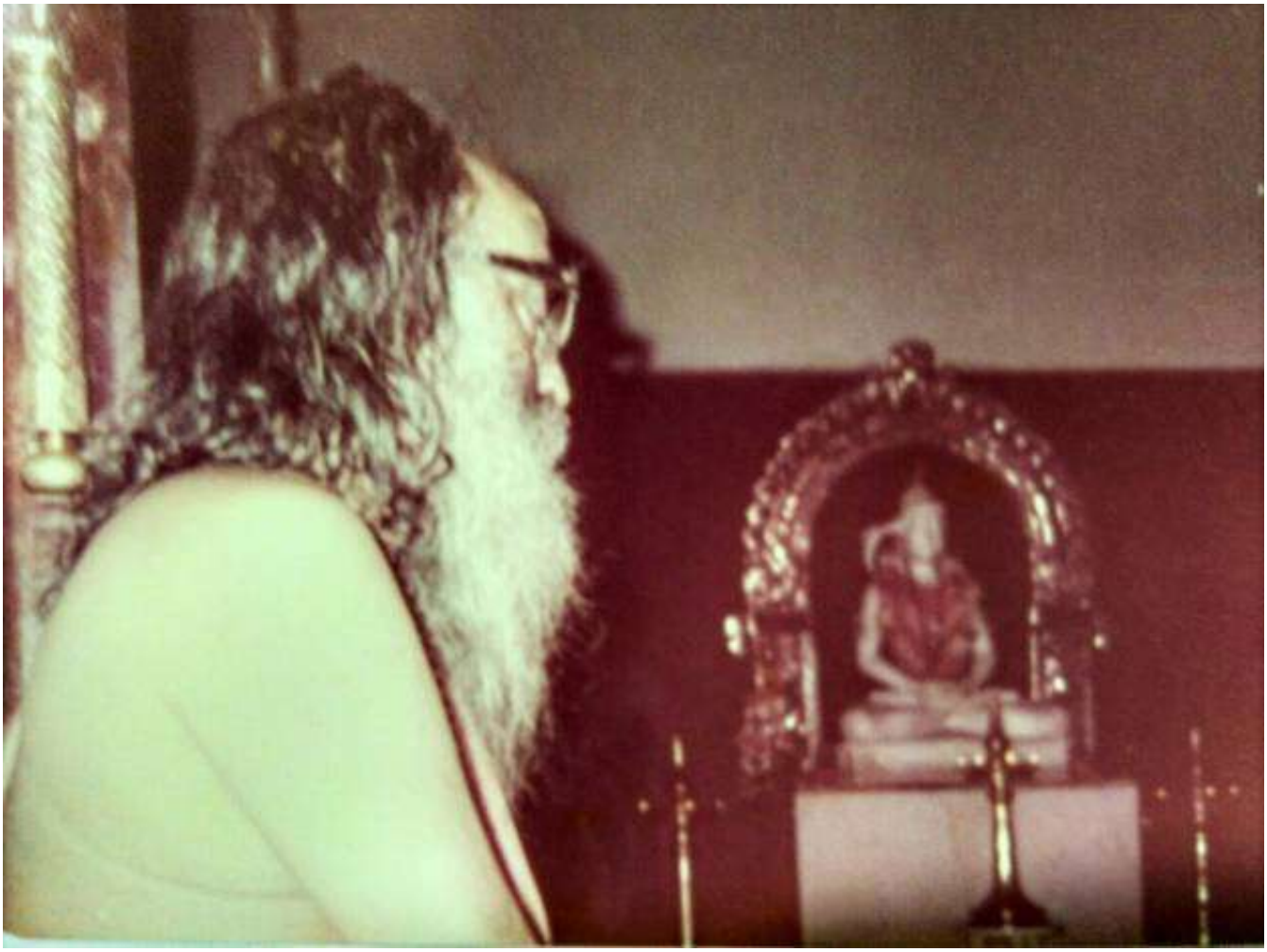
There is no spiritual concept Gurudev cannot explain with this simple looking chart.

Gurudev is immortal. So will be His love, teachings and the BMI chart.

OM GURAVE NAMAH!

Om GuraveNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai



Gurumayam.....

SadaashivaSamaarambhaamSankaraachaaryaMaadhyamaam

Asmad Aachaarya Paryantaam Vande Guru Paramparaam

Thus, starting from the Great SadaaShiva (Eternal Auspiciousness), who is Lord Naraayana- the Supreme Para Brahman, through Sankaraachaarya and my Aachaarya, the Guru Paramparaa eternally flows....

This Paramparaa flows into Asmad (the individual soul)Aachaarya -- the Guru within, who is our own Self. The individual soul, which desires to attain the state of Godhood, or the state of true knowledge, practises incessant devotion. When the individual's devotion has reached a mature stage, the Lord, who is the witness of the individual soul and identical with it, manifests.He appears in human form with the help of Sat-Chit-Ananda(Existence, Consciousness and Bliss

Absolute), His three naturalfeatures, and form the name Chinmayaanada, which He also graciously assumes. In the guise of blessing the disciple He absorbs him in Himself. According to this doctrine the Guru can truly be called the Lord. The Upanishads say that none but a Guru can take a man out of the jungle of intellect and sense perceptions. So there must be a Guru!

Guru is God or the Self. The Sat guru (the Guru who is one with Being) is within and indicated as Tat Sat (That Existence). There is a stanza in Kaivalya which says, 'O Guro! You have been always with me, watching me through several incarnations, and ordaining my course until I was liberated.' The Self manifests externally as the Guru when the occasion arises, otherwise he is always within, doing what is necessary. The Guru does not bring about Self-realization. He simply removes all the obstacles to it. The Self is always realized. He who bestows the supreme knowledge of Self upon the soul by making it face towards Self alone is the supreme Guru who is praised by sages as the form of God, who is Self. Cling to him. By approaching the Guru and serving him faithfully, one should learn through his grace the cause of one's birth and one's suffering. Knowing then that these are due to one's straying from Self, it is best to abide firmly as Self. The words of sages assure that if one does a wrong to God, it can be rectified by the Guru, but that a wrong done to a Guru cannot be rectified even by God.

This Supreme Guru, Swami Cinmayaananda Saraswati, the Self in all, within and without, can be very much perceived as the form of God! Through His words and deeds, He always prompted an individual for a "U –Turn" for a face to face interview with the Self. His words like "You Change, The World changes", "Take a U- Turn, and face the Centre" are some of them. Gurudev-the Jeeva culturist, cultures a Jeeva by His sheer Graceful Glance and the Creature (Jantu or Jeeva) becomes Creator! He helps a jeeva remove all his obstacles, his non-apprehensions and mis-apprehensions. Thus guide him to the right apprehension, that he is the Self.

All this learning came to me in one rigorous tapasya like phase, intense, overwhelming and harsh. The Guru was clearly present – within and without. This is what happened.

In 1987 some Air India crew members were falsely implicated and wrongly imprisoned on charges of drug smuggling. (Search the internet for the story) I was one of them. A diplomatic tussle ensued with the airline being held to ransom for a crime neither it had committed nor had its crew. At first the three of us crew were confined to house arrest for close to 26 days following which we were sent to prison meant for hardened criminals. This was 21st of September. I was allowed to carry a laminated picture of Gurudev into my cell and I used to sit and chant some mantras, sometimes loudly, looking at Gurudev's picture, as Gurudev was my only refuge.

It was a great period of hardship, no doubt, but clear to me that the experience was brought to me by my Guru. Those intense days I was aware of only Gurudev and nothing else. Harsh as it was, I came to see that the experiencer, the experienced and the process of experiencing were all Gurumayam! It was that and nothing else. Within a week of our jail, the ministry began to move heaven and earth. Later I was

to find out that this coincided with the Mastakabhishekam at Sidhabari! What do I say!

John, a Nigerian, who was sentenced to life imprisonment used to come to our cell every day, to take care of me, out of compassion. He saw the picture of Gurudev and said “Master, He looks like God”! And John wanted to know what I was chanting. I told him I was chanting a mantra invoking my Lord. He too wanted to chant. Since he could not chant the mantra properly, I asked him to write the mantra, a page a day (Sree Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram). When the annual Amnesty list came (Nigeria announced such a list every year) John was fourth on the list of prisoners granted amnesty. John walked out a free man! This made me realize that the Guru and God are one! [John stayed in touch with me for many years. Our release was a celebration for everyone in the prison and John especially. Later when Gurudev went to Lagos in 1988 for a yagna, John came and met Gurudev. He then wrote to me to recount this moment and said how happy he was! I had told John to send the likhita japa to Sidhabari, but do not know if he did.]



'Master! He looks like God!'

After this many other prisoners approached me asking to know more about my Master! Rest of my stay in that maximum security prison, I spent glorifying Gurudev and His teachings to an audience, wholly ignorant, but a thirst to hear and learn more and more! That the Guru who brings the experience, also brings the ability to endure it. And He brings the inner cleansing as the reward! When you go through the fire it may feel uncomfortable. But know: He carries you in His arms!

The Guru within made the whole jail experience a challenge that was bearable. The Guru without protected and nursed our three families. How the days passed I don't know. All I know is Gurudev Gurudev Gurudev in my head, my heart and every cell. Even that awareness I owe to Him. He kept me in His vision and Himself in my awareness, nonstop. When I reached Bombay after all this, I was received by Pujya Guruji and taken to the Jagadeeswara Temple. Gurudev was in Bahrain. When I called Him He said, "Well done bete!" Then: "Go to Guruvayoor, prostrate then go home and prostrate to your parents."

He never forgot a single detail. Never. Be it my evolution or my duties. He pointed them each to me. And after that incident, I felt as if a huge load had been removed! The Guru, God and Self all came into clear understanding.

Om Chinmaya Satgurave Namaha!

OM GURAVE NAMAH!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head- CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Guru



The Guru is the guide who shows the path to the divine. Gu means darkness and ru is one who removes that darkness. This darkness is the ignorance of our true nature, which is deeply embedded in the psyche. Most people are not even aware of it and hence it is difficult to remove. It is only with the blessings of the Teacher that we are able to recognize the Truth. The grace of the Sadguru removes the ignorance about our own Self. It is fascinating that though we live with ourselves from birth, we are unable to know ourselves. We need someone else to tell us who we are.

We are born but do not know how or from where we came. We are given a name, make new associations and within a short time learn the tricks of the world. We get busy with life and such questions seldom enter the mind. If at all the mind wanders in this direction, we quickly abandon the pursuit. We are not only unaware of ourselves but also about various things in the world. We go through life being taught. It is quite amazing, how we continuously learn. We are constantly being taught by the whole world, which includes time, people and situations. If we are ready to learn, there is a message at every turn.

From another perspective, in real terms there is really no teaching because the knowledge or the power is present within us. Without this inherent ability, we would be unable to learn. Even animals have the capacity for learning to follow instructions, according to their innate abilities. Take the example of dogs; some dogs are capable of learning a few commands, whereas others are capable of learning

many more tricks. Some dogs can be trained to chase, while as some can be trained to find people lost or trapped in the snow. Each breed of dogs has their own personality traits. In the same way, we humans have an inborn capacity to learn; our teachers only facilitate the learning process.

Of all the teachers who teach us, the Sadguru is a Teacher with a difference. His status is special, because only through him do we come to know ourselves. The Sadguru is the mirror in which we see ourselves reflected. Through this name, we prostrate to the Guru who has shown us our true nature. We venerate the Teacher whose penetrating words have entered the heart and removed the darkness.

The words of the Teacher are like the rays of the sun; they penetrate and dispel the darkness. Thinking of or meditating on the form of the Teacher removes the darkness.

Pujya Gurudev first learnt from Swami Shivananda and then from Swami TapovanMaharaj. He took sannyasadikdha from the former, but considered the latter his Ultimate Teacher. He had reverence for all Masters but it was through the blessings of Swami TapovanMaharaj that he comprehended the Supreme Self!

OM GURAVE NAMAH!

286. OM GUNATEETAAYA NAMAH

17-02-2016

OM GUNATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Maya is essentially 3 gunas. Trigunatmika Maya. Maya is an illusion.
Gunas cannot be different. Nevertheless creation which is again an illusion needs this illusory Maya. Created beings essentially being Gunas, are governed by these gunas as the individual ego.

Creation involves creation, maintenance and creative destruction. These three are expressions of Satwa Rajas and Tamas. God uses these three gunas for His triple purpose. A Brahma Gnani having transcended the ego transcends the gunas too. Thus He is Gunateeta. They are in Him He is not in them. TeMayinatuAhamteshu.

All gunas can only sustain in contrasts. Tall-short, good-bad, high-low etc. Their very relative nature limits. Binds. Therefore,gunas in Samskrita are also called ropes.
The solution is given in BG14 – gunebhyahs caparamvetti -- Gnani.
In a Gnani all duality and consequent bondage ends. Hence He is Gunateeta.

At Every Breath a Teaching pg 316

Who was He?

The Paradox & the Unpredictability

*Sometimes His mind remains in the sattvika (serene) state, sometimes in the rajasika(dynamic) or tamasika (inactive) and at others,beyond the three gunas (thought textures). Sometimes He appears as a worldly person and at others as one who roams in the streets of(Vedanta). But the sage whose ignorance has been dispelled by the teachings of His teacher never gets deluded.

Sometimes he is silent,and sometimes he is engaged in discussions; sometimes he laughs loud (without words of explanation),revelling in the bliss of His own Self; and at others he observes closely the behaviour of the people around Him. But the sage

whose ignorance has been dispelled by the teachings of His teacher never gets deluded

(Jeevanmukthanandalahari 11-12)

*That day Gurudev showed us how playfully He could sport through life's problems as His mind soared in spaces where seemingly serious earthly concerns became but a small twist in a vast, delightful game.

Rudite Emir

Swami Chinmayananda-As I know Him page 46
It is very difficult to pin point or segregate any particular personality asset of a Gunateeta and a Gunadheesh. Yet Gurudev's special blessings for me are His smile,His beatific glance and His words meant as if for me alone. This unique feature has hooked me to Shree Charan for life.

(Dr. D.K. Garg)

Om GunaateetaayaNamaha!

Om GunaateetaayaNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

Last night at 10.30, while I was reflecting upon Gurudev as Gunateetah, Gurudev manifested through Sankara Channel, His talk on Geeta Chap.13. The subject was shloka 15 which He explained thus:-

“Sarvendriyagunaabhaasam Sarvendriyavivarjitam

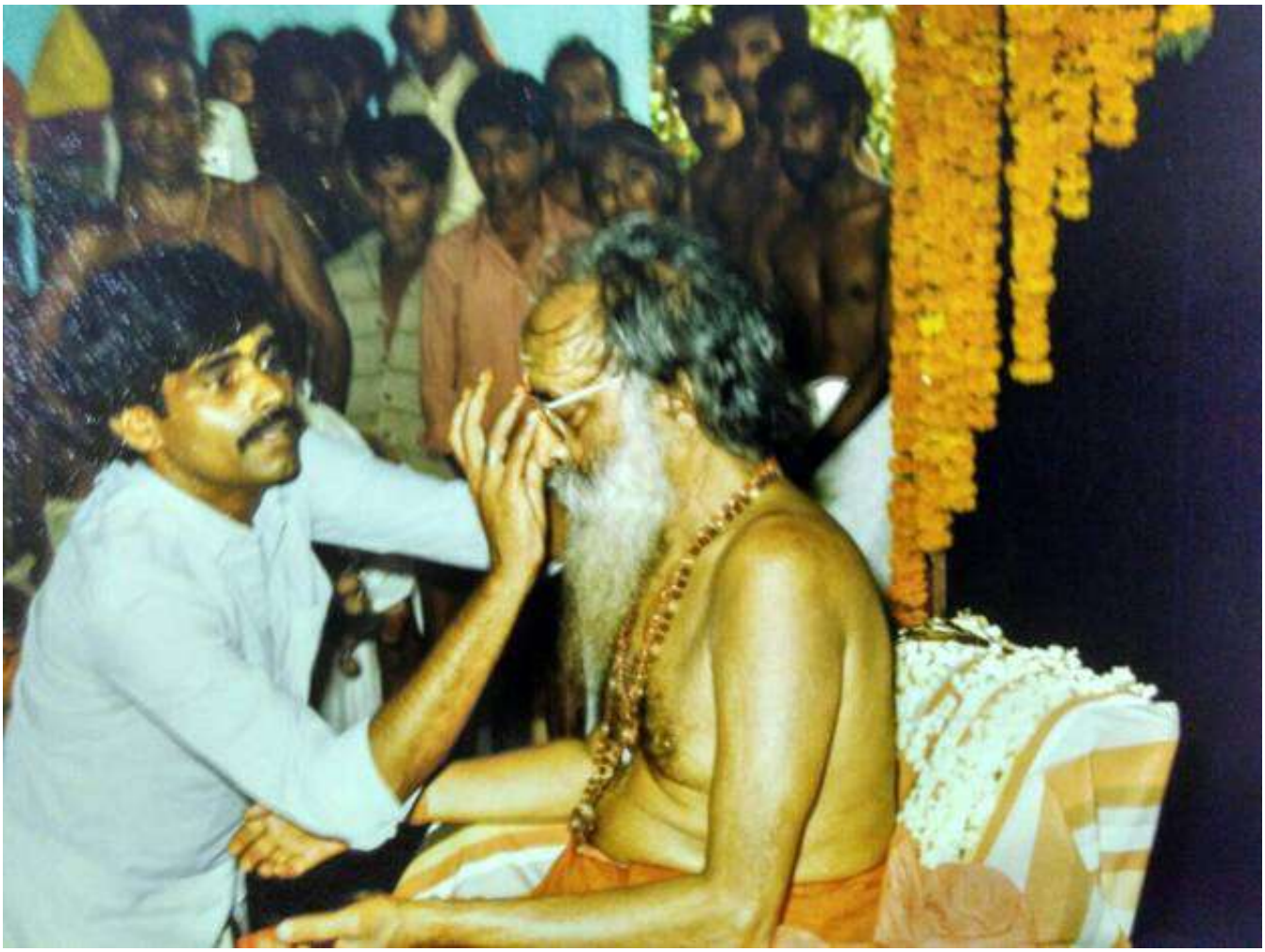
AsaktamSarvabhritchaivaNirgunamGunabhoktr cha.” (Bhag.Gita 13-15)

“Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses; unattached; yet supporting all, devoid of qualities, yet their experiencer.”

He expounds further:-

“The moods and influences under which human minds come to play and experience themselves, are called ‘Gunaas’; Sattwa (unactivity), Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inactivity). These are influences that govern the mind and yet they are the objects

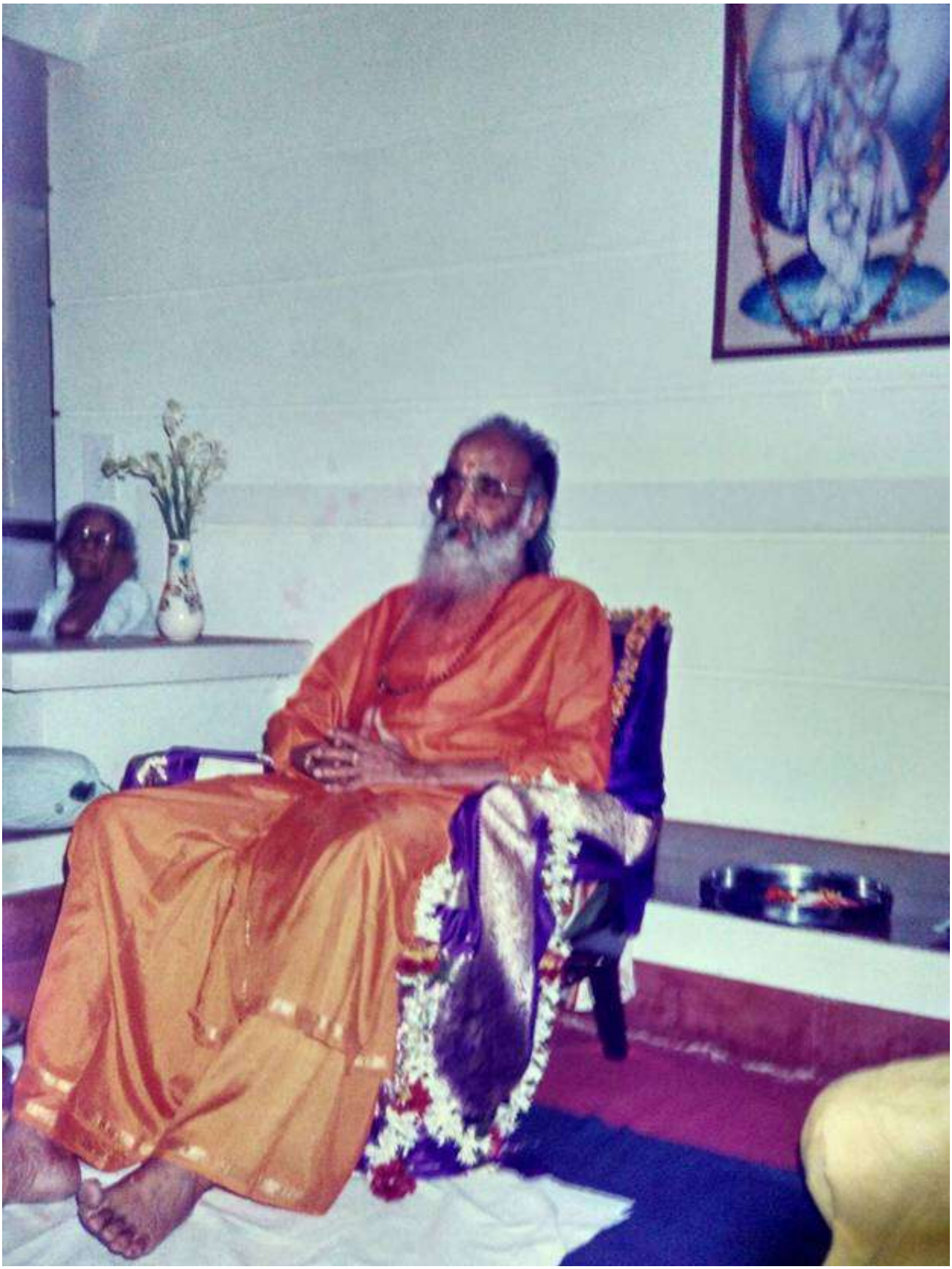
of realisation or perception for the Conscious Self. A live mind alone can experience these influences. The Consciousness conditioned by the mind is the Ego (Jiva) and that is the experiencer (bhoktr) of the Guna. Unconditioned by the mind in Its own nature It is the Absolute!"



Thus in the above stanza the Self as the Absolute is described as beyond sense organs, mind and intellect, detached from everything and without any relation to the various Gunas. One who is established in Brahman, the Absolute is beyond Gunaas! Thus Gurudev revealed is Gunaateeta nature last night though Sankara Chanel!

Gunaas are born out of Primordial Matter (MoolaPrakriti). And in the production of the effect and the cause, Prakriti is said to be the cause; in the experience of pleasure and pain, Spirit (Purusha) is said to be the cause. Purusha seated in Prakriti, experiences the qualities (gunaas) born of Prakriti; attachment to the

qualities (gunaas) is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs. The Supreme Purusha in this body is also called the spectator, the Permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord, and the Supreme Self. Naaraayana, the Great Lord, is known as the 'Moolaprakriti-Vikriti-Krit (the very doer of modification of Moolapakriti). Just in His mere presence, Prakriti dances (yasyaSannidhimatrena)! One who is beyond thisMoolaprakriti is Gunaateeta. And Gurudev is one!



Krishna tasmaiNamaste–(lady sitting as witness is Jamshedpur amma)

In ‘SrimanNaraayaneeyam’, Sri BhattatitrisalutesNaaraayana thus:-

“Sabdabrahmeti Karmetyanuriti Bhagavan Kaala ityaalapanti,
TvaamekamViswahetumSakalamayatayaaSarvadhaa Kalpyammaanam
VedaantaihyathuGeetam Purushaparachidaatmaabhidam Tat
tuTatvamPrekshaamaatrena Moolaprakritivikritikrit Krishna Tasmai Namaste”
(Dasaka 98-Sloka 4)

“O Lord! Being everything and therefore conceivable in any or every form or manner, Thou, the only cause of the whole universe, art spoken of as Primeval Sound, as Adrishta (of Karma), as atoms, as Time etc. by the various schools of philosophy. In the Vedaanta,that Reality alone is called Purusha,Para, Chit, Atma, etc.and is described as causing (the projection of the universe by) the various modifications of Maaya (Moolaprakriti) by a mere glance. O Krishnaa, Salutations to Thee who art that Reality alone.”

Om GunaateetaayaNamaha!

Om GunaateetaayaNamaha!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR



Salutations to the One who is beyond gunas

Gunatita is one who is beyond all gunas . The three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas), the scriptures mention are the three qualities of Nature or the outer expression of the Supreme Reality. The world is the body of God. We touch God when we touch our body.

The world is fundamentally made up of matter; even space and air are matter. All beings are matter alone and this matter is active. The activity in plants and animals is complex in nature. They follow their own set of laws and are governed by an inherent intelligence which rules over all matter. Human beings are even more complex because their minds are evolved and play a part.

When we look at the world, we find three distinct qualities which express as tamoguṇa or matter, rajoguṇa or activity and sattvaguṇa or intelligence. Everything including the physical body, the mind and our thoughts is made up of these three

guṇas. Guṇa also means that which binds. Feeling sleepy is a quality of tamoguṇa. When we are sleepy, we are in the grip of laziness, lethargy and inactivity. When rajoguṇa takes over, the person becomes more active at the level of body and mind. This is also a form of bondage. Similarly, sattvaguṇa expressing as knowledge and intelligence is also bondage.

These three gunas of prakriti as though bind the world. All beings and matter are under the sway of these three. We are controlled by them.Those who have gone beyond the three gunas or do not come under their control are known as gunatitah. They are beyond their ambit and can no longer be influenced by them. These Mahatmas live along with the three gunas, but as their master. They are not enslaved by them.

The example of the snake would clarify this point. Poison in the body of the snake, though poisonous for others, does not affect it. In the same way, for all other than the Supreme Reality, guṇas are poison. We find the fearsome snake beautifully draped on the form of Lord Shiva. The snake is the symbol of Time. Vishnu Bhagavan symbolically sleeps on the snake, ever its master. Kala or time binds us; it plays a very crucial role in our lives. ‘Time and tide wait for none.’ When time runs out, there is nothing anyone can do about it.

All our emotions are bound by time. If we remove time from fear, the fear ceases to exist. Where there is no concept of future, there is no fear. If there is no concept of past, all the sorrow from our lives is removed. Even our ambitions are governed by time. Eckhart Tolle, in The Power of Now says that he has lost interest in his past and future. All of us are deeply embedded in our past. We recall with great interest stories of our past. When it happened, it was very interesting but regaling it again and again makes us lose out on the present.

We are equally fascinated by our future. Astrologers and palmists are very busy because we all want to unravel the mystery of the future. The daily or weekly predictions in the newspapers are widely and avidly read. But the Sadguru has gone beyond all fascinations with time and is free from its bonds.

OM GUNATEETAAYA NAMAH!

287. OM GRANTHAKRITE NAMAH

18-02-2016

OM GRANTHAKRITE NAMAH

Offered by Br.Kutastha Chaitanya,CIF,Veliyanad



People who moved with Gurudev, enjoyed direct experiences with him, may think that others who have not met him, have missed Gurudev.

I was living near Chinmaya Nagar in Chennai. I have also been to ChinmayaNagar, but I didn't know 'what' Chinmayawas or to whom ChinmayaVidyalaya belongs. Yet here I am in the Mission.

Sometime after I joined the Mission, I told a senior Swamiji that I had missed Gurudev - not even seen him. He said,it was natural for people who moved with Gurudev and who had seen him, to develop bhakti bhavanatowards him. But there are people who, without seeing him have such great bhakti; that is a biggest thing and that they are really fortunate and gifted.

Once before joining ChinmayaMission I visited a few temples with some colleagues at work. Personally I was not drawn to temples or worship. They took me to Tiruvannamalai. Then we went to Thiruththani - near Chennai for the worship of lord Subrahmanya. It is situated on a small hill. We climbed the steps to the temple as it was some auspicious day.There were thousands of people in the hill. I couldn't tolerate the stress. Others in that crowd were managing - happily tolerating all the squeezing crowd. I asked them how long we have to stand like this. They told till morning 4 am, till we get the first darshan of Lord Murugan.

The time was around 11.30 pm. I told them I cannot stand there like this.

I came down the hill and waited for them near a book shop. I needed to pass time till they came, so I browsed. One book caught my attention. It was Bhajagovindam. I recalled that all homes played this song. Now it was in book form before me. I needed to pass time anyway. So I bought the book. It was a tamiltranslation) of SwamiChinmayananda's commentary.

Casually I was reading it. A little bit of the subject went into me. The transliteration of the Sanskrit verses was in tamil. It was nice reading it. The songs and the beats and rhythm and words.

Within 6-12 months, I don't know what miracle it was but I had applied to join the Sandeepany Vedanta Gurukula course in Chinmaya Mission. Me and spirituality were two ends of a pole.

The Sandeepanyapplication form asked a question: what are the books you have read. I remembered that BhajaGovindam book, and mentioned it, assuring myself that that Swami Chinmayananda must have something to do with this ashram.
I thought that might please the selectors and so I wrote BhajaGovindam by Swami Chinmayanada and a few others I had read.

When the interview call came, I feared they may question me about this Bhajagovindam book. So I read the book again, practically preparing as for an interview.

That night at Thiruthani when I read the book the first time, even if casually, something must have gone inside, without me knowing it, the words of Swami Chinmayananda. His teachings. Then for this interview when I read something more deep - his teachings went inside me.

In the meanwhile while was reading paper in the office I saw in the Engagement column ChinmayaMission programme at Rani Seethai Hall at Mount Road, Chennai. It was Sw. Mitranandaji's talk on the topic - Seven Days Seven Masters.

I have never been to any satsang ever. In fact I never knew the word Satsang also at that time. I decided to attend this talk. I managed to take my office colleague with me telling the talk will be superb as if I knew. I needed a lift, that was my objective honestly.

In this talk Seven Days Seven Masters, SwamiMitranandaji was going to speak about SwamiChinmayananda on the seventh day only and the 7thday was a Sunday. None of my colleagues wanted to 'waste' their Sunday. Hence I too could not go.

Yes, I missed that wonderful opportunity to hear about Gurudev- His life, about his work, Mission and all.
But the previous six days, I would go to the book stall after the lectures. I bought Journey of a Master. I started reading it ... and began understanding Gurudev's life.... In the last section of the book, there is Gurudev's question and answers, that went in deeply.

I had cleared the interview for the Vedanta Course and I joined the course which was from August 2000 to December 2002.
During the final two months, a conflict arose in my mind. Some turn of events led to my having to stay alone in the ashram.
All others except me went to a camp. I did not know what to do. First day went by, second day too ... I took Gurudev's Bhagavad-Gita, and started reading. It kept me glued. All the time I was studying Gurudev's commentary. I finished the second chapter also. By that time, the others returned from the camp.

In those ten days of isolation I got a chance to study Gurudev's commentary on Gita chapter 1 and 2, deeply. Had I had studied them earlier, I may not have understoodas much as I understood then.

After graduating from the Vedanta Course I was posted to Tiruchengode, near Salem.I was 24 or so.

Six months later I was sitting in the veranda in the Mission centre. A senior person around 50 -55 years,came and suddenly fell at my feet, and offered sastanganamaskar. I was baffled. I asked, "Who are you? And why are you doing this?"

He said he was from Erode, that he was in a very critical stage of life, didn't know what to do next; that in that frame of mind he happened to go to a book fair where he purchased "NammalMudiyum" (Tamil translation of Gurudev's We Must). He then told me that after reading the book he was a totally transformed person. He said my life style has changed; I was broken in mind and lacklustre. That Swami Chinmayananda's writing changed my life fully.....

So he had come looking for a 'SwamiChinmayananda related ashram.'That was how he found the Erode mission center. He came straight here and did namaskar to me! That was how much Gurudev's book impacted him and he saw all swamis and brahmacharisas the representatives of Gurudev!

My life gained meaning through reading his books but without being aware that the

books were impacting me. That elder too had been completely transformed by Gurudev's writing and books. No wonder then that Gurudev says, "Meet me in my books …"

To that One who is a shabdaswaroopam of the Lord, to Him my salutations.

Om GranthakriteNamah!

Om GranthakriteNamah!

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu ji – Chennai

All of us know the number of books Sri Gurudev has authored. To-day if anyone has to understand Sastras in their purity, yet easy and inspiring, adhering to Sri SankaraBhashya, Gurudev's books have all these aspects. Complete, full, precise and perfect.

Apart from this He has become subject matter of many books. Books on His life anecdotes, have been compiled by so many people and each of these have only onspired us all. Figuratively He was responsible for these books too. Hence GranthakriteNamah. These books can lift our minds to Him and God.
A Grantha reveals values and truths. Gurudev's life itself is a Grantha.

Amongst His various books, the Holy Geeta and Mandukya Upanishad excel in their thoroughness, in their completeness, in their style of exposition.
Many great people have gone on record like the popular Tamil author Sri Manian. The hero in one of his novels says when he has a problem he opens any page of Swamiji'sGeeta and finds an answer!

This could well be the author's own experience. But then, never was a truer word spoken or written!
The Late renowned and respected Sri G.D.Birla in his autobiography says there is no day he goes to bed without reading Swamiji'sGeeta.
Amongst His brief treaties on Karma Bhakthi and Dhyana are Secret of Action (art of living),I Love You based on NaradaBhakthi Sutra and Hasten Slowly based on Yoga Vasishta.

These are masterpieces written in his own characteristic style and His manner of teaching.

Gurudev's BMI chart is exemplary unique wholistic. It is so simple yet there is no Vedanta concept Gurudev could not explain with that.
For any serious student His Kindle Life,Manual of Self Unfoldment,Meditation and

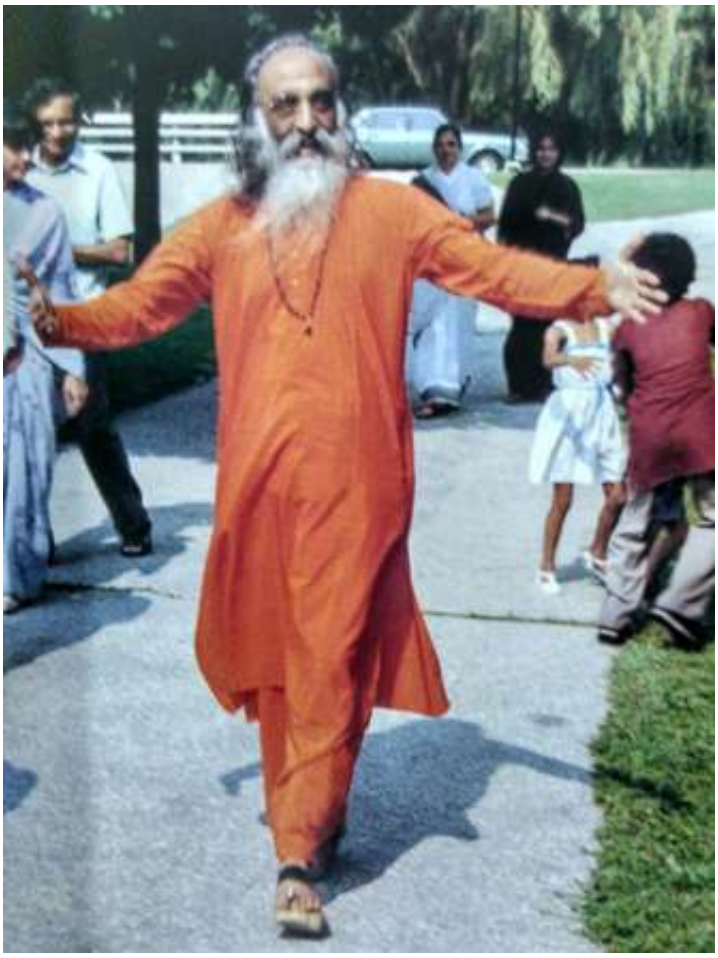
Life are of immense help.

Om GranthakriteNamaha!

Om GranthakriteNamaha!

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

The dictionary meanings of Grantha are, binding, stringing together a work, treatise, book, composition, literary production etc. and ‘Krit’ means creator. Also, Grantha is a Brahmic scriptfrom the Brahmi script in Tamil Nadu.The Malayalam script is a direct descendant of Grantha. This was widely used in Kerala, to write Sanskrit and the classical language Manipravalam, and is still in restricted use in traditional Vedic schools (Sanskrit Veda Paatasalas). Grantha script still lives in Tamil Nadu, albeit in reduced state. ‘Re’ means to do something again. ‘ligion’ is taken from the root, meaning ‘to bind’-- unify. Therefore Religion is “Bind again.”



Once, while explaining 'Religion', Gurudev said 'when individuals run all over, there comes an evolved person who says, 'Come ye dear ones' and he gathers then into his religion or opinion (matam)...'

Swami Chinmayaananda, our Poojya Gurudev was not just an individual; He was an Institution- a Yuga Purusha! Even though the word meaning of Granthakrit is an author or a writer, it assumes a more meaningful magnitude, when yoked to this Yogi who was a magnificent, majestic, magnetic, state-of-the-art-Master, who always abided in Brahman!

His own Brahmic Script (Grantha) that was used for His classical language English was a true script, written for the “Play of Life- The art of Living !” His book “Vedanta through Letters” contains Gems and Jewels that inspires one to dig deeper into the Scriptures! Poojya Gurudev bound us together into a Chinmaya Family, His own true Re-ligion! The Chinmaya Mission Pledge that He created, “We stand as one family ‘bound’ to each other with love and

respect" strings us together! His artistic BMI chart "Unfolded the Self" in us and taught us "The Art of Man-Making". Through His innumerable writings, Gurudev strived to re-bind or re-unite the individual with the Truth revealed in our Scriptures and kindled our Life!

Om GranthahKriteNamaha!

Om GranthahKriteNamaha!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head CM- Delhi & NCR



Salutations to the Author of Spiritual Books

The Master writes on the Supreme Reality, because that is the only thing worth writing about. The market is flooded with books of various kinds, on a variety of topics, which eventually lead us nowhere. Millions of words are floating around in the form of books, confusing the public by their different theories and philosophies. People buy books not because they are good, but because they are mentioned in the list of best sellers. We never know what may become popular. Under the garb of spirituality, even books with not much substance are finding their way on to the bookstalls.

Grantha is that which helps us to remove our granthis or knots. We are

obstructed by the knots in our heart. The scriptures or books on spirituality help us in removing these obstacles. Gurudev has written many books aimed at the spiritual aspirant, among these the most famous is his commentary on the Bhagavad-gita. His commentaries on the Upanishads are fascinating. His talks on the Isha, Keno, Aitreya, Taittriya, Mundako, Mandukya, Kaivalya have been transcribed from recordings of his lectures and are invaluable support for the seeker. He wrote at a time, when the Upanishads were not very popular. Most people were not even aware of their existence. Even the Bhagavad- gita.was not very popular. His English commentaries on these sublime texts uncovered the mysteries of this ancient wisdom. As a result of his farsightedness, these became accessible to the common man in a language they found easy to understand.

Before filling a vessel with a water or milk, we have to clean it. Gurudev used the power of words to cleanse the minds of the spiritual aspirants who came to him. He has to his credit the most amazing array of books on a variety of subjects associated with spirituality. In his inimitable style, he first removed misconceptions and then proceeded to give the correct knowledge.

The three steps in gaining knowledge are: Clean the mind, fill it with new knowledge and then stabilize it. If the vessel is not clean and we fill it, it will create confusion. Removing all the negativities is like karma and upasana. Pouring in new information is like shravaṇa and stabilizing it is manana and nididhyasana.

What we are not convinced about does not belong to us. Our knowledge is only what we are convinced about. We may say, ‘The world is divine,’ but it only becomes knowledge, if we are convinced about the statement, otherwise it remains book information. We learn a great deal through manana but if we do not contemplate on it, it may fade away. What is superficial will leave us.

There was a king who did not employ anyone from Community A. To get over this hurdle, a man belonging to the community changed his name and posed as a member of Community B. The king employed him but soon became suspicious. He empowered his minister to do some detective work, who obliged by pouring water on the head of the sleeping man. The man woke up with a start and his reactions gave him away. When we are fully aware and in our senses, we can do a cover up job. It is when we are taken unawares that our true nature surfaces. This is the real ‘I’.

Gurudev gave us new thoughts and convictions. He repeated them so that they became firm and unswerving, deeply embedded in the psyche. Being a prolific writer,

he wrote extensively. There are many titles to his credit. Moving from city to city, he also conducted an amazing number of gyanayagya. He lectured morning and evening reaching out to thousands of people. He could be compared to acaryas of ancient times like Madhavacarya or Shankaracarya.

Gurudev had an amazing capacity to spontaneously come up with names and titles. One devotee wanted to publish a random collection of his writings and wanted a name for the book. Prompt came the reply –Scraps and Bits. Anjali Singh compiled a book of questions and answers, collected from conversations while traveling with him by train and air. He named the book – On Wings and Wheels.

Gurudev had a journalistic background and his power of expression was amazing. His pen could draw unparalleled word pictures. The whole scene would come alive through his narration. Even his one line statements were a complete teaching in themselves.

OM GRANTHAKRITE NAMAH!

288. OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

19-02-2016

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his specific permission



*'Chinmaya' is one of the names by which Sri AdiSankara, is glorified in his Ashttothara - ChinmayaatmaneNamaha. Deriving therefrom, the meanings emerging are, the one who is full of effulgence, or illumining consciousness, -the brilliant one, the one with full knowledge (chit plus maya).

* What is special about a person who is chinmaya?

Total awareness, presence, consciousness. When Gurudev was in action, working,

what we saw was a person who was totally conscious, one totally aware of every movement he was making. Most of us, however, perform actions unconsciously. We do things with our hands but the mind is occupied with something else. We are hardly there! But Gurudev's every action was a study in grace, a study in awareness, consciousness. When action is done with full consciousness, that action looks very graceful.

* Like when he would take a pinch of snuff to inhale. Gurudev had a condition called deviated nasal septum. So he ended up taking in air through the mouth when he talked. The only remedy available was surgery which does not help very much.

So Gurudev would inhale snuff and that would clear his blocked nose and then he would be free to continue with his talks. In the video (Swamiji is referring to what they will be watching), watch him inhale snuff...you will understand why watching Sri Ramakrishna folding a shawl can lead one into Samadhi.

*Even as he is talking, Gurudev will pinch off snuff and hold it between two fingers, and continue talking, the hand waving about as if in a mudra. Those watching him will wonder ' when is he going to inhale it?' .....he keeps talking and suddenly, without any warning he will come out with a joke or a powerful incident, wrap the audience in splits and while everybody is laughing --- it's a sight, trust me, when you watch him closely and this action begins to have a separate dialogue with your mind – he will inhale the snuff, giving it perfect time to perform the job of releasing the gagged air passage! So conscious, so graceful, so perfect, so well timed, so dignified.

ChinmayaayaNamah.... Conscious performer. Aware, full of awareness, awareful, mindful, full of mindfulness, chinmayah...

*As a seeker we should learn to perform consciously, mindfully, awarefully. Chinmaya is that consciousness,

*1987-Sidhabari – Kathopanishad: In meditation class, he excepts everyone to meditate and not take notes. One person seated in the last row was taking notes. So Swamiji said 'stop taking notes'. As he wrote again Gurudev said "I told you to stop, leave the hall now, out". Now this guy realised, this time it is me, it's not for somebody in the front... Slowly he got up and left the class. Later he came by and said "Swamiji I was writing the notes, sorry I should not have done so....I am sorry."

Gurudev's reply was " I know you were writing the notes, I can feel the pen and the paper, I can feel that."

Can we feel someone writing? 'I can feel the pen, the nib and the paper... I can feel'. What is that frequency he is referring to when he says 'I can feel'? Four hundred people, one person sitting in the far end writing and he says I can feel... !

*This is how Gurudev lived, in full awareness, mindful of all that happened in his vicinity yet mindful of all that he needed to do in their midst. Chin-maya.

To that utterly chin-maya guru, our prostrations,

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, Mumbai

Na tatrasuryobhatinachandra-tarakam

nemavidyutobhantikuto'yamagnih

tam eva bhantam anubhatisarvam

tasya bhasa sarvam idam vibhati. (Kathopanishad. II- V- 15)

The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor the lightning and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light, all these shine.

That Light is the pure Consciousness (Chit) – the Light of all Lights! That Light illumines the light and darkness! That Consciousness-Concentrate is Chinmaya!

ChidroopenaParivyaaptamTrailokyamSacharaacharamTatpadamdarshitamYenaTasmai Shree GuraveNamaha!

"Salutations to the Guru who has made it possible to realise Him who as Consciousness pervades the three worlds with their movable and immovable objects."



Tatpadadarshanam.....

That TatpadaDarshanam is Chinmaya Darshanam! When Chinmaya-the Pure Consciousness- the Infinite Brahman, rides on a limited mind, that mind will necessarily become unlimited-Infinite Brahman. You give your mind to Him-the Lord-the Guru within, He will launder that mind for you. A laundered pure mind is no more a mind! Poojya Gurudev says " Never Mind "! Wherever Gurudev said 'never mind' in His talks, pause there and see what He said just before that. Invariably it will be a subtle point revealed. Purity of the mind is achieved only with Gurukripa.

Once I asked Him: - Gurudeva, in your 'Talk on Krishnaavathaar ' there was a blank in one of the 'paadas' , you chanted. Gurudev asked me, which one. So I chanted the following: - "Krishna twadeeyapadapankajapinjaraantaam; Adhaiva me vishadu ----------;
PraanaprayaanasamayekaphavaatapithaihikandavarodhanavidhouSmaranamkutahste."

Gurudev made me chant this twice and the third time, He filled in the blank with 'Maanasa Raja Hamsaha'!

[The meaning of the shloka is something like this “Oh! Krishnaa, into Thy Lotus Feet- the Nest, may this Mind- a Raja Hamsa, enter, nest, and rest ‘right now’, because, how can I remember Thee (I am not sure), at the moment of my last breath (praanaprayaanasamaye) and while my throat (kanda) becomes constricted by the Kapha, Vaata and Pithaof the body?]

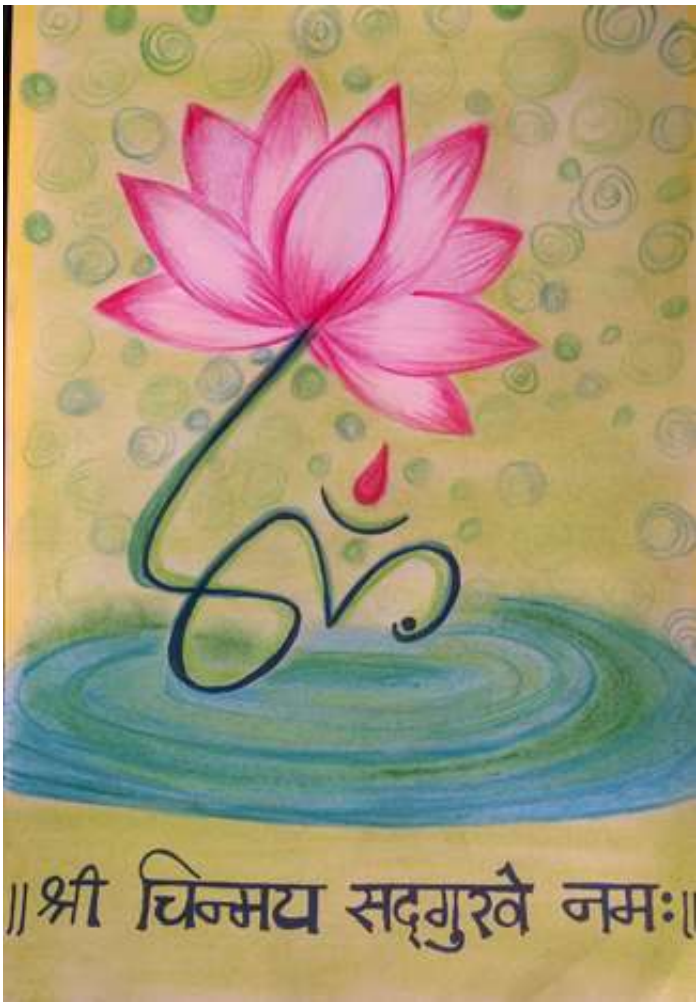
He continued, "You have a family to bring up and settle. While doing this, keep laundering your mind. Launder and Wander.....".

Om Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha!

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by BrniAnupama Chaitanya,CM Jamnagar



OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri.Hemachandrudu,Chennai

ChinmayayaNamah means I bow down to Pure Consciousness meaning consciousness unattached with anything.

That alone is. Kaivalya.

This cannot be explained excepting in the words of RealisedMasters,since words can only explain qualities. This is a pure subjective experience. But since we know Gurudev is a Brahma Gnani, He is established in Himself. Therefore, He is Chinmaya, pure Consciousness. We have enough to quote Him on this topic specially in Kenopanishad.



Before we see these quotes I would like to share a well known incident concerning this name.

A few enthusiastic devotees in Chennai approached Gurudev with a proposal of starting an organisation and call it Chinmaya Mission. Gurudev said not to name the mission after Him. The unrelenting devotees convinced Him this is not His name. Since our job is to spread knowledge this is most appropriate. Gurudev conceded.

Now let us see a few extracts from Sri Gurudev on this Chinmaya.

Kaivalya 18

This "Objectless awareness " (Chinmatra) is unconditioned and unlimited and therefore,all the causes for disturbance and distractions have ended in it and thus it is Ever-auspicious (Sada-Siva).

Kenopanishad 2-2

But the student has gained, certainly,a very intimate knowledge of the Self in him, and yet it is not as 'an object other than himself'. That the Self is recognised as one's own real nature,is the uniform experience of all Masters.

Agama (tradition of Masters) is the only evidence with reference to which one can express transcendental experiences.

Kena 2-3

Language of intuition alone can soar to the realms of Pure Consciousness.

Kena 2-3

The Self which is Knowledge Absolute (Chinmaya) cannot be known by another knower other than Itself.

To That all-knowing Knowledge Absolute, my salutations.

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM- Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Pure Consciousness

Cinmaya is chit , of the nature of Consciousness or full of Knowledge. Chinmaya Mission takes its name from Gurudev’s name as also from the meaning of the word. Gurudev used to say that we can transform ourselves and the world through Knowledge. Change effected through rules, force and insistence can at best be only temporary. But the transformation that comes from within does not require any outer

supports. Knowledge is that which purifies, transforms and is the ultimate aim and goal of life. Through this we come to know our true nature. We come to understand ourselves.



The thirst to learn is naturally present in every living being. Even small ants have the inherent desire to know the source of sugar. We all want to satisfy this urge orjijgyasa. The basic instincts or urges we have are the thirst for survival or living, the wish for knowledge and the desire for happiness. Our very nature is Pure Existence, Pure Knowledge and Pure Bliss. Not being aware of and not recognizing our eternal nature creates a sense of incompleteness.

We identify with our body and are frightened by its perishable nature. This gives rise to the desire to survive. Though our nature is all-knowing, of the nature of Knowledge it is blocked by our impurities. The desire to be happy is also our innate nature. These urges to know and be happy are fulfilled by the blessings of our own nature. When the time is appropriate, the Lord in some form or the other appears to guide us. There is only one Teacher or Guru. God alone in the form of this vast cosmos teaches us.

The Teacher imparts the same Knowledge to different students and they imbibe it in

accordance with the level of their own yearning. Students develop a rapport with the Teacher in accordance with the intensity of their desire. Being at different levels, they learn according to their own spiritual evolution. Once some human beings, devatas and asuras went to Brahmaji and asked him to teach them something. Being a man of few words, his teaching was short and cryptic. All he said was, “da.” They could not understand what he meant and he was not ready to explain any further. So they went off to their respective guides or Teachers to get explanations.

Brihaspati told the devatas that since they predominantly seek enjoyment, they are being advised to exercise dama or restraint. Shukracharyaji opined that since asuraslacked compassion, ‘da’ stood for daya. They should develop compassion in their hearts. Human beings are greedy, constantly wanting more. In order to overcome lobha, they need to give in charity, so ‘da’ is dana. Here we see one teaching being interpreted variously, in accordance with their respective levels of understanding.

It is true that the teaching of the Guru is received according to our levels of understanding. But it is also true that the words of a Sadguru can never go in vain. They are like seeds being planted in the soil. They will certainly grow to their full stature because the blessings of a Mahatma can never be in vain!

OM CHINMAYAAY NAMAH

289. CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA

20-02-2016

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni.Anupama Chaitanya,CM Jamnagar

In duality there will be always doubts. Doubts can exist only when there are two or more thoughts. Where there is oneness, doubt cannot exist. Abiding in the Absolute Truth Gurudev dispelled all the doubts of His devotees. Almost everyone who heard the lectures of Poojya Gurudev had experienced that as the doubts arise they also got solved (unasked) during the next lecture. Also the clarity with which Gurudev answered, there remained no room for any doubts.

Gurudev always encouraged questions, he would say, "Longer the beard greater the doubt should be".

Also Gurudev said "Please do not feel that you are troubling me with your questions. You never can. To answer doubts is my life's fulfillment."

Sometimes, when in a difficult situation, we may doubt whether God loves us or not. Poojya Gurudev explained it so beautifully to a group of people about God’s way of loving.

He told us of a little boy who went to nursery school and cried when his mother left him there. The teacher calmed the little one, quickly gave him brightly colored toys to play with, and he was soon fascinated. When it was time to go home teacher started collecting toys from the children. The boy, pained at the loss of his new found joy, clung to the toys and cried out loud. He would not let go. Finally, he gave in to the teacher’s entreaties and loosened his grip. When he came to school the next day, he got different toys, new ones, different from the previous day but more enchanting.

Thus each day the teacher took away the old toys and gave him new ones that were better than the previous ones. Soon the child learned not to cling to what he had but to laugh when it was taken away and look forward with assurance to new toys waiting in the wings for him.

The suffocating burden of attachment fell away from us instantly, and we realized the glory of God’s love for us. (Source:At Every Breath A Teaching:pg.Page no.194 -New Toys Every Day)

Salutations to the Dispeller of doubts.

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda ji with his permission

*Salutations to him who removes all doubts,who cuts all doubts asunder (Chhina- to cut asunder; samshaya - doubt). Where even the shadow of doubt is removed – chhinasamshaya.



Is it his teacher-hood or his divinity one wonders. Both aspects come to play. In his presence, just in his presence, doubts disappear. It’s how he addresses people, meeting them at their level of ignorance and lifting them up to clarity. A great trait of a teacher. Then there are those who come to him, with the faith that he has the means to remove their doubts. Answer their questions. And when someone has faith, that faith has to be strengthened.

*Yet, he is the teacher, and he is allowed to play with his students. And he does play. In most question-answer sessions, Gurudev's opening address would be,'Don't think I will remove your doubts....! That, now that you have asked a question, your doubt will go away ..... No. Don't think like that. What I will do is, reflect aloud upon what I think for your situation; reflect upon a possible direction for you, so that if you think in that direction, there is a possibility that your doubt can go.'

Sometimes, Gurudev would very humorously add, 'Ah, but if you are in love with your doubts I can't do anything!' Yes, some people are attached to their doubts. You will find such people when you go out to the field to work. They will look at you, wearing their doubts like a medal, and tell you, 'I have asked seven teachers before and you are the eighth one. Please remove my doubt!'

*So, whenever Gurudev takes up a Q&A session he would spell it out, 'I can give you certain data and a kind of direction; but you have to remove the doubt yourself.' Working on a student's doubt is not easy. It is the love for the people that makes him empathize with the student's point of view.

*To give you an example. There was a youth meet in Chennai, in a place called Rani Sipahi Hall. In the Q&A session, one college student asked, what is vasana? He said 'I came to your talk yesterday; I saw the chart you were using, had something called 'V'. I asked somebody in the crowd and they said V stands for 'vasana'. What is that?'

What is the best way to answer this young man? Gurudev started his answer like this: 'if you see a young girl, in clothes that expose more than what she should expose, and at that point, you feel like whistling. That tendency which makes you want to whistle, is Vasana.'

*He could because he is a teacher, for whom students, knowledge and love came together. This was also natural and empathetic because he dealt with students all the time, and he knew their situation, their mind. And a teacher should have empathy

*To that Remover of Doubts, our prostrations!

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

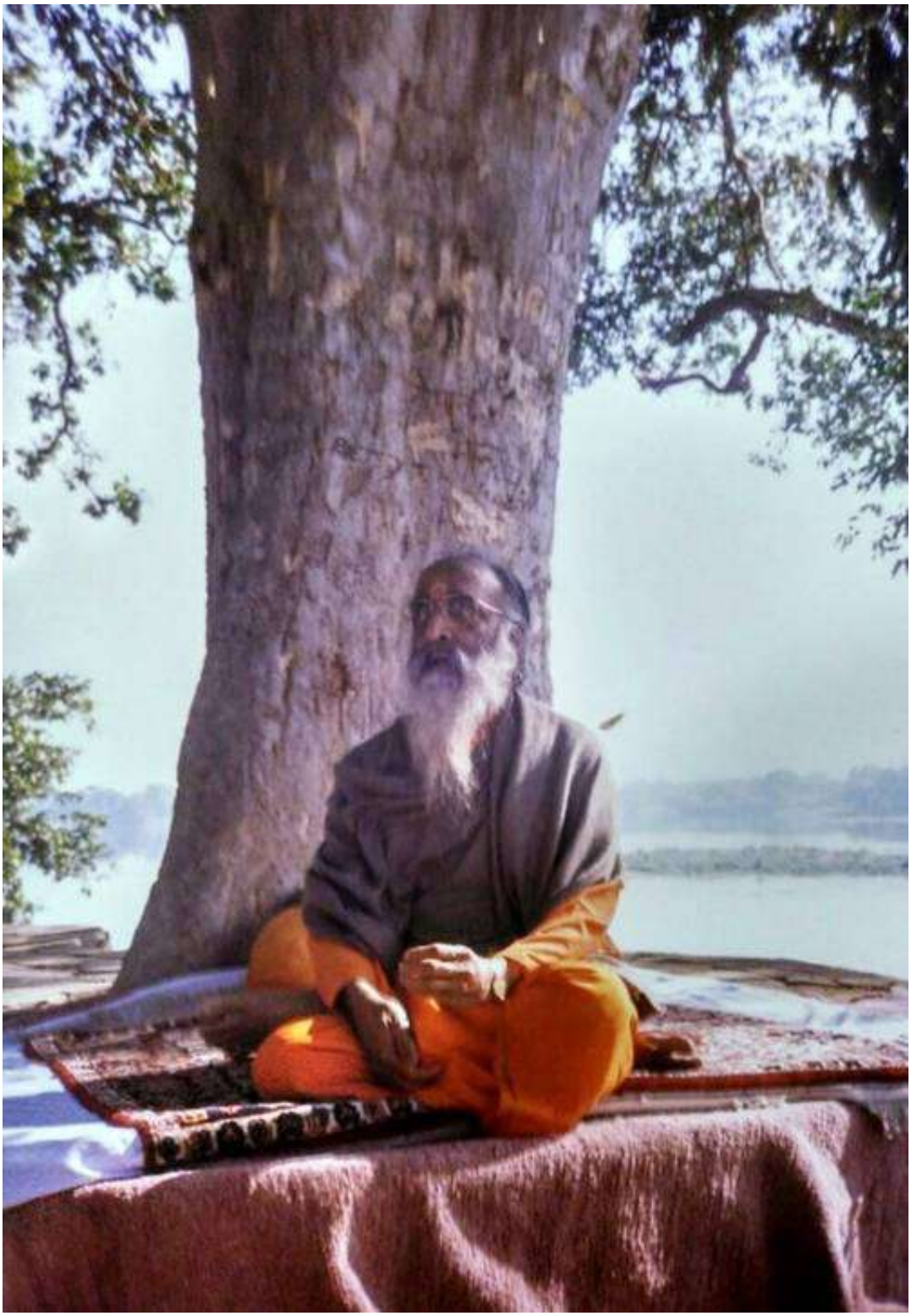
OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji,CM -Mumbai

ChithramVata-taror-mooleVridhaahSishyaaGurur-Yuvaa

GurohstuMounamVyakhyaanam, Shishyas-tuChinnaSamshayaha! (Shree DakhinaamoorthiSthotram. Dhyana Shloka 3)

“Strange indeed! Under the banyan tree were the aged disciples around the youthful Guru! He taught them with “silence” but the doubts of the disciples were all dispelled.”



Citram...!Gurostumounam...!

Dakshinaamurti, a manifestation of Siva, as the Guru, who brought four ancient

learned sages to an experience of the Self through the power of his silence.He is the source of Jnana and is the Lord of Memory (Medhaa). His mudra (sign) is Chin mudra (Jnana Mudra)-the sign of Consciousness, indicating Tattwamasi-That Thou-Art! This is the Source of all Masters! This ‘ silent teaching’ consisted of a spiritual force that emanates from The Guru, a force so powerful that it is considered to be the most direct and important aspect of teaching. The Sat guru effortlessly emits a silent power that automatically quietens the mind of everyone in His vicinity. The one attuned to this force, experiences inner peace and well-being. The proximity of a Satguru sucks one to a Samaadhi that precipitates a direct experience of the Self.

Poojya Gurudev was in Chennai once, conducting GeethaJnaana in Jan 1984.
I was on my way back from my annual pilgrimage to Sabarimala during Makara Samkrama. I had gone to Guruniketan, NambiarAmma’sresidence to give Gurudev Prasaadam, early in the morning. Gurudev took me with Him for the morning class that day, happened to be Maandukyopanishad. The karika (Gloss), He took that day was ‘MaayaamaatramidamdvaitamAdvaitamParamaarthataha’-‘The duality that is cognised is a mere illusion, or Maya. Non-duality alone is the Supreme Reality.’ While He was elaborating the description of non-duality (AdvaitaBhasha) and how Sabhda Brahman pulsated from “Silence”, Gurudev quoted a shloka from Panchadashi:

“ChodyamvaParihaarovakriyataamDvaitaBhaashayaa

AdvaitaBhashayaaChodyamNaastichaapi Tad-Utharam”

He explained thus: “Question and Answer is conducted in the language of duality (dvaita); in the language of non-duality (advaita), there exists no question, hence no answer.”

Gurudev reiterated that everything takes place in Silence! The whole day I was with Him and after the evening session of Gita, while we were having bhiksha, His host reminded Him of the joke He cracked while explaining the above shloka (chaapi – in hindi it means ‘have tea’). Gurudev looked at me and said ‘‘tomorrowearly morning at 4, we will have some nice Kaapi (coffee) with cow’s milk at Ramu’s farm”.

Next day we had that ‘nice Kaapi’of course, but the journey culminated at Kaanchipuram. We reached the KaanchiKotiParamaachaarya’sMatham! It was my first visit there. When Swami ChinmayaanandaSaraswati reached a point there, ParamaacharyaChandrasekharaSaraswati came crawling out of a wooden box and they were just gazing at each other! Utter Silence! No spoken words! Just looks! What a SaraswatiDarshanami! Then He retraced back into the box and we also returned! This was a true exposition of Silence (MounaVyaakhyaanam)!

CchinnahSamshayaha means ‘one who dispels all doubts’. ‘A doubt is the gulf between your intellectual understanding and conviction’- thus said Gurudev. He then asks ‘if there is no gulf, how can there be a doubt’? This is how He dispels doubts.

When all mis-apprehensions (Vikshepa) and non-apprehensions (Aavarana) merge into the right apprehension that ‘I am the Self (Aatman) and my nature is Sat-Chit-

Aananda', the Jeeva will be free and is liberated.

The very proximity of Gurudev absorbs one to Himself who is the Self within all. This is how the Guru within and the Guru without becomes one with the Self.

This experience was on board an Indian Airlines flight on sector Del- Bom when I travelled with Poojya Gurudev. I was seated next to Him. After the aircraft was air borne, Gurudev wrote some letters and I folded them and kept in His briefcase. Then He sat crossed legged, took His Japamala from His pocket and started doing japa. I also closed my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I found Gurudev's left foot stretched on to my lap! I lifted his foot into my forehead, and did a pranaam.By then, the flight landed in Mumbai Airport and was taxing. Gurudev said "We had good rain isn't it?"



Choiceless awareness at His feet...silent power...

This is how a Sat guru effortlessly emits a silent power that automatically quietens the mind of anyone in His vicinity. The one attuned to this force experiences inner peace and well-being. This was an effortless cruise in Brahman!

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Knowledge of a Gnani is samsayarahitam – devoid of doubt. Mundakopanishad says Bhidyathehridayagranthichidyanthesarvasamsayaha. Gurudev says when you get the knowledge of rope there cannot be any trace of snake in it. Not even an iota.
More so for a Guru, since He is shrotriya(well versed in scriptures) and Brahma Nishta (established in Brahman)
They can see the very root cause of the question and remove the doubt from its very roots.
Gurudev's answers are crisp complete instantaneous and unassailable.

Once as I was taking Sri Gurudev for bhiksha. I asked Gurudev that though chaturvarnyam (the four varnas) is based on Guna and Karma there is a view that birth in those castes takes place according to Gunas only. Prompt came His reply: In that case, all children of Gandhiji should be same which we know they were not.

Someone asked Gurudev is there Brahma loka. Sri Gurudev retorted "Budhu! where do you think you are!" This means where there is spiritual teaching it is Brahma loka.

To the question of rebirth Gurudev says if there is no rebirth how do we explain differences at birth, such as being born blind, born crippled, born rich etc. God being equal just and all loving.

In the Company of Sages page 26

Rituals are dramatisations of truth. They dramatise our inner personality under the influence of spiritual Sadhana. The candle of Christians or the oil lamp of Hindus can be compared to the body in which the oil of Vasanas allows the mind to float. The light of consciousness in the mind exhausts the oil and the manifested flame merges with the Infinite element of fire ever present in the universe. In the same way the wick burns down and the wax melts slowly feeding the flame -- the individualised ego manifestation. When the wax is exhausted, the wick is burned to ashes and the flame merges with the Unmanifest light principle.

In the seventies and eighties we used to have question and answer sessions of college students from different institutions with Gurudev. It was such inspiring sight.

In the company of sagespage 7

If God is the creator of everything in this world, why should we reject all that attracts us, even if it be vices?.

Gurudev answers.

In case you really have the idea that God created the world out of Himself, then the world is nothing but God, and therefore you as an entity, can have no real existence. God alone is. If the ego is completely eliminated how can there be either attachment or vice? God alone is and, therefore He cannot have any attachments as there is nothing other than Himself everywhere. Vice is only when you act for the pleasures of body-mind-intellect totally careless of others.

To the extinguisher of all doubts, my prostrations.

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P. Eswar, CM Mumbai

Question-Answer session during Spiritual Camps.

Gurudev gets the various doubts of the audience collected systematically with their names, doubts all written down legibly, clearly.

He starts, “You must be very clear about your doubt!”

The audience silently feels, “If I am clear about the doubt, why should I ask you for clarification?”

Then He clarifies, “Nobody on this earth can clarify your doubt! What is a doubt? Your mind gets exposed to a new datum. The mind puts it up to the Intellect. The Intellect is unable to find an appropriate location for the datum. It returns the datum as it is to the mind. It precipitates as a doubt. So you go and approach a person in whom you have total faith and place the doubt in front of him.

“You can’t relax.

“The person starts building a bridge from his side – provides more data – and you with 100% attention – quiet, alert, vigilant – start building a bridge from your side.

“On the other hand you can’t relax, but you ought to be more vigilant. A word, a gesture, silence …. Ah! Your doubt is cleared!

“The doubt was due to lack of some information, a short circuit, as it were.

“Then you say, ‘Swamiji has cleared my doubt!’ No! Not at all! I have provided the missing datum, data, link... that is all!”

That means if Sundaram has a doubt and he is not present during the ‘doubt-clearing-session’, the QA session, his paper would not be taken up. Why? It is his doubt and he needs the data that will help clear his doubt in his mind to the satisfaction of his intellect. He has a doubt, and he alone needs that particular ‘gap filling’.

To that greatest of clarifiers, doubt destroyer, my salutation!

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM-Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One who is Free from Doubts



Saṁśaya is doubt or doubting. Doubt is not accepting or believing what the other person is saying. In suspicion and skepticism, we give the other person, the benefit of doubt, but in samshaya we accept that the other person is a liar. We are convinced that the other person is a liar unless proved otherwise. The Gétä says, “Those who have suspicion are
destroyed.” Ch.4.40 (Samshayaatma pranashyati/vinashyati) Suppose we are disbelieving then regardless of what the other person says, the impression remains.

ajïaççäçraddadhänaççasaàçayätmävinaçyati|

näyaàloko'stinaparosukhaàsaàçayätmanaù||

To have a question is very different from being suspicious. Arjuna had a question. He merely wanted his doubts to be cleared. At no time did he doubt Lord Krishna, even though some of his declarations could be taken as shocking and completely out of the ordinary.

In Chapter 4 of the Gita the Lord claims that in the beginning He gave this Knowledge to the Lord Sun, who in turn passed it onto Manu. It then passed to Ikshvaku, who in turn gave it to his son. Arjuna was completely taken aback but he did not call him a liar. He only expressed his lack of understanding. He merely wanted to know how this was so, since he perceived the Lord as being born in a different era. The Lord then clarifed that He had taken many avatars and this teaching was passed on in an earlier reincarnation.

We have implicit faith in the Bhagavad-gita because it has been authored by Lord Krishna. We may not have accepted it so completely had it been written by someone else. Despite this, to increase our conviction, in the Gita, Sri Krishna had refered to the Vedas, the Upanishads and also other great rishis. Even He has authenticated His words because He understood that questions, impurities of the mind and even ignorance are not as dangerous as suspicion. It is very difficult to deal with lack of trust. There is nothing we can do about it. The Teacher has dispelled all doubts from his mind and has the ability to remove them from the minds of his disciples.

Once some rishis desirous to gain Knowledge, went to Brahmaji. They found Him sitting with Saraswati, listening to music. They left there feeling disillusioned, because of their preconceived ideas about how a Teacher should be. Their quest for Knowledge then took them to Lord Vishnu. They found Him resting on the snake, with Lakshmi pressing His feet. Even here they were disappointed and proceeded to the abode of Lord Shiva. To their surprise, they found Him in His ardhanari rupa. This to them was the ultimate in attachment to the wife or the female form. Out of disappointment they left His abode as well.

Lord Shiva instantly realized their problem. He intuited their desire for Knowledge and knew that they held a picture of the perfect Teacher in their minds. In His extreme compassion for them, the Lord took the form of Dakshinamurthy to teach them. They found Him sitting under a tree in the pose of chinmudra, in total silence.

chitramvatatarormulevriddhaùshishyagururyuva,

gurostumaunamvyakhyanamshishyastucchinnasamshayah.

In the form of this young ascetic, the Lord fulfilled all their conditions. He did not speak. He taught through silence. Our doubts are deeply ingrained and cannot be removed by self-effort. We need the grace of a Teacher to remove them.

OM CHHINNA SAMSHAYAAYA NAMAH

290. OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

21-02-2016

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his specific permission

* Salutations to him for whom the world was his own self , who sees the world as himself.

* Gurudev often expounded the Cause- Effect theory and said ‘effect is nothing but the cause’ – that is theory.

* But how Gurudev puts it sometimes, is so veryinteresting. In many of his lectures and texts we see expressions like these -- ‘God created the world’ or ‘God manifested Himself as the world’. These are his words, his language, his vocabulary. Enter this thought -- the world was manifested; the manifestation of the world is nothing but God himself manifested as the world.



When we were studying under him, Gurudev would sometimes ask us, “You think you came into this world? From where?”

This was engineered to make us think. 'You came into this world, into the universe? From where? Or, the universe manifested you? Caused you to be?'

* Therefore watch the words he speaks. Did you come into this universe or the universe manifested you? When we say that the universe manifested me, I am connected with the universe always. I am not separate from it.

* For him the entire world was nothing but his own manifestation who saw the world as nothing but himself, as the one truth ever. That everything is himself just as my hand is also me, my nails are also me.

* When you listen to Gurudev's talks on the Geeta, you will notice that, whenever the word 'yeH' (Sanskrit) comes, he would call it a 'universal pronoun'. The pronoun yeH means 'whosoever', whoever he be, ' who-he'. When you dwell on this word and its meaning, its power is seen. Whoever he be, whether he is Indian or Chinese, Muslim or Sikh, whoever he be, whoever that may be, everyone is included in this pronoun yeH. Such a tiny word, all inclusive, no barriers to entry. If you are, then the word refers to you too. The barriers appear only when we are living which limitations. When our mind is fragmented, we see the world fragmented. A fragmented mind sees 'this' and 'that'.

* In Gurudev's own words -- ' Mind and motion, or mind and agitation, is the world we experience; we are not able to see beyond that because the agitations don't cease in us.

* With the mind when we see world, we experience. Without mind if we can see the world, the vision has to be God!

* Hence jagat atmaney namah, or one who knows this entire world as one, without parts, without fragments. Fragments means, there is me and there are other things than me. No fragments means, there is nothing other than me.

* Gurudev saw no fragments.

To that one who saw the whole of creation as his own self, our prostrations!

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMA

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

When a master attains Brahman state He sheds all His identification with appearances (objects, people, beings, things...) and becomes the very essence the substratum of the ever changing world too.
Jagat is satchidananda with a name and a form. Earring, chain and bangle are gold with a name and a form. Satchidananda is the essence substratum of the world like Gold is the essence and substratum of all ornaments.

Jagadatma is this satchidananda Gurudev Brahma Gnani the essence and substratum of the changing phenomena. Gurudev is that Eternal Blissful Consciousness in all. We shall see Sri Gurudev's words on this topic.

Bhagvad Gita 9:4
ALL THIS WORLD IS PERVADED BY ME IN MY UNMANIFESTED FORM--the subtlety of a thing is measured in terms of its pervasiveness and therefore, the subtlest must necessarily be the All-pervasive. As all limited things must have forms, the All-pervasive alone can be Eternal and Infinite. All forms are perishable substances (Dravya). Thus the Self, in its essential Unmanifest nature, must be pervading everything, as the mud pervades all forms and shapes in all mud pots.

That Gurudev is connected to all, we shall see through one or two of the many available anecdotes.

Every Breath a Teaching page 132

Quick Energy

Anonymous

During a yagna in the United States, a husband and wife were waiting by the elevator where Swamiji would arrive to enter the lecture hall. The wife was very tired, utterly exhausted from an extremely strenuous day at work. As her husband held the elevator door open for Swamiji, she was leaning against the wall next to elevator, eyes closed. Swamiji passed by her and touched his hand to her cheek. At once, a burst of energy streamed through her and she felt fully revitalised.

Return Trip

Anonymous

The wife of a dedicated Chinmaya Mission member in Delhi had become seriously ill. She was taken to Mumbai for testing. Gurudev had Himself just undergone an operation on His eyes, and she and her husband went to see Him.

Gurudev touched her hand. "Why have you come to Bombay?" He asked.
"I am under observation at the Tata Institute," she said.
Gurudev held her hand for about five minutes and then said to the husband, "Take her back".

Then, looking up He added," I had to bring her back from there ".
The next day, all tests turned out negative. The devotee says she owes her life to Gurudev.

My prostrations to that Jagad aatma.

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

Offered by Shri. N. Kalidas ji - CM Mumbai



Jai Jagadeeswara!

“Jai Jai Jagadeeswara!” Is this familiar? This is how Poojya Gurudev ends many of His letters. Jagadaatma is verily Jagadeeswara, who is the almighty Brahman! !

Jeeveswarajagat is perceived as the three-dimensional dynamic activity of the

Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent Reality -- the Supreme Brahman. Sri Sankaraachaarya through His Waves of Beauty (Soundarya Lahari) glorifies Sakthi, the wielding power of creation or manifestation of the Supreme Lord. Sakthi is the space-maker in Brahman, giving mobility to That. Thus Matter is Energy in Motion. Brahman energises His Moola- Prakriti and the pulsation begins! This is the 'Tat-twam' of creation. This ephemeral, dynamic, three-forked jag-jag activity is the Jagat. The very meaning of jagat itself is that which 'comes and goes'. Jagat is the effect of creation.

There has to be a cause for an effect. Ishvara is the efficient and material cause of creation, yet another name for the creative and expressive aspect of the Brahman that is in every living being and everywhere. Ishvara is that which is "free from avidya (ignorance), free from ahamkrti (ego-sense), free from bandhan (bondage)", a Self that is "pure, enlightened, liberated."

.



Jeeveswarajagat ... three-in-one.

Then who is Jeeva? Jeeva is the reflection (Aabhaasa-Chaitanya) of the Self, in the mind. It is otherwise called the ego which functions as I-I-I, in the waking and dream states of our expression. This ego, according to the moods (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) and condition of the mind experiences itself as the waker, the dreamer and the deep sleeper, and in all these states, naturally, it claims to be the 'doer' and the 'experiencer'.

Aatman, the Purusha caught up in the web of BMI and OET, is the Jeeva who claims to be the PFT, the experiencer. When the 'shadow-play ends, he realises his true nature, that he is Aatman. There is neither otherness nor distinction between Jiva (living being) and Ishvara.

Sri Shankaracharya defines the fundamental tenet of Advaita Vedanta thus:

"Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya Jeevo Brahmaiva Naapara" --"Brahman is the Reality, the Jagat (universe) is an illusion, and the Jeeva (living being) is Brahman alone, none else".

Poojya Gurudev eternally abided in Brahman, the Supreme Self. He is the knower of Brahman (Brahmavit) and therefore He is Brahman, the Atma (Self) in all Jeevas (individual souls) - the Jeevaatma! Chinmaya or chit concentrate - being the Pure Consciousness, pervades and permeates the Jagat (even though it be an illusion), whose substratum isThat same Brahman. Because of this Pure Consciousness we are conscious of, aware of even an illusion – Jagat. The substratum of such an illusion named Jagat, being Brahman, the Atma of Jagat, necessarily is Brahman. Or Jagat-aatma is Brahman.

Swami Chinmayaananda is the unique Master, who charted the entire Trinity, (Jeeva, Ishvara, Jagat), in the form of His BMI Chart for us. This is how He laid it open to us in His unque style and words:

"The Atman (OM), caught up in the web of the BMI (Body, Mind, Intellect) and OET (Objects, Emotions, Thoughts), is the PFT (the Jeeva). The Jeeva, in the form of PFT (Perceiver, Feeler, Thinker), assumes the notion "I '' (Ego) and grazes on OET, prompted by, tossed by His own Vasanas (V) and exhausts his Vasanaas.

This is the purgative exercise Jeeva does in this purgatory called Jagat." Only a know-er (vit) of Brahman (the substratum) of such an illusion called Jagat, can illustrate such an illusory theme. Our Humble Prostrations to such a Master-Ch-artist who is Brahman!

Sri Gurudev comments: - (Sri Rama Geetha-34)

"After rejecting all the equipments with the famous scriptural statement "Not this, not this" and experiencing the Immortal, changeless mass of pure consciousness in his heart, the wise man, having enjoyed the existent, blissful Self, should discard the entire world, just as one throws away the empty shell of a tender coconut after having enjoyed the sweet water of the fruit"

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM- Delhi & NCR



OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Self of the World

Jagadatma is the Self of the world. The Self is the core or the being of a thing. It indicates the essence or essential nature. Generally, we look at the world through the eye of duality. Our normal experience that we are different from the world forms the basis of all our interactions and with this we formulate various relationships. If we believe that the world is a stranger, then our interactions are the same as with a stranger! The emotions and responses to the world are of fear, distance, or apprehension.

The world viewed with these emotions, responds in exactly the same way. Our negative thinking leads us to imagine that the world is out to harm us and to counteract that we believe that we must be assertive and aggressive. Such people are always scared, tense and full of stress. To them the world remains a stranger and hence their feelings of discomfort remain.

However, when the world is viewed as a friend, a complete shift in perspective takes place. The attitude of friendship and fearlessness is met with a similar response of emotions and feelings of friendship, because the world is like a mirror. It mirrors back to us the very images that we send forth. As my response to the world, so is its response to me. A child looks at the world as a parent and the world responds as such.

The scriptures tell us to treat the world or Nature like a mother with love, respect, reverence, faith and total trust. The world responds in kind, by taking care of us. Similarly, if we treat the world as our Guru, the world reciprocates by teaching us. The Bhagavata Purana tells the story of Dattareya Avadhuta who saw his Guru everywhere in the world. In return, even the birds, animals, plants, flowers, trees and rivers, taught him valuable lessons of life.

The scriptures teach us to look at the world as God – the sun as God, the sky as God, everything as God! The Teacher tells us to treat the whole world as our own Self. He knows he is the Self of the world, meaning that the world is no different from him. The world is his body. Jagadatmane namah means he is the Atman of the jagat or the jagat itself is the A tman. Both are one. There is no difference between the Teacher and the world. He sees the world as his own body and there is no sense of duality, fear, anger, jealousy or greed. These emotions appear when there is a feeling of duality.

The Teacher knows that he is the very support of this world, like the dreamer, who wakes up to realize that he was the substratum of the dream. On waking up the dream disappears into the self.

The Guru knows himself to be the soul support of not only the world but of each and every being in it. Even if we cannot interact with a Teacher in a physical form, the Teacher is present in the form of this world. To meet God people go to temples, but God exists outside the temples also. They go in search of Gurus to meet God, but God exists outside the physical form of the Guru also.

akhandamandalakaram vyaptam yena characharam,

tatpadam darshitam yena tasmai shri gurave namah.

The state of the Teacher indicated in this shloka, pervades the entire cosmos, and the Teacher is no different from that state. So, the Teacher is the very Self of the world.

– Jagat atmane namaḥ.

OM JAGADAATMANE NAMAH!

291. OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

22-02-2016

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

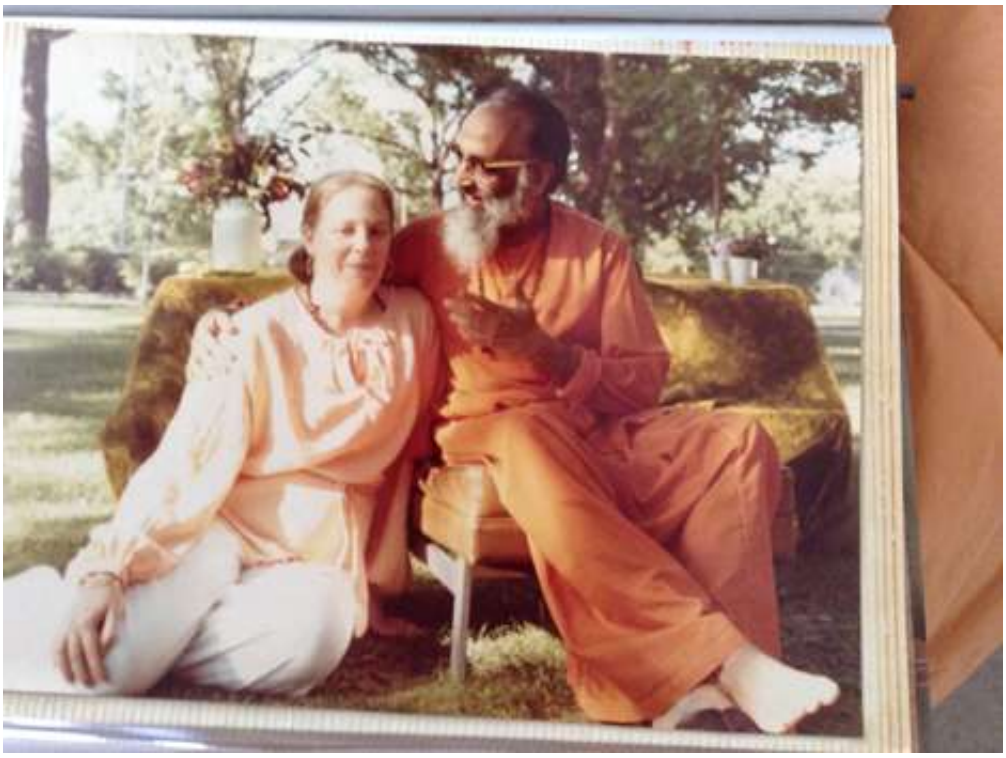
Offered by Sheela Kripalani, Allentown, New Jersey. Sheela ji says about herself: I met Swamiji in 1971 in Boston and as a result, joined the study group. He returned the following year, I attended several yagnas and began corresponding with him over the years. After marriage, I moved to New York where Swamiji would stay with us whenever he came to the city. He told us to come and live in Sidhabari, and my husband and I were there from 1990 - 1992. Words cannot express how blessed we both feel, having had such an opportunity to be with Swamiji for all that time.

Salutations to the witness of (all happenings in) the world.

(Please note that I refer to Gurudev as "Swamiji"; that was how I knew Him)

I.

The year 1971 was the first time I had heard Swami Chinmayananda give lectures. I was so enthralled by what he had to say, that I wanted to hear more. Then a public announcement was made for anyone interested in meeting the 'swami' at his residence in the afternoon. Since it was a working day, only a handful of us attended. We were all so excited to meet this colossal figure in person.



With Gurudev - *taken in at a Camp in Flint, Michigan*

The topic of conversation was very general as most of us, being raised in the West, were introduced to vedanta for the first time. One college student was excited to tell Swamiji about America and asked, "Swamiji, have you seen the Empire State Building?" (at the time, one of the tallest buildings in New York). Without the slightest hesitation, Swamiji replied: "From where I stand, I can see the entire cosmos!"

They all laughed, not understanding the depth of his statement. Yet, deep down I sensed that *he had just uttered words most profound*.



At Kusum Patel's house during his yagna in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1985.
(This was made into a poster many years later by Anjali Singh.)

II.

In 1992 in Sidhabari, Swamiji decided to have a 75-day Camp on Shankaracharya's "Vivekachudamani".

Preparations were in full swing in the newly-built Kamala Hall (situated next to the Satsang Hall).

The artists arrived with their airbrushes and canvas and painted a backdrop the width of the stage--- a beautiful scene of the sacred Himalayas to be the background for Swamiji's lectures.

Although two sides of the hall are open, only the entrance to the original Satsang Hall on one side, and the base of Lord Hanuman on the other can be seen from inside. Both the front (stage) and back (audience) of the hall are windowless so there is no view.

All this being said, on one of these days the hall was filled to capacity. The brahmacharis from both Sidhabari and Mumbai along with the delegates from many parts of India and abroad were seated in great anticipation of Swamiji's arrival.

Entering the hall, he reached the stage, prostrated in front of the portrait of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, then took his seat center stage and began his talk.

Our attention was fixed on each and every word he spoke when, a few minutes into the lecture and without pause he said, "Brahmachari! Roof of the Hanuman building---NOW!"

Initially I thought this was a part of the talk, but slowly realized something else was happening. Continuing his lecture without interruption, Swamiji finished the topic, ended the session and left the hall as he normally did.

Many of us remained behind to find out what had actually happened; and why did Swamiji say:

"Brahmachari! Roof of the Hanuman building---NOW!"?

It turned out that a young child unaccompanied by an adult, somehow found his way to the edge of the roof (three stories tall) of the Hanuman building ; and would have fallen off had the brahmachari reached there a second later.

Now, Swamiji's residence is to the right of the hall; the Hanuman building is behind and to the right of his residence. It is not possible that anyone in that hall, including Swamiji could have seen what was happening on the roof of that building. And yet, Swamiji 'saw' and saved the life of that child that day.

As Naam 32 states: He is the witness of (all happenings in) the world------"Om jagatsakshine namaha".

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

This is Chinmaya.
Chinmaya is not fooled by what he sees outside in the world.
Because Chinmaya knows what is on the inside.
Chinmaya is a witness.
Be like Chinmaya.



Om Jagatsakshine Namah

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Brni Anupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar, Gujarat.



Om JagatsaakshiNe nama:

“I don’t travel,” Gurudev said.

Someone asked Gurudev how He can manage to travel so much. Doesn’t he get exhausted, especially given his fragile health?
Gurudev’s reply was: “ I don’t travel. Bombay comes, Bombay goes. Madras comes, Madras goes. I don’t go anywhere!”

(Source : At Every Breath A Teaching, Rudite Emir, pg. 272)

He lived ever as mere witness, untouched by any of the happenings in the world.

My prostrations to That silent witness of all goings-on.

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Jagat sakshi can mean he is omniscient or he is not involved in the worldly transactions. Even as Jagadeeswara things happen merely by His presence. Sannidhi Matrena. In the sense of being Omniscient, a Brahma Gnani having transcended upadhis He becomes Sarva Vit Sarvagnah.

In the other sense, mentioned above, Gurudev knew everything happening in the Mission, yet He was always detached. Though He encouraged everyone, He was neither excited nor depressed when things happened. This includes, things where outcomes were not pleasing or as desired (by devotees).

In His mere presence (Sannidhi Matrena) things used to happen.



In His mere presence .....

Gurudev has commented on this attitude of sakshi in His Atma Bodha (verse 18):

"A king is not a participant in the drama and dance in his darbar-hall. He is only a witness. Like him, the Atman is a witness of the drama of life going on in this body and in the world outside---the microcosmic and the macrocosmic existence."

In the sense of all-knowing: Every Breath a Teaching, pg 147: All-Seeing Eyes (greatness in small things)

- Padmashree
In the early days of knowing Gurudev, before she started to serve Him as assistant, Padmashree of Bangalore was travelling with Him on a train journey. Gurudev was handing out prasada to everyone when Padmashree walked from her cabin towards Gurudev's cabin. She was standing behind Him when Gurudev reached His hand behind His back with a fruit in it. Padma was not sure if it was meant for her, for she had just then silently walked in, with Gurudev's back turned to her.
But Gurudev continued to hold His hand behind His back and said I don't have to turn around to know who is behind me!
We also have heard Gurudev telling, 'even when I joke it is true or has a purpose'.

Therefore He knows even without seeing.

There are countless instances like this we have only taken a sample.

To That witness of everything, my prostrations.

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji, CM Mumbai

I was reflecting upon what to write about the witnessing nature of Poojya Gurudev for the above mentioned Naama- “Om Jagat Saakhine Namaha!”

But I wasted a lot of time immersed in ‘jagat’ (illusion) yesterday, and in the process, missed the theme of the naam -- ‘Jagadaatmane’. Later I was reminded by a text message from Jagadaatman! It read: “In your JAGADATMANE how do we see Gurudev as the Jagat atma? Can you add a para?”

I did add and the page was posted!

Next was Jagatsaakshine Namaha. As usual I invoked Gurudev for inspiration, for some idea to write so that I could glorify Him as a true witness of all, a Jagatsaakshi. He answered my Invocation instantly.

What a fantastic mind-numbing coincidence. ! My telephone rings. That was a call from a friend, not involved much with the Chinmaya Mission, but fully committed to Gurudev’s Vision, bringing into my awareness, a mysterious deletion of a particular story, not mine (Na mama), from 290 stories posted so far, in the web-pages Celebrating Gurudev - A Flavor Unforgettable!



When I checked the web-site pages, I discovered he was right. Story no.16 dated 23 May 2015 was deleted! And was the only one missing. This particular story was from a Brahmachaarini, who did not even put her name, who was posted in a remote town in India. She was relating a direct experience she had during the first week of the Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations during a Satsang. She was at the peak of Sat-Sang and the climax was her bhiksha coming, in the form of a hug from Poojya Gurudev, with the book “Crescendo Peaks”.

This means He watches everything every moment! Everything takes place in His Sight! What is He doing? Isn’t He a Witness?



Kaarunyam ... Sees all, rejects none, untouched....full of only Love.

Just look at Him, Gurudev, The Jagatsaakshi! Experience that Omnipotent Omniscience, witnessing Consciousness, watching the Web - the Jagat- without any involvement, a mere Witness! Our Humble Prostrations to that pure Consciousness who is the Sole witness, Swami Chinmayaananda! My gratitude to that Jagatsaakshi who phoned me and also to that Jagadaatman who texted me!

Once, In Siddhabaari, Poojya Gurudev was walking up and down in the Sat-Sang hall, very thoughtful and restless, once in a while looking into the mountains! It was around 5 in the evening. There was a camp going on. Campers were not allowed to leave the Aashram without informing Swamiji. This was one of the rules of the camp. Some campers had gone on a sight-seeing tour to Mcleodganj, without informing anyone. They met with an accident around 5, in the mountains and escaped with minor injuries. This was the time Gurudev was looking in that direction at the mountains! Was He a witness? Om Jagatsaakshine Namaha!

“Try not to get into the web of Samsaar, just remain as a witness. Just as you oil your hands before cleaning jackfruit (so that its latex juice which is so difficult to remove, does not stick to your hands), remain a witness so that samsara does not stick to you."

Sri Gurudev lives in the present, witnessing all! Let us relish His Presence!

Om Chinmaya Satgurave Namaha!

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Witness of the World

This name indicates the Teacher as a sakshi or witness of this world. Earlier the Teacher was indicated as the Atman of this world. The supreme Reality is also indicated as the sākṣi of this world. Sakshat ikshate sadhan vina – without any intermediary medium or equipment the supreme Reality perceives the world. It doesn't require an eye to see or a mind to think. To see anything, we have to use our eyes. To see our eyes we have to use the mind. To see the mind we have to use the intellect. To see the intellect we use our consciousness.



The Consciousness is aware of the intellect. It doesn't require any medium to see the intellect. The mind functions in the medium of thoughts. We are aware of the thoughts without any medium. The Atman is the witness of not only the body, mind and intellect but it is the sakshi or seer of the entire creation. God is the sakshi. He understands everything; He knows all our thoughts and actions.

Fire is symbolic of the sakshi. The ritual of lighting the lamp has a great spiritual significance. Before we perform any puja or do anything auspicious we light a lamp, which is kept lit through the ritual because fire symbolises the sakshi. The lamp represents God or the witness. It is the sakshi or witness of all our activities.

All rituals are performed with fire. Marriages are solemnised by the bride and groom taking their vows with fire as the witness. The marriage rites include the couple walking around the fire. When a person dies, the body is placed in the fire and agni devata takes it to the appropriate loka. Like fire God is the witness of all our activities.

The Teacher understands the disciple completely. Their relationship is strange and

eternal. Of the many varied relationships in the world, this particular one is most strange and subtle. The Scriptures say that when we surrender to the Teacher, the Teacher takes care of us in not just this life time but through many, many life times. He is the constant companion or witness.

anekajanmasamprapta-karmabandha-vidahine,

atmagyana-pradanena tasmai shrigurave namah.

One enthusiastic, young boy suddenly developed an interest in spirituality. He approached his Master with the desire to learn the scriptures. The saint was pleased and asked him to stay at the ashrama and learn. But the boy, like many of us, had other things to do. He wanted to study, so he promised to come whenever time permitted. The Master set off on his travels. He returned after five years and asked the boy to follow him. Now, the boy had other priorities. His parents wanted him to marry and he wanted to fulfill their wishes. The Master came back after a few years and met his children.

The man promised to go to the Master, as soon as the children were settled. The Master returned even after their marriages but no, even now the man had things to do. The man became old and decrepit, but still desired to play with his grand children. Some more years passed, he died and came back to the same house, this time as a snake guarding the wealth in the house.

The Master came again and found the grand children dancing around with a stick, wanting to beat the snake. The compassionate saint told the children to leave the snake alone. Then approaching the snake he said, “My boy, at least now come with me.” He then put him around his shoulders and walked away. The Teacher is the dispassionate witness, ever by our side.

OM JAGATSAAKSHINE NAMAH

292. OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

23-02-2016

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*In 1994 or 1995, I was conducting a yagna in Madurai. Then, the Madurai centrewas not developed and families did not have the facilities to host us. So we stayedat theBangoorDharamshala and that is where I was staying in 1995 too.

This was a dharamshala, hence did not have the means to even supply tea or morning coffee.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust(CCMT) reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Down the road was a tea stall. Every morning I sat on one of their benches and sipped my coffee, as I mentally planned the day ahead. After a day or two, the tea stall owner, having seen me there for some days, came up to me and asked me who I was, and my origins, my antecedents, who I worked for and so on. As I was in yellow clothes, I told about myself and the Chinmaya Mission. Quietly, he asked me if I was a disciple of Swami Chinmayananda.I said yes.

He then beckoned to me to come inside his stall. There inside a room, on the wall, who should I see, but a couple of our Gurudev's pictures, wearing his trademark bandana. Something stood still inside me. This was definitely from the 1950s. Gurudev was far younger in body. The photographs were old, probably from the 1950s. It was a deeply moving experience to see these photographs he had.

He must have sensed something, for he went on as if we both were in sync, and said that, in 1950s swamiji had come to Madurai for a yagna where he would carry holy water from the Ganges and sprinkle it on the people. He said he himself carried the bigger larger pot, filling Swamiji's pot when it emptied.

These moments are hard to define. So near and yet so far, is one sensation. This man who could not even speak English, who ran a tea stall – that's all he did, pour water for Gurudev, the water of the Ganges!

A sort of numbness I felt.

This tea stall man who met Gurudev just once in 1955-1956, held on to his photographs right upto 1995 with reverence, on his walls. How much communication would he have had with Gurudev afterall? What was the motivator that kept him glued to the memories and the photographs? (After Gurudev's yagna in 1988, many of his disciples wanted that photograph, but the man would not part with it!)

And here he was in 1995, nonchalantly pottering around his old tea stall, doing this and that, offering me tea and narrating to me the greatness of my own Guru! And instead of he being amazed that I belong to that Master, I am amazed!

I felt like weeping. He didn't know what Gurudev meant to me. The irony is, I also could not tell what Gurudev meant to him!

This isthe genuine love that Gurudev had for people.

What did tea stall man see in Gurudev? Those few moments of being with Gurudev and carrying his water, this he remembered this till his last days. I made it a point to visit him every time I went to Madurai. In 1998 or 1999 he passed away. From 1956 when I first met him, to 1995, he revered Gurudev's photographs even though he met him just once.

What happened in that one meeting where he just poured the Ganges water into a smaller pot? What spectacular moment lay there?

But it was love forever. It is with that kind of love that Gurudev touched people

continually…..Janapriyah!

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,CM Mumbai

“I Love You”! This is what made Poojya Gurudev my beloved! This is a small book containing twelve letters (jewels) addressed to Balavihar children. Gurudev wrote these letters in 1968 from Tapovankuti, Uttarakaashi, sitting on the lap His beloved Gurudev Sri Tapovanam, while on a retreat. This book reveals how Gurudev reached our hearts! Gurudev called it a “Doota-Yagna” meaning “Yajna-by-post.” (Dootah = mail-carrier). Love can do wonders! Poojya Gurudev is love personified.

In Vishnuahasranaama Gurudev reveals, “Naraayana is the One Who deserves to be worshipped by all devotees. He, being our very own Self, is the treasure-source of all our devotion. Thus He does draw from us all our surrender, love and reverence,” He says. “As an expression of our devotion we do offer to the Lord that which we love the most in life”. We love our ‘Self’ the most! We do everything in this world just for the sake of our “Self”! This Self is to be offered to the Lord. This is Self-Surrender (Sharanaagati). Since this Self is the Self in all, this becomes Absolute Love! That is Gurudev!



janahpriya.... priyahjanah...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

“I Love You”! This is what made Poojya Gurudev my beloved! This is a small book containing twelve letters (jewels) addressed to Balavihar children. Gurudev wrote these letters in 1968 from Tapovankuti, Uttarakaashi, sitting on the lap His beloved Gurudev Sri Tapovanam, while on a retreat. This book reveals how Gurudev reached our hearts! Gurudev called it a “Doota-Yagna” meaning “Yajna-by-post.” (Dootah = mail-carrier). Love can do wonders! Poojya Gurudev is love personified.

In Vishnuahasranaama Gurudev reveals, “Naraayana is the One Who deserves to be worshipped by all devotees. He, being our very own Self, is the treasure-source of all our devotion. Thus He does draw from us all our surrender, love and reverence,” He says. “As an expression of our devotion we do offer to the Lord that which we love the most in life”. We love our ‘Self’ the most! We do everything in this world just for the sake of our “Self”! This Self is to be offered to the Lord. This is Self-Surrender (Sharanaagati). Since this Self is the Self in all, this becomes Absolute Love! That is Gurudev!

Therefore Gurudev is the beloved of Janah (Creatures-People). Thus JanahpriyaayaNamaha!

When we see Gurudev, We feel we are the closest to Him. This feeling everyone has. In turn, Gurudev also makes you feel the same. This is the beauty of the ‘centre point’. We are at that centre-point of love, our own Self, the Atman! “He does draw

from us all our surrender, love and reverence" even those you don't give! Thus the prayer: - Hare Krishna Hare Krishna KrishnaKrishna Hare Hare (Looter Krishna Looter Krishna KrishnaaKrishnaaLootoLooto--- looto being ' please loot.'). All this makes Gurudev the beloved of people just like Krishna!

Om JanahpriyaayaNamah!

Even today, I make myself a child, attend the BalaVihaar in my own mind, reading to myself "I Love You", the prasaad, He gave me and enjoy His presence and that nectar of Love!

Om Chinmaya SatguraveNamaha!

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

A gnyaani's visible trait is unconditional love since He sees Himself in all.



janapriya....

Gurudev says everything echoes in nature. Hence it is natural that everyone loves Him, people of all ages, nationality, or level of literacy.

To a devotee in most of the cases even moksha or God or knowledge matters not.To them, their Swamiji is all. Identification is complete. The youngwho are known to live in a world of their own, to them too, Sri Gurudev is all; He received more attention than they gave their own parents at times.

There were quite a few devotees, some orthodox, who could not understand a word of English yet they loved Gurudev totally.

Gurudev says where there is love mind gravitates to the object of its love effortlessly.

The very reason so many people were attached or even obsessed with Him, shows their love for Him.

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Himpg 70

Shri. K.S.Bhatnagar

One feels love around Him. You can feel His love for you by just being in His presence and by clarifying your doubts with Him. You can feel His love when He quizzically looks at you and you feel thrilled. That was His love for His devotees. When He left this world, the loss one felt first was that of His love. In His presence one felt transported with joy divine.

Pg 96Shri.Raghavender, Hyderabad

Once in Cochin,when all the members rushed to prostrate to Swamiji, He said, "Why do you want my hands and legs?" I am already in your heart,buddhu!"

He is in my heart. His blessings are always with me.

Every Breath a Teachingpg 55

editor
But most often,many of us, men and women alike,were weeping Gopis (milk maids) at Krishna's side,hardly able to contain our bliss.

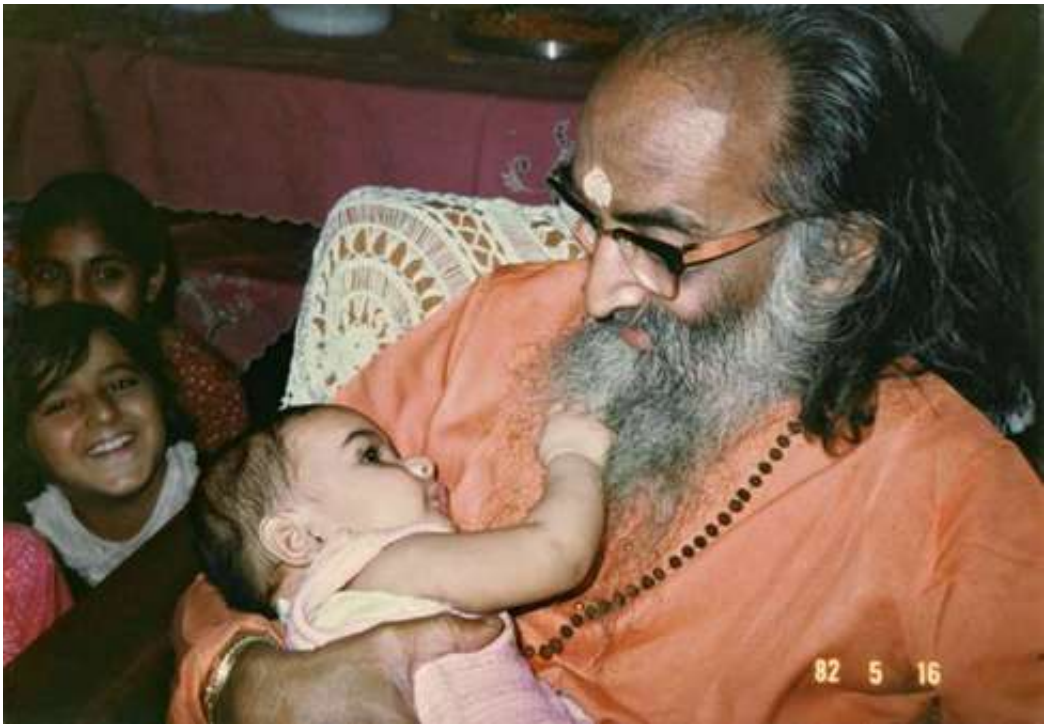
To that unconditional and abundant giver of love, bliss and compassion to one and all, my prostrations!

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One who was loved by All



Blessed to be so loved by One who is so loved...

Jana, means people. Priya means beloved. The word has two meanings and both meanings are correct. One meaning is, one who is dear to people. The other meaning is, one to whom people are dear. We can interpret it as we like. Either or both meanings apply.

When Lord Rama was about to go to Lanka, He established the Shiva Linga at Rameshwaram and worshipped Lord Shiva. Parvatiji asked Shiva what Rameshwara meant. The reply was, “For whom Rama is Ishvara.” Similarly when Lord Rama was asked, He replied, “Jo Rama keIshvara.” For Lord Shiva, Rama is Ishvara and for

Lord Rama, Shiva is Ishvara. Similarly, this name implies: for whom the people are very dear and he who is very dear to the people.

Now let us analyse the word 'dear'. Once someone asked Pujya Gurudev, "What is the sign of my spiritual progress? How do I know that I am progressing"? He replied, "If you become dear to people and they to you, then understand that you are progressing. If people are getting tired with you and you are irritated with them, then your journey is still incomplete. You have to work harder."

As we progress on the spiritual path, the identification with the Self increases. Everyone automatically senses this identification with the Self and is attracted towards the person. In the presence of a realized Master, we intuit the sense of oneness that the Master emanates. Also as the Master is free from jealousy, greed and anger, we are attracted to him. He gives out a feeling of childish innocence. We are all attracted to children. Even the young of animals have an aura of innocence that everyone is automatically attracted to.

The innocence and simplicity of a Mahatma attracts us and we feel a great sense of love. The Lord or the Self has this magnetism. Krishna literally means one who attracts. Lord Rama has this power of attraction. Pujya Gurudev also had this charismatic appeal. People of all ages were fascinated by him. He had the capacity of being a child with children, young with youngsters, knowledgeable with the wise and simple with simple folk.

Everyone could sense the feeling of oneness. When he interacted with the children they felt he was a part of them. One minute he would allow them to play with his beard and almost immediately after, discourse on a sublime topic. Again, he could interact with the youth on some worldly, intellectual matter and again go back to playing with the children.

He had this capacity of attracting everyone, including animals and birds. Even Nature is attracted towards a Mahatma. The Mahatma feels that the Self in me is the Self in all. There is no sense of difference... "I am everyone". So, he becomes dear to everyone, janapriya, and all become dear to him

To that One who is dear to all and to whom all are dear, my prostrations.

OM JANAPRIYAAY NAMAH

293. OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

24-02-2016

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri KVN Namboodiri,Chenganur Kerala,an ardent devotee of Gurudev.



Shri KVN Namboodiri

Controlling senses is man's biggest hurdle on his path. If Gurudev is Iswaraa as we saw in Naam 14 (story 273) and if we have known Him as Omkarvid, and as Guru and as Jagadaatma, then for me He is verily Hrishikesha the One who dances on Kaliya and controls him. All we need to do is stay in abidance with Om Chinmaya Satgurave Namah and hand over ourselves to Him. He will and does control our senses! Only one whose senses are controlled can control our senses – this is my belief. He is thus both controlled and Controller....!

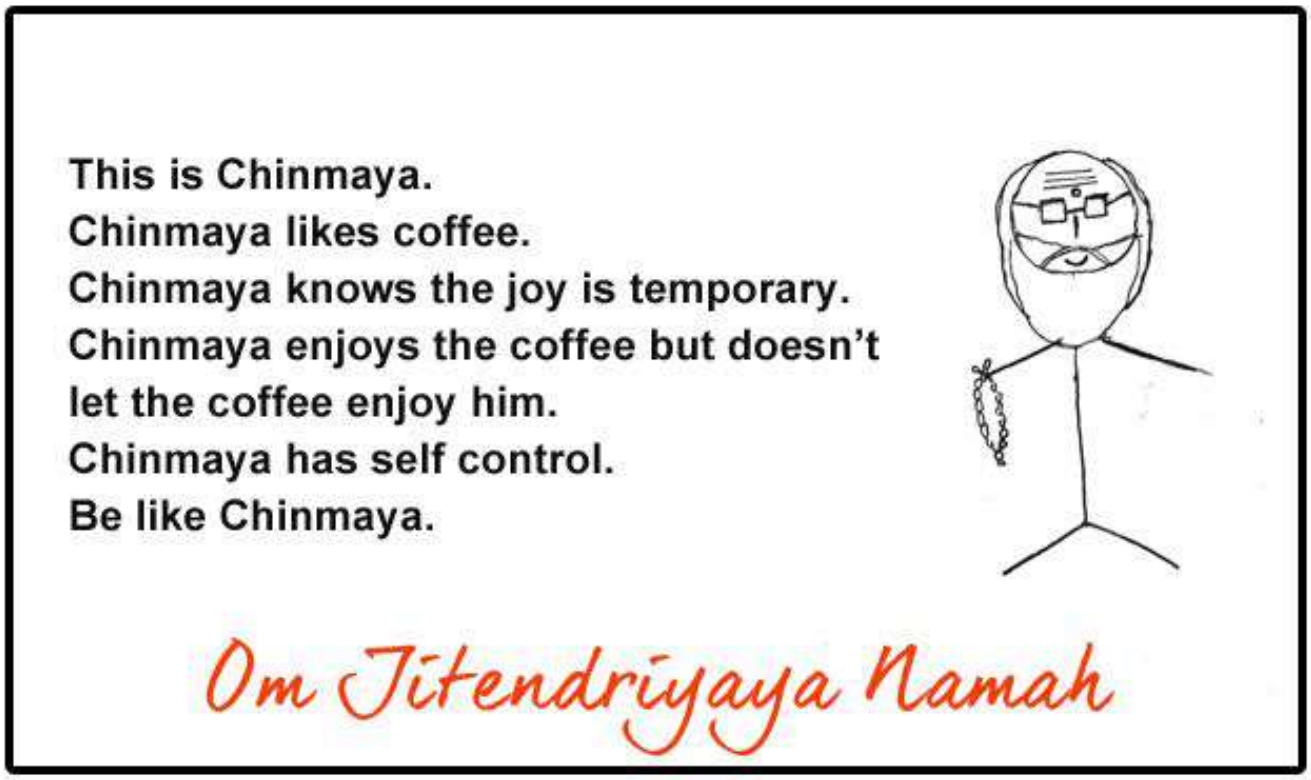


‘I am Hrishikesha! .....’ ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

[Picture Story: This Krishna has a story behind it. He took a trip round the world, arrived Mumbai ,then went to Kowloon,Hong Kong and settled there.The person behind Gurudev is Iswar Daswani , Mala's father. This Krishna did BOM- LON- NY- Flint- Krisnaalaya- Hkg- BOM- Hkg-!
Gurudev is doing the sthapana Karma.]

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH



OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH



OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji,CM Mumbai

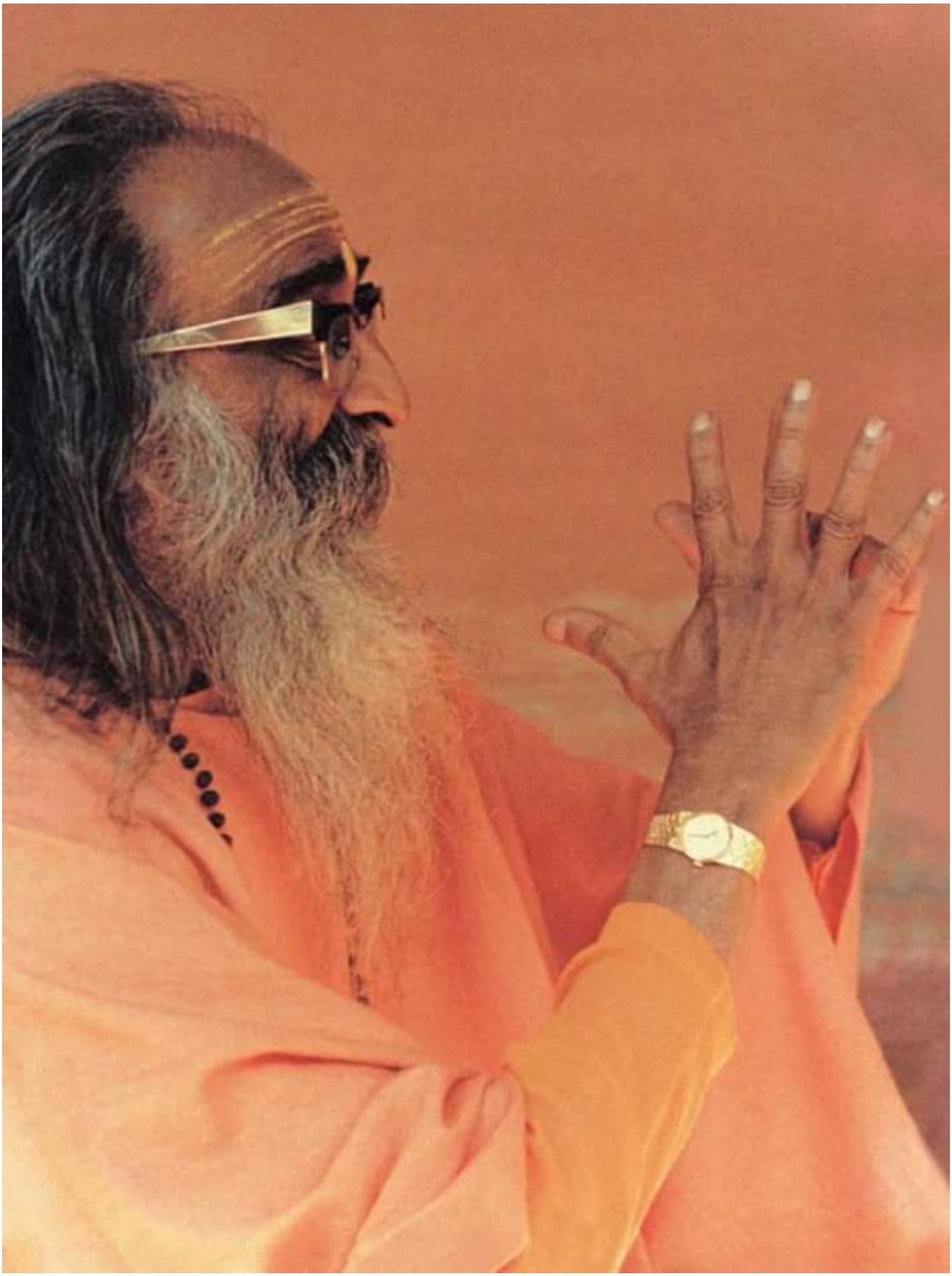
Shri BhagavaanUvaacha:-

“They say that the senses are superior (to the body); superior to the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the intellect; one who is even superior to the intellect is He (the Atman).” (Bh. Gita. III-42)

Poojya Gurudev is that superior Master-Mind, who is the Atman- who is Chinmaya – the ‘Consciousness-Concentrate’ that lights up the very intellectual ideas, emotional thoughts and the objects of perception. Gurudev is that pure Consciousness, who has

consciously withdrawn all identifications with the body, mind and intellect, thus gathering entire awareness from its delusory pre-occupations and made it live in Himself as Himself- as Objectless Awareness.

Therefore Gurudev can be seen as a Master of circumstances and Vaasudeva –the Lord of inner instruments (Anthahkkaranah). To that Master- Conqueror of Senses and Sense-organs, our Humble Prostrations!



Five Indriyas and the Mind

Once, Gurudev was sitting in front of His Kutia and usual evening Satsang was going on during the Vivekachhodamani camp at Siddabhari in 1992. There was a Mexican camper, who was very free with Gurudev and he used to ask all sorts of questions to Swamiji.Gurudev treated him like a child and always answered him. He asked "Swamiji, why did you keep a tortoise there at the threshold of the temple?"

Gurudev said "for you to trip". Everybody laughed. Then Gurudev said, "You see, you have to be very vigilant like that tortoise at the threshold, before entering a temple of wisdom. A tortoise has four legs, a tail, a head and an all-proof shell. It 'hastens slowly' and steadily to its goal. It is so vigilant, that if you put even a pinch of sand in front of it, it immediately withdraws all its limbs into the protective shell. This is the "pratyaahaar- (the fourth limb of Ashtaangayoga) of that Yogi-Tortoise!

Poojya Gurudev expounded further: - "The Five sense-organs of perception and One Mind are the vehicles by which each individual perceives the stimuli and responds to them. Even though the sense-organs are many, the faculty in us that receives all the stimuli from all the five avenues of perception is one and the same, the mind- the one Paanchaali (Draupadi) who has the five Pandavaas as her faithful husbands.

Not only that the mind is one in receiving the stimuli, but in executing the judgement of the intellect and thus sending forth responses to the outer world, it is again the only outlet for the individual personality to express through. Thus restraining the senses and sense-organs (Jitendriyah), one, who is a Yogi, arrives at the threshold of Intellectual Conviction (Dhaarana) en route to the status of Samaadhi (Equipoise)"

Only a Yogeswara, who is yoked to Buddhi Yoga, who is a Conqueror of His Senses and Sense-organs (Jitendriyah) and who is established in Brahman- the supreme can expound like this!

To Him our SaashtaangaNamaskaaram!

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Swami means Lord one who controls everything one who owns everything. A Gnani having gone beyond BMI has transcended senses. Swami is also Iswara one who governs, one whose wish alone prevails.
Naturally a Swami is a master of the world of experiences and senses.

They have total mastery over not only senses, but they also have control over the mind, people and choices.
Having tasted Brahmananda who will have any inclination towards paltry pitiless world of senses.
Even 'Chinmaya' means filled with consciousness. There is no otherness.

Gurudev lived with Swami Sri Tapovan ji Maharaj, an epitome of vairagya. Many of his students left the ashram, unable to stand the rigours of Sri Tapovanamji'steacherhood. One student seeing TapovanMaharaj, threw all sweets into Mother Ganga not even opening the parcel, and left Him.

With such a master, our Gurudev lived for 9 years.
In fact Gurudev, guided by Sri Tapovanam ji, even adopted parivrajaka way of life (a lifestyle of wandering) for a short period.

While Gurudev was in Chennai a highly renowned musician came to play his instrument for Gurudev. After listening for a short while Gurudev said even if the music is divine it is still at the sense level and requested to stop.

Every breath a teaching page 150

Greatness in small things Not a word about no saltIndraAdvani

IndraAdvani had cooked Swamiji's lunch, but had unwittingly left salt out of the panir (cottage cheese) balls, not having tasted the food before serving it to Swamiji, as is the custom when serving saints. (Tradition demands that the guest be the first to eat the food).

Swamiji finished the meal without a word about the taste.

Indra asked "Swamiji, may I give you some more paneer?"

"Yes" he said "and add a little salt this time"

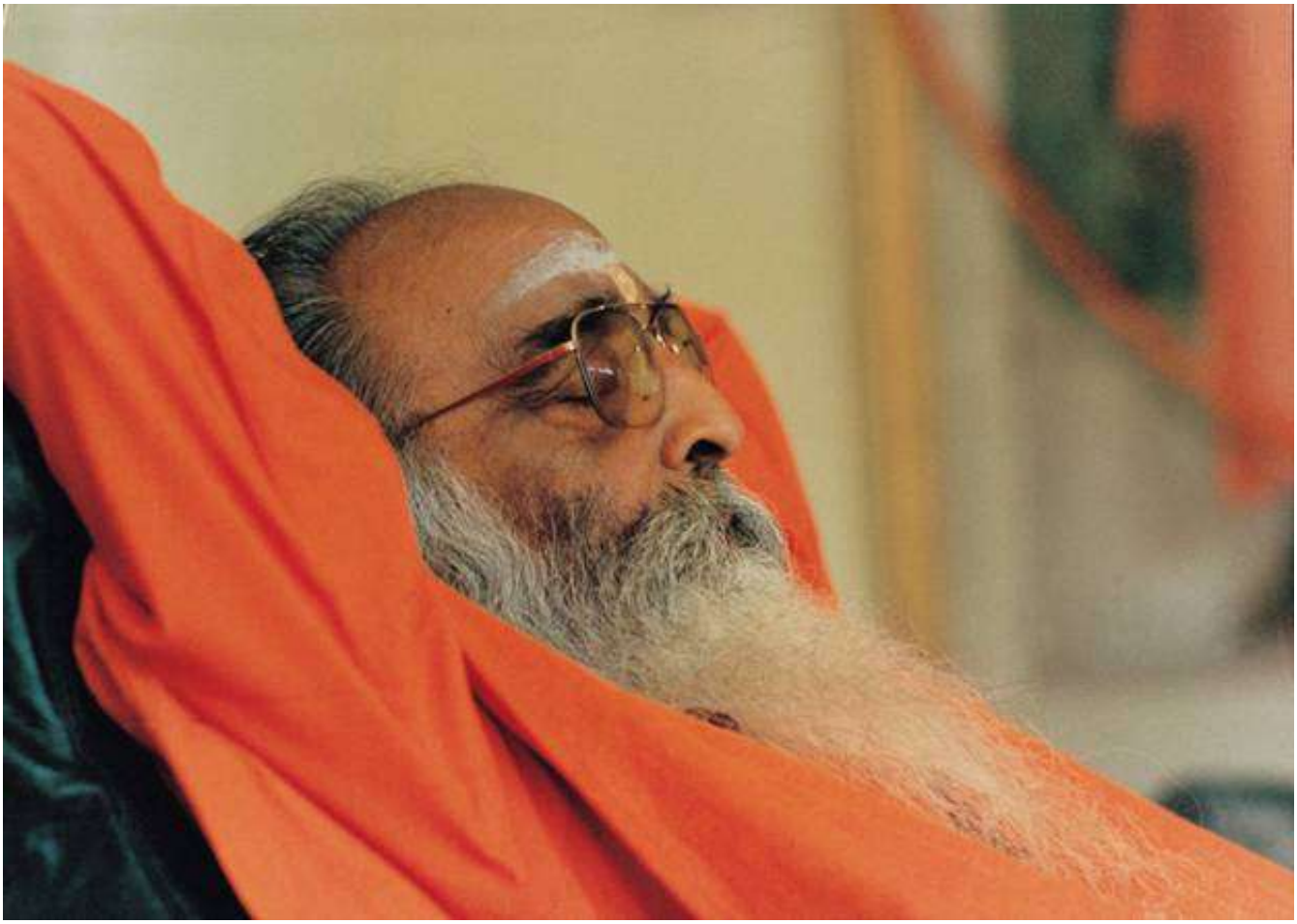
To a Swami of the order of Gurudev conquest of senses is effortless.

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR

Jitendriya means one who has conquered his senses, the organs of action and perception including the mind. The mind is also an indriya. The one who is the total master of the senses is called jitendriya. The scriptures say that the senses are like horses, the body the chariot, the mind the reins and the intellect the charioteer holding the reins.



Conqueror…

Generally speaking, our mind, senses and intellect each have their own agenda. The senses are not under one's control. The tongue is not under control. The eyes are not under control and so on. First, one has to control one's desires and passions. Then only can one control the mind. When the mind is at peace, the senses are automatically controlled. All this happens if we have a deep understanding and conviction in our hearts of the oneness of the Self. This conviction is absolute when one experiences the Supreme in a state of samadhi. The Mahatma who has

experienced the Supreme, is in complete control of his senses.

Once Shri ShukadevaMaharaj, the son of VedVyasaji and a realized Master went to meet Raja Janaka. On arrival at the king's palace he was asked to wait outside in the sun for a considerable amount of time without any water or a place to sit. He waited calmly for the king's arrival. He was quiet and peaceful. After some time the gates were opened and he was given a red-carpet treatment with Aarati, music and the works. But there was no change on Shri Shukadev's countenance. Neither did the wait outside the king's palace disturb him nor did the splendid welcome later excite him. His senses were totally under his control. Such a one is jitendriya, one with absolute control over the senses.

This control is evident in the practice of judo and karate. Once someone sought out a Zen Master and asked to be taught the technique of meditation. Before learning meditation, the monk directed him to learn the art of archery. The person stayed with the Zen monk for many months and in due course became an expert archer. He could shoot any target dead on. The pupil was then taken to a cliff, told to stand on one leg and shoot a distant target. The Master said that if he succeeded, he had learnt the technique of meditation. If not, then probably he would not within this lifetime!

A Mahatma has total control because he is established in the Self. But the seeker has to put forth effort to attain this state.

Once just after receiving diksha from Pujya Gurudev all our batch mates were assembled for a group photo with him and Swami Tejomayananda on the terrace of TapovanVihar in Mumbai. We were all clean shaven dressed in our yellow robes, ready for the perfect picture. There were some trees in the background. Gurudev settled in and everything was all set. The photographer was just about to click, when we heard our manager, Shri Jayaram suddenly shout out, "pant-utaro".

There was stunned silence, nobody knew what had happened, and the photographer froze. Actually, Jayaramji had noticed a trouser hang on a tree in the background, which he thought would spoil the picture!

Finally nobody could control themselves and everyone burst out laughing. Gurudev joined in the fun and laughed the loudest! However, after laughing for a while, Gurudev suddenly became silent as if nothing had happened and he was ready for the photograph. We were all struggling to control our laughter. Laughter is a funny thing. At times one finds it difficult to laugh and at other times difficult to stop! But Gurudev had the capacity to stop instantly.

Once in Uttarkashi someone brought a large basket of mithai for TapovanjiMaharaj. The students waited the whole day for the mithai to be distributed, but there was no sign of it during the meal. Like this a whole week passed by. The students wondered about the fate of the delicacy. Then finally, after ten days he instructed someone to bring the basket out and everyone eagerly waited to be served. No such luck. He gave instructions for the basket to be immersed in the Ganges! Neither did he eat nor were the students given any of the sweets. His logic was that if the mind is directed towards the mithai, then how would the students direct it towards

Brahman? Masters have their own unique way of controlling the mind and senses.

To that One who had conquered and controlled His senses, our prostrations.

OM JITENDRIYAAYA NAMAH

Kindly see Story 283, Naam 24 OM KRITAKRITYAAY NAMAH. An offering by Ms. Rudite Emir which had been missed by oversight, has now been posted there. Kindly go back and read it. Hari Om

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

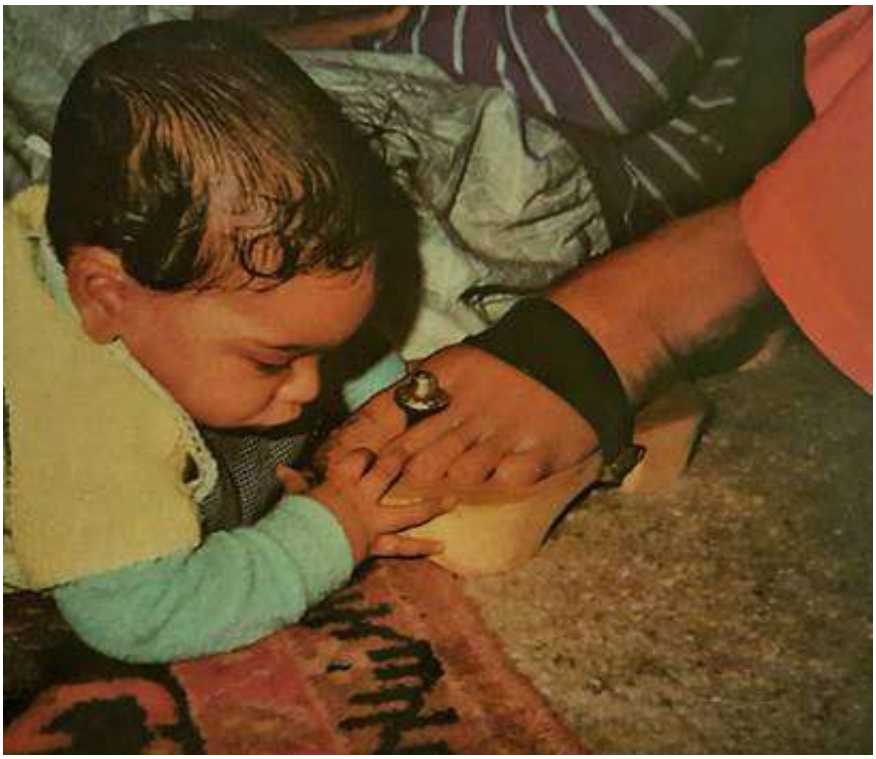
294. OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

25-02-2016

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

Jeeva+_Brahma+ aikya + vid = The perfected knowledge (vid) that the Jeeva and Brahman are one.



Jeeva-brahma-aikyam ....

*To the one who knows he is Brahman.

For those who have met him, seen him, watched him, he was a lesson in 'All is

Brahman’. For only the one who knows he is Brahman, knows ‘all is Brahman’.

Suffice it to say, Gurudev understood the Truth and in so understanding only saw Truth all around him. So complete was this knowing and abidance that one saw no duality in his conduct, thought or word. In other words, he lived like one, seeing nothing but the Truth in all persons and things, merged with the Absolute. He knew that this jiva is nothing but that Truth.

*Gurudev’s experience of the aikyam was his own experience, it was not a textbook narration …it is his life’s experience.

*Very rarely did one see Gurudev acknowledging this. But he did make one very strong statement in connection with Swami Sivananda and Swami Tapovanam – “My work is dedicated to the shrutis and to Swami Sivananda who taught me to live in God. And to Swami TapovanMaharaj who pushed me into the beyond.” In this statement, if one ponders, one sees his subtle acknowledgement of jiva-brahma-aikyam; Gurudev studied at the holy feet of these two greatest of masters and using the Knowledge they gave him, he removed whatever traces of avidya that remained in him.

This studying at their feet deeply impacted Gurudev. They were responsible for his evolution and growth – which he acknowledged.

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

The essence of Advaita Vedanta is that the seeker and the sought are one. All Mahavakyas speak of this oneness. Naturally a Brahma Gnani not only knows, but also lives in this awareness. Right from His earliest days, Gurudev used to start His letters with, "Blessed Self" and close the letters with "Thy own Self."

Once Gurudev told me to do something, accomplish something. Not being confident, I told Gurudev that I have my limitations.
Pat came the reply "My guru told me man has no limitations."

Let us see Gurudev's explanation of this oneness in His commentary toVivekachudamani, verse 440:

He sees no distinction between the Lord behind the whole cosmos called Iswara, and the Lord functioning through the body called Jeeva.
Jiva -Iswara -eka -bhava is the identity between the individual Jeeva and the universal Self.
Patterns are woven into a cloth with coloured thread.
Flowers,plants,houses,trees,animals---all are woven into patterns. It becomes a world of its own. When a child starts pulling the thread from one end,it comes out and the entire jagat is liquidated into yards of thread. In the thread, the entire world has become one



Similarly the whole world is a 'Conscious ' world, the material of which is This Consciousness. He who has unwound all this, knows the Reality behind the entire cosmos. 'That Reality alone am I ', he realises.

Every Breath a Teaching pg 112
Blessings and transformations, Piercing the Heart(anonymous)

One young American woman experienced a powerfully transforming first meeting with Swamiji. At the camp,Swamiji talked a lot about Vasanas, as He often did. At one point He explained, 'addiction Vasanas', that they are the kind you cannot hope

to exhaust; you simply have to stop doing what you have been doing-- and as He said that He looked at His new listener, an addicted smoker. She felt as though the entire lecture were addressed to her only.

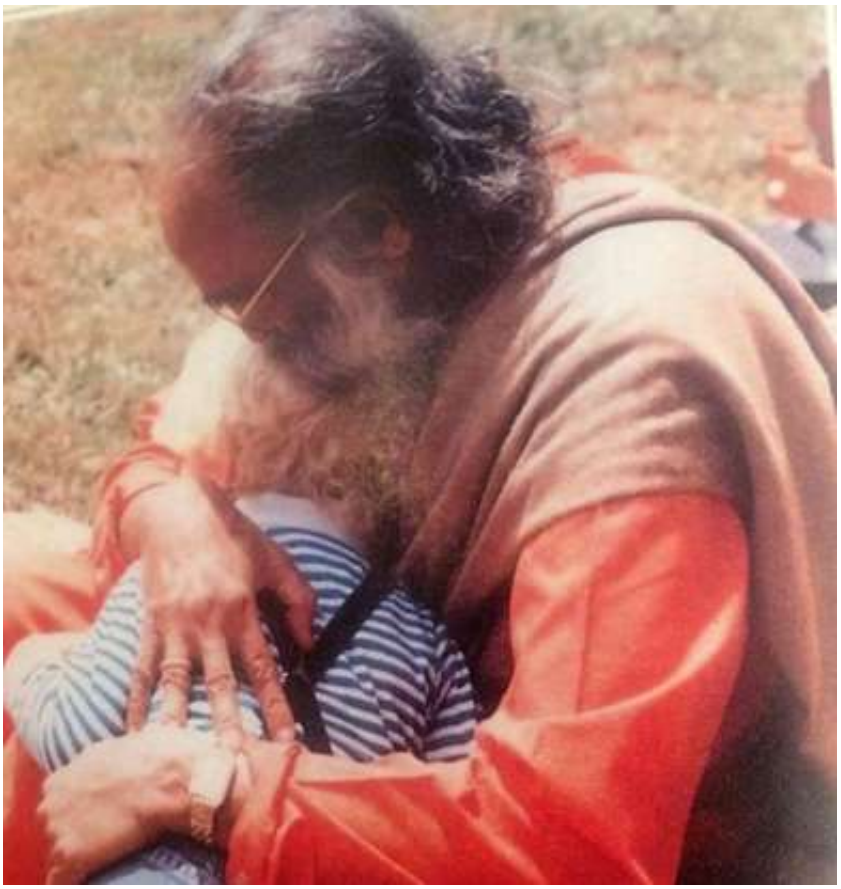
At the end of the lecture,Swamiji said,almost in a whisper :
"Your own essential Self is divine,whether you like it or not "
With those words,her heart was pierced. After the lecture, she went off alone to the woods and wept.
To that Knower of the Oneness of the jeeva with Brahman, my prostrations

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

Offered by Shri N.Kalidas ji,CM,Mumbai

The Individual or personal soul enshrined in the body and imparting to it life, motion and sensation is Jeeva or Jantu (Creature). I quote Gurudev:-“Creator forgot His Nature and called Himself a Creature. This is Creature’s journey towards the Creator.”



Journey towards the creator ... jeevabrahmaikyavid

Source: Philip Isola

The creature is searching for his true nature (Sat-Chit- Aananda) and its status Brahman, everywhere and in and through everything. One will search for only that which one has an idea about or one has experienced it before. The Jeeva-- the Individual - through the process of negation, with the help of the famous Scriptural or Sruthi declarations like, Neti,-Neti (not this, not this), rejects all its kosas or layers such as the annamayakosa, the manomayakosa and so on of his personality, until he experiences the Immortal, changeless mass of pure Consciousness in his heart. That is his real nature, Sat-chit-ananda.

Gurudev says “This is called Detach-Attach- Yoga! “

This Yoga takes one to a state that leaves nothing to reject, thus “not this” becomes That! That Thou Art- Tattwamasi! Poojya Gurudev narrates this in Sri Rama Gita thus:-

“A man of pure mind, endowed with faith, through contemplation of the great statement” That Thou Art”, with the grace of the teacher comes to realize the perfect identity between the Paramaatman and Jeeva, and then gains supreme happiness and becomes like the Meru Mountain , unperturbed under all

circumstances.” (Sri Rama Gita Stanza 24)

Poojya Gurudev explains further:-

“That which functions as a conscious individual ego (Jeeva), that which expresses as the world of plurality (Jagat), and the Creator of all (Ishvara) are all expressions of the one essence, the Self. To realize this essential identity between the ego and the Self is the final goal and true destination of all spiritual seeking. To reach this goal means to achieve a state of Blissful Consciousness (Chit-Aananda), a state possible only for the extremely pure mind.” To such a pure Master-Mind who is Chinmayaananda, who is the Self in all, who is ever established in Brahman -- thus the knower of the identity between Jeeva and Brahman (JeevaBrahmaikya Vid), our Humble Prostrations!

Swami Chinmayananda, our PoojyaGurudev, dished out Great Vedanta declarations like,‘That Thou Art’ (Tattwamasi), ‘Neti-Neti’ (not this not this) etc. even while dining, flying, irrespective of time and space. This was during a lunch bhiksha during 1988, at my brother-in-law Satya’s home at Sydney. Even though I realised Swamiji relishes anything one offers, I knew some of His favourite dishes. One of them was “UnniThandThoran”.Gurudev used to call it UTT! This is made with the ‘core of the banana tree stem or trunk’ and is called ‘UnniThand’ in Malayalam. [unnithandu is the core of the banana stem and is a delicacy. It is the core or center-most portion of the banana stem]



UnniThandu core of the banana stem.

We went looking for it but it was not available in any of the Indian shops in Sydney, and we were returning home disappointed.

En route we found a banana trunk, as if looking at us, in the garden of an Australian home, the banana bunch already cut off and taken. I went and rang the door bell and asked the householder there if I could have that banana tree trunk.

He was Albert, a Lebanese gentleman settled in Australia. He very happily consented because he felt we were doing him a great favour by removing it from his garden!

Look at the way Gurudev is working as the Sarvaatma in all! Albert welcomed us home and offered us some bananas, the fruits of his action. Thereafter, he happily cut off the middle portion of the trunk and gave it to us. But he enquired why we wanted 'this stuff'. We told him why and also invited him for the bhiksha.

Albert came and was introduced to Swamiji. We felt as if Albert happened to be someone special for Gurudev, going by how Swamiji spoke to him. Hence we made him sit next to Gurudev for the bhiksha. While having lunch, Gurudev's hand went straight to Albert's mouth with a 'Thank you' and Albert started chewing UTT!

Albert was wonder struck! He didn't know what was happening because he was meeting Swamiji for the first time!

Just see how some punyaatmas meet the Master! After lunch Gurudev was explaining how one can get to the 'Core' of anything, using this 'core of the banana stem' as an example, by peeling out the layers one by one and negating them, saying 'not this, not this' and eventually discovering that from which nothing further could be peeled away.

"That is the 'core'! He said "This end product is that(core) and That Thou Art! Tatwamasi!"

This Bhiksha at Satya's place was one of the typical PoojyaGurudev events where He fulfilled His devotee's punyas without an overt plan!

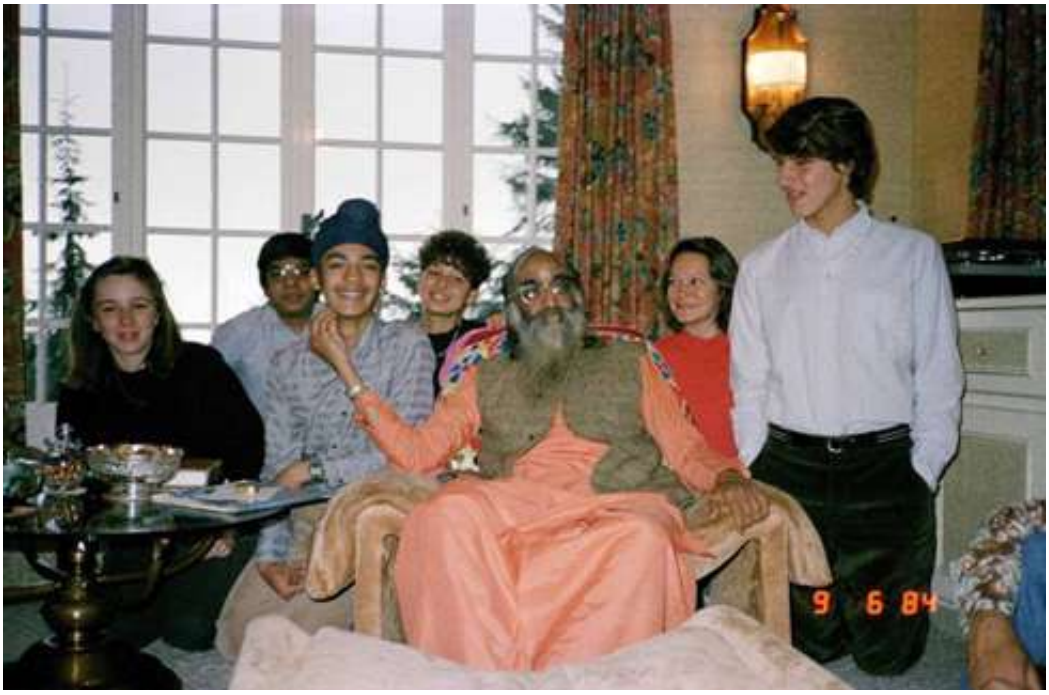
Thus Albert enjoyed 'the fruits of his action', had the prasaad --UTT -- from the Master, fed into his mouth too (what more can anyone want!) made out of the 'core'- the Essence and the 'icing on the cake' was the revelation of the Great Mahaavaakya "Tatwamasi"- That Thou Art!

That is Gurudev-the Jeevabhramaikyavid, who revealed His Identity!
TasmaiNamahaSatguruChinmayaaya!

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR



Salutations to the Knower of the Oneness of Jiva and Brahman

Vid is the knower. Aikya, means oneness. Jivabrahmaikyavid is the knower of the oneness between jiva and Brahman. Jiva means the individual, or what we know as 'I, me and myself.' Brahman means 'everything, everyone, the Totality.' For example a circle has many points. If we look at one point individually it appears different from the entire circle. But if we observe carefully we find that all the points are present in that circle.

The ocean consists of millions and millions of drops of water, yet we know it is all only one. It is as if all the drops are swallowed by the ocean. A drop of water identified with the ocean knows that there is no difference between itself and the ocean. There is no difference between the waves and the ocean. Similarly when we look at ourselves as individuals and then see the world, we feel they are different.

We look at the world as 'this' or 'that'. We say 'that star' and 'this table.' For other living beings, we say, 'you' and 'them'. This labelling of the world as 'this' or 'that' divides the world. But for a Mahatma the inert 'this' and 'that' disappears. Only the One remains.

The scriptures tell us that we are basically one and there are no differences. To understand this oneness is itself the main goal and aim of life. Our meditation should

be to comprehend this feeling of oneness. The scriptures say there is life in everything, nothing is inert. We divide the world by our perception of ‘this’ and ‘that’. But if we look at it without any division, then the world is 'this’, alone. But why call the world even ‘this’. The world is alive. So, we should say, ‘you, the world’. There is ‘I’ and there is ‘you’ the world. After some contemplation, one comes to realize that the world is not ‘you’. It is ‘I’. Therefore, the world becomes my own self.

The Self is first far away – that. Then it comes nearer – this. It then becomes you and finally it becomes ‘I’. From ‘Tat’ it becomes ‘Tvam,’ then ‘Aham.’ Tatmeans that and denotes distance or Brahman. The scriptures indicate this as, TatBrahman - That is Brahman. In the mahavakya – tat tvamasi the Reality is indicated as tvam. Then in aham brahma asmi it is indicated as ‘aham’. These concepts are all very subtle and our understanding depends upon our capacity to comprehend.

Now let us replace the word, Brahman, with the word God. Some people don’t believe in God. For them the world is inert or an illusion. Some believe, that God is somewhere out there – Tat. Then God comes a little nearer and one can directly communicate with him. God becomes ‘you’, and graduates to second person. Finally God becomes first person. He becomes aham. So, from third person, God is made second person and is finally realised as first person. This is the path of our sadhana.

The Guru is one who has understood this oneness between the individual and Brahman and is known as jivabrahmaikyavide.

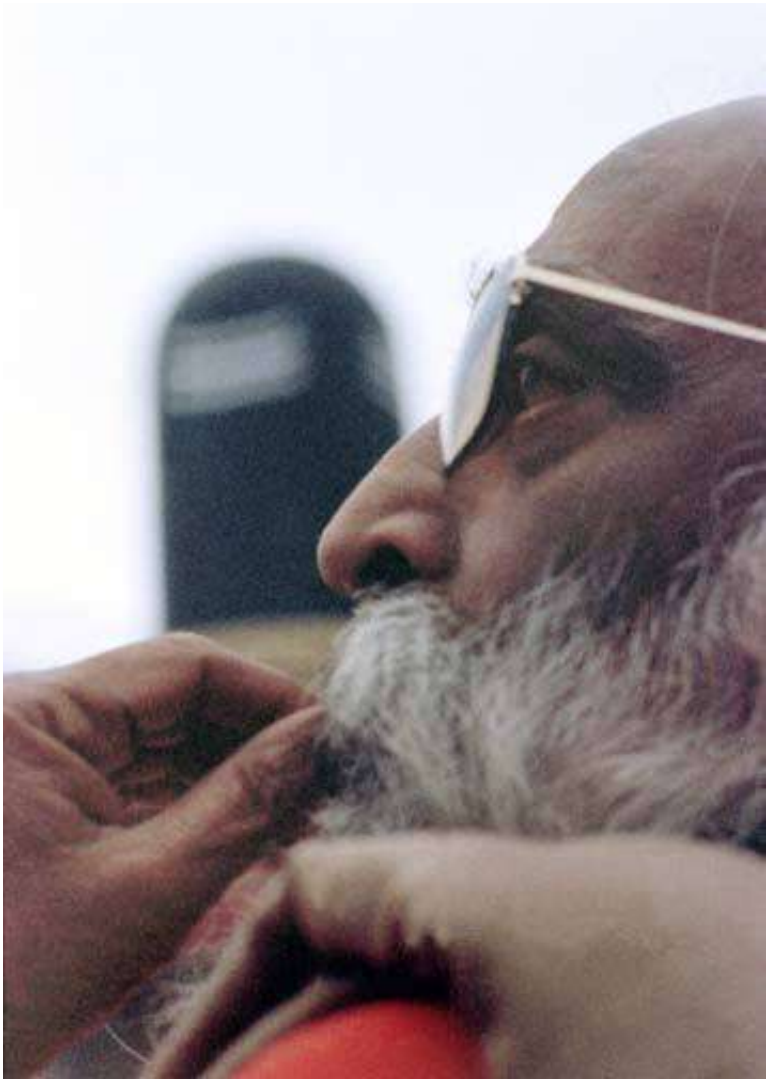
OM JEEVABRAHAMAIKYAVIDE NAMAH

295. OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

26-02-2016

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swamini Supreetananda, erstwhile Resident Achaarya Chinmaya Mission Mangalore, currently residing at CM Bangalore



Om JivanmuktayaNamah
SatsangatveNissangatvam
NissangatveNirmohatvam
NirmohatveNischalatattvam
NischalatattveJeevanmuktih

Sat sangatve - through the company of the good, Nissangatvam - non-attachment, Nissangatve - through non-attachment, Nirmohatvam - freedom from delusion, Nirmohatve - through freedom from delusion, Nischala – Immutable Tattvam - Reality, Nischalatattve - through Immutable Reality, Jeevanmuktih - the state of liberation in life.

“The company of the good weans one away from false attachments; from non-attachment comes freedom from delusion, when the delusion ends, the mind becomes unwavering and steady and from an unwavering and steady mind comes Jeevatmukti (liberation while being alive)”.



SwaminiSupreetananda ji with Swami Brahmananda ji

'Sat' means consciousness. 'Asat' means inert matter. Matter is asatbecause it has no innate potential. It is not self-luminous. That does not mean it is useless. Asat or inert matter gets power only when it is activated by sat. Matter dances according to the tunes of the spirit indwelling it. Matter is ignorant. Material world is illusion. Ignorant beings mistake material world for the real. Jivas are mixed up in the material world. The enlightened ones who have come out of the veil of ignorance are called the jivanmuktas. Let us think over and understand how this is made possible.

Sat is a divine entity. Vasatiitivastu. This is pure. This is one and indivisible. Asatis inert, perishable and insentient. sadasat is the mixture of sat and asat. The whole of the visible world is sad-asat.Similarly the jiva and its gross body are sad-asat. Therefore they are mutable. They perish. They are apparent. They are not real.

Noble persons realize this fact. They give up asat and revel in sat.nissanga means becoming free from illusion. One who is free from illusion attains peace of mind. He attains stability of mind in respect of the spirit. He experiences the joy of pure Self. This is what Sri Shankaracharya means by saying 'NischalatattveJivanmuktih '.

Sat is Paramatman. He is steady, unmoved, one and the eternal.

Sadasatis jiva. A living being is a mixture of sat and asat. This mixture denotes ignorance, illusion, unsteadiness, assembly and what is impermanent. A person who clearly differentiates sat from the asatignores asatand abides by sat. He visualizes the three gunas of sattva rajas and tamas in him. He goes beyond these three. He attains the Paramatman. While he is very much alive in this world, in this birth itself he becomes a fulfilled seeker in this very body and achieves liberation. He is called jivanmulta.

The shloka in the Gita, viz. 'dvavimoupurushaulokeksharashchaksharaeva cha' says that this world is of dual nature consisting of kshara and akshara.

These are the sets of dualities:

(1) the eternal and the temporal - nitya-anitya

(2) existent and nonexistent - sad-asat

(3) mutable and immutable - kshara-akshara

(4) living being and the self - jiva-atma

Knowing this distinction is important for a living being. We should realize for certain that we are not the jiva or the 'individual living being'. This is taught in the scriptural sentence 'netineti'. This is spiritual wisdom. When one becomes a

jivanmuktaa living being surpasses the limitation of dualities by leading an honest life, surrendering at the feet of a guru and treads the path of truthfulness. He realizes the limitations of prakiti, its bindings and its gunas. Without surrendering to it he becomes self-realized and spends the rest of his life just like that.

No person in this world is capable of discerning the true from the false or the sentient from the insentient. Everyone is confounded. Unfortunately some people are confused. They think they know the truth. Mistaking the true for the false and vice versa they are wasting time. If anyone in this world desires to attain bliss and peace he has to resort to the Veda which is enlightening like a lamp. He must acquire spiritual wisdom of the shastras and Upanishads through a guru. This is the only way and this is what is called vedanta. This is atmavidya. This is purnavidya. Acharya Shankara has very clearly shown the simple spiritual truth in his prakaranagrantha called bhajagovindam. In the shloka 'satsangatvenissangatvam 'etc. he has very clearly explained in vivid terms how one should become a jivanmukta. A jivanmukta must ponder over seriously using his mind and intellect. It is very interesting. But this is very secretive or esoteric(guhyaguhyatama). A jivanmukta wins over kamakrodha and other four enemies that total into six called the arishadvarga. He stays having crossed the pairs of opposites like sukha and duhkha. He surpasses trigunas by means of his virtues. That means he realizes truth. He practices all the precepts that he learns and preaches.
Is it possible to attain a stage like this? Yes it is very much possible. Who How and for whom? Many people have already become jivanmuktas. Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda RamanamaharshiTapoanMaharaj Pujya Swami Chinmayananda and many other undetected people have all become jivanmuktas. Thus even though the body mind and intellect are asat, but by virtue of the power of sat they carry on their activities. Therefore they are sadasat.
Who am I? Only the body mind and intellect seem to be myself. The functions of these seem to be my functions. This is wrong. Our experience is confined to this sphere.

Whosoever dismisses his individuality as he is alive and continues to live after the realization of Brahman is called Jivanmukta.

Om JivanmuktayaNamaha

Swami Chinmayananda had all the features of a jivanmukta as explained above. He lived the life of a jivanmukta in joy. Not only he was realized, but he shared his knowledge with all the seekers who came to him in this world. He was upright and steadfast. He blessed us all. He was the teacher of many spiritual teachers. He was a successful universal guru who inspired everyone to become a jivanmukta.

Swamini ji wrote her reflections in chaste Kannada. We are most grateful to Dr. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Head of Department, Philosophy Arts and Culture, and Spiritual Studies at Amrita Vidyapeetham University, for translating Swaminiji's text. Dr. Iyengar was thefirst Director of CIF [1998-2003] appointed by Pujya Guruji.

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

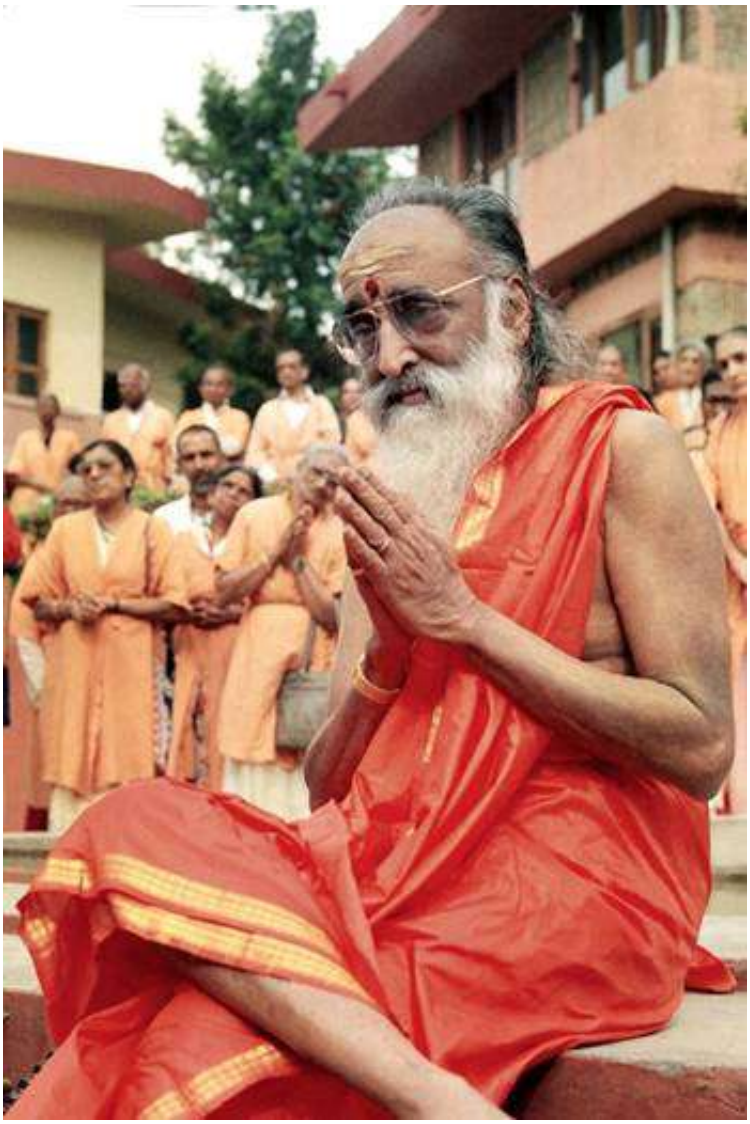
Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji,CM Mumbai

Poojya Gurudev is always established in Brahman the Supreme. Thus He was independent of everything. He would descend to the Jeeva-hood, our level to take us to God-hood. He was a Yogi who taught us the greatest Yoga-Shaastra, Bhagavad Gita. These are the attributes of a Yogi-an absolutely independent one revelling in Brahman, a Jeevan-Mukta.

“The Yogi acquires all Divine Aisvaryas. He experiences cosmic consciousness attains many kinds of Siddhis, which are described in Bhagavata and Raja Yoga of MaharshiPatanjali. Brahmic Consciousness is the experience of Maha-Karana wherein there is neither time, space nor causation. It is an unconditioned, ineffable state. Srutis describe in the negative, Neti, Neti-not this, not this.

"
Ya
tovachonivartanteaprapyamanasasahaanandambrahmanovidvannabibhetikadachana-The mind and speech return back from it baffled as they are not able to grasp and describe it; the wise who knows the Brahman which is bliss, is not afraid of anything at any time.”

Om Jeevan MukthaayaNamaha.Free of jivahood this is how it has been described by Swami Sivananda -- “the Jivahood has gone now. The little 'I' has melted. The differentiating mind that splits up, has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences, and separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only eternity. The Jiva has realised his identity with Brahman. The ideas of caste, creed and colour have gone now. When he becomes a Brahma-Varishtha, when he enters the seventh-stage of Jnana or Turiyatita, even the slight body-consciousness which was in a state of Samskara or mental retentum disappears. He has to be fed by spectators. The world completely disappears for him. He experiences the state described by Ajati-Vadin or the utterance of Srutis "Na cha nana astikinchana-there is no such thing as diversity”.



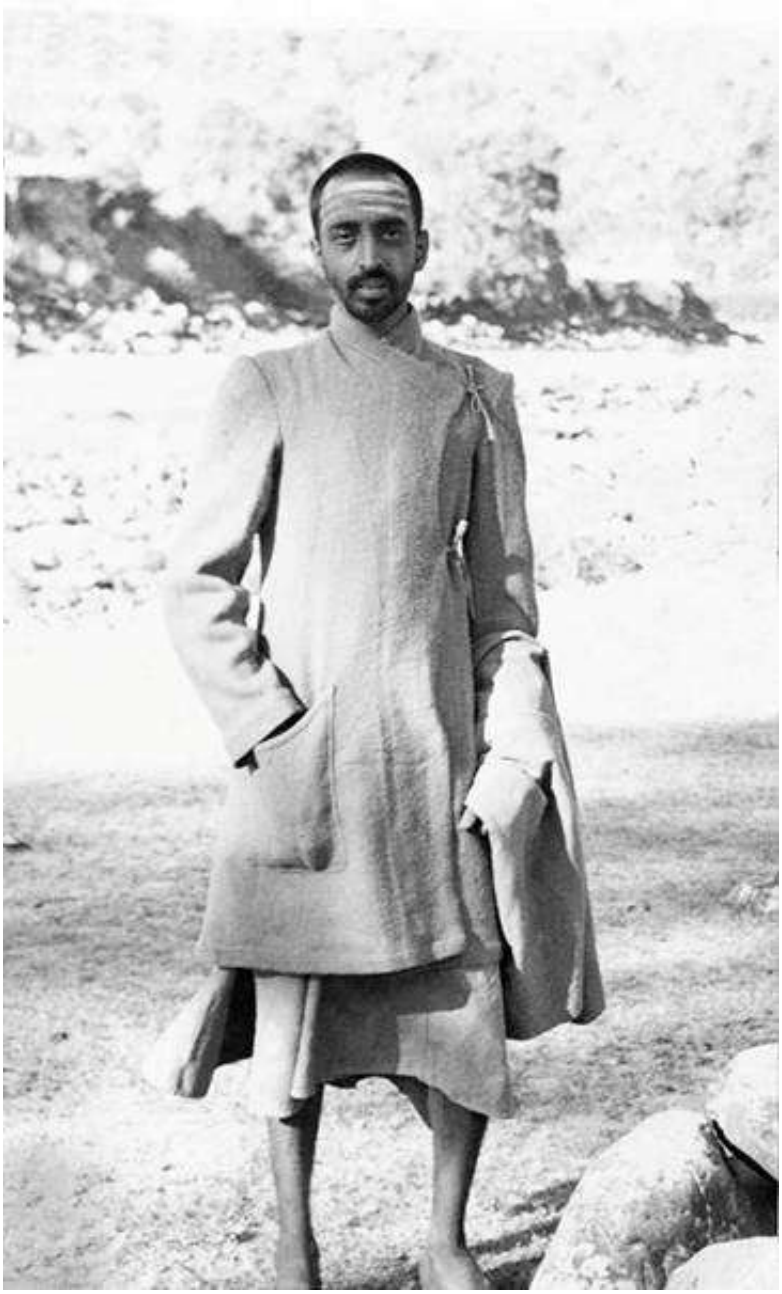
Continued experience ....

The above mentioned lakshanaas suited Poojya Gurudev and all of us experienced His Siddhis and continue to experience even today. To Him our Humble Prostrations.

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

A Jeevanmuktha is one who even while in a body is liberated. This is in contrast to the belief of the majority who have a vague concept of liberation that liberation is after death. Sri Sankara establishes on the ground that if Jeevanmukti is not possible no one will have a guru to talk to them on moksha from their experience and

consequently mukti will haveto be a wild guess.

A Jeevanmukta in simple terms is one who has liberated Himself from His own misapprehension born out of non-apprehension of Himself. He has grown beyond the notion that He is basically an individual with a body. As Gurudev puts it so beautifully, He is not a body with a soul he is a soul with a body.

One who thinks he is an individual feels insecure and needs lots of things to be secure. He is bound by his wants. A Jeevanmukta knows He is beyond the BMI and He is the Consciousness that lends sentience to them, and is not affected by them.

For Him life is a sport. He is established in His own glory -- Swayamahimnetisthathi

Gurudev says all laws of morals and ethics are codified from the lives of jeevanmuktas. They are not bound by any law.

Hymn to Badrinathverse 9

Gurudev's commentary

One who has achieved the Self is no more under the injunctions and laws prescribed by the Vedas. He is a law unto Himself. The actions of such mighty men of Bharat are the very standards,and the Vedic injunctions,that present rules of conduct,moral virtues,physical disciplines, are all copied from the behaviour-pattern and inspired actions of these Mighty Masters.

But what prevents the Man of perfection from being a licentious moral wreck?

Where the ego has ended there the individual has discovered His divine nature.Through His physical apparatus thereafter the Divine alone plays,not the undivine,animalindividuality.

A great musician,accepted as the greatest in the world,even if he has free will, cannot,while singing, miss a beat,or break the tunes; or topple the rhythm. In short he cannot commit a fault.

Every Breath a Teaching pg 115

His Attributes

Swami Swaroopananda

The last day (of the spiritual camp at Sidhabari) was the highlight. The convocation was over. It was going to be a full moon night.
Everybody had over eaten. Gurudev knew. Imagine the next day's morning meditation! Gurudev could not allow us to sleep with such heavy stomachs, so ...while the pahadi boys sang their lovely songs with joy, Gurudev went picking out the delegates one by one.

"Dance! Dance!" --He commanded by His mere look, all the time a mischievous smile

playing on His lips. And then for the joy of all, the Master of Masters danced with us

(Yoga ratovaBhogaratovayasyabrahmaniramatechittamnandatinandati Eva.)

As we watched Gurudev in His daily activities,we witnessed Him playing many roles,each role perfectly suited to the situation at hand. We saw an awesome display of

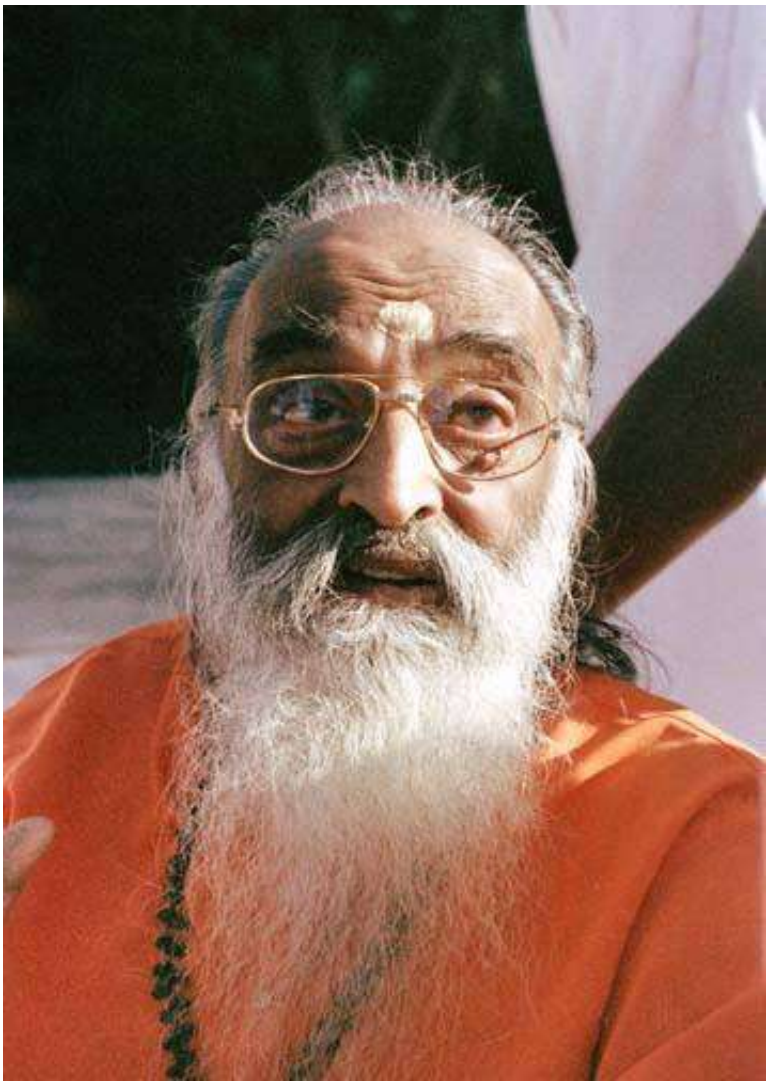
qualities which,in sum,began to scratch the surface of what might be called a definition of who He was. Yet a final decision eluded us.

To that Jeevanmukta who eludes definition, my salutations!

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Om jīvanmuktāyanamaḥ

Salutations to the One Liberated while Living

Jivanmuktaya means one who is free whilst still alive, living in the body while living in this world. In TattvaBodha, a student asks the Teacher, 'Who is a jivanmukta'? One answer is that one who sees Brahman everywhere is a jivanmukta. Another answer is: An ignorant person feels that he is ignorant. We feel that we are female or male, or feel that we are a brahmana,kshatriya, vaishya or shudra. Just as each one is convinced about their status, in much the same way the person who is fully convinced that he is Satchchidananda Brahman is a jivanmukta. He who is convinced that he is ajah, nirvikara, nihsangah, sarvavyapi, sarvajna is a jivanmukta.

J0vanmuktas are rare to find and the dedicated spiritual seeker sometimes has to travel thousands of miles to find one. This whole process is very mysterious; there is no logic to it. Guru hunting or shopping just does not work because we judge people from our own stand point. We have our standards and ideas, which may not get fulfilled. Paul Bruntonof In Search of Secret India fame, came all the way from London to meet Bhagavan RamanaMaharshi. He visited Egypt, traveled all over the Himalayas, met many Mahatmas and wrote about the various miracles they had performed. His travels led him to the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, who directed him to RamanaMaharshi. So he finally landed up in Tiruvannamalai at Ramana Ashram and met the Maharshi. It was here that finally all his doubts were cleared and he realized himself. He found his Master in the form of RamanaMaharshi.

Similar is the story of Swami Vivekananda's search for his Guru. He met many spiritual Masters and to all of them he put the same question, "Have you seen God?" Not satisfied with any of their replies he continued his search till he met Shri Ramakrishna Parmahansa, who convincingly answered his question. Before he could say anything, Ramakrishna asked, "Where were you for such a long time? I have been waiting for you."

The shishya may not know the Guru, but the Guru knows the disciple. We say 'marriages are made in heaven', likewise the Guru-shishya relationship is made in heaven or even above. It is a strange, amazing and wondrous relationship.
The Purana are full of stories about how people met their Masters and realized their inner Self. Often people have mystical experiences when they meet their Masters. A special bonding exists or in some cases develops between the Master and the disciple. This trust and faith is unique to the relationship.

In the world we find many Mahatmas but by the grace of the Lord, we are led to the feet of a jivanmukta, who alone has the power to grant freedom.

OM JIVANMUKTAAYA NAMAH

296. OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

27-02-2016

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Jeerna + mandir + udhaaraka means One who revives neglected temples. But there is more than that here. One, Gurudev was ever an Advaitin. What he taught, he practiced and vice versa. That was why he had no prayer altar. Never carried an altar. He didn't need one, because his own life was a temple. His life was worship. His work was his altar. But he understood why we need temples.

*When Gurudev talked about the need for temples, it was a brilliant exposition. He talked about the idea of a temple, the vision of a temple as the ideal....For every kind of devotee.

*Arta, arthaarti or jignyasu, they all begin at the beginning. That is where temples come in. Temples were built as the central point of activity in a village or town. All activity revolved around the temple, celebration, worship, learning...



Rambodha Temple Sri Lanka

*Gurudev also had very unique thoughts about temples. In Sidhabari we have a Rama temple. Usually, Rama temple means Ram darbar, the composition that is reminiscent of Rama's coronation ceremony - the Pattaabhishekam scene -- Rama, Lakshmana, Bharat, Shatrughna, Seeta, Hanuman. But in Sidhabari Gurudev chose to celebrate Rama in the forest...Vana Rama, Rama and Seeta in bark, Jatadhari.



Sidhabari'sVanvasi Ram Sita and Lakshman

Why? Because Sidhhabari is a place for tapas, and Rama's 14 year long exile, was one long tapas. The Sidhabari temple is to remind us of Rama's tapas.

*Bangalore's Deenabandhutemple is again a concept temple. It depicts Lord Krishna dancing on Kaliya, the snake, after having captured.



The idea represented there is the control of the five senses. You are dancing on it,Kaliya. But at the temple gate, you will see a fire, you as-if walk through it you are purified. This is how Gurudev concstructs the idea for each temple. He enjoyed doing this, building a concept with the attendant values depicted at the temple. It can't be the usual praying center.

*Likewise in the late 70s, at SabarimalaiGurudev asked that the mahavakya' Tatvamasi' be written right above the sanctum sanctorum. So many thousands of crores of people visit Sabarimalai. They cross the 18 holy steps that are considered to reduce the ego, and come face-to-face with the declaration, 'Tatvamasi' or "That Thou Art'. The Lord you have come seeking is you yourself. How meaningful and stunningly so!



Eighteen Steps and Tat TvamAsi put up by Gurudev

*Then turn one side and go see the lord and there you face another mahavakya, 'AhamBrahmasmi' behind the sanctum sanctorum; sans the ego which shrank as I climbed the 18 steps, I come to realize that I am Brahman. , So while Tatvamasi was an instruction, AhamBrahmasmi is a realization. In this manner Gurudev made

temples express a meaning for devotees.

*Badrinath. The chief purohit,a man named Rawal, wrote toGurudev mentioning how bad the roads leading up to Badrinath are; that some more facilities are necessary to make the path a little comfortable for the pilgrims.

The issue here was also that Badrinath is open to pilgrims only 5 months of the year – May to early October. The main puja happens in Joshi Math, which is 45 kms high into the mountains.

A committee was formed by some Swamis from different Matha-s coming together. They approached Gurudev and asked him if he would agree to be the chairman or president. This was 89-90; Gurudev wrote back saying, 'Count me out, I can't even travel, I can't take up this responsibility. Just keep me as an ordinary member not even a trustee.' But from Sidhabari Ashram, Gurudev sent a handsome amount of money to set the ball rolling. Rs 2.5 lakhs, or so, from Chinmaya TapovanTrust.

Gurudev's chief concern was that inBadrinaath we need facilities; that place inspires so many people, who make the long journey. How many Prayags you cross - Dev Prayag, Vishnu Prayag, KarnaPrayag, RudraPrayag and then you reach the Indo-China border at Mana village. That is where you see the river Sarasvati coming! That is the only place you see the Saraswati, after that the river goes underground and is not available to see. That is in itself a great source of inspiration.

*The above are a few of the instances that we are aware of, where Gurudev went ahead with his support of a temple, a place of culture and worship, because someone told us about it. But there are so many many instances where Gurudev has offered support about which we know nothing. But the point being made is, that was his vision, his vision of why temples and monuments must be restored, renewed, refreshed, revived. Because he was deeply appreciative of the fact that since human life in India revolves around temples,from there people can evolve. He saw them more as national monuments than as spiritual centers, where people would go feel and be inspired by the ideology.

*Gurudev's attitude to temples as the pivot of all human activity was pointed, strong and consistent. In every school, he ensured there was an altar – and this orientation he ensured from Balvihar onwards and hence in the Vidyalayas too. The altar would be dedicated to Lord Ganesha or Goddess Saraswati, so that children associate schooling, study, knowledge, effort, with the source of all that.

*There were also places where Gurudev did Pranpratishtha – sanctifying the idol and breathing prana into it, whereafter the idol becomes a deity.

*Sankara rebuilt and restored temples all over India, so did Gurudev. Gurudev repaired, renovated, refurbished the crumbling Melpazhur Mana and named it AdiSankaraNilayam, the place that would thereafter be the home of Chinmaya International Foundation, Chinmaya Mission's Sanskrit research foundation.



SriAdiSankara's birth room remodelled



Gurudev's AdiSankaraNilayam.

*Thus, Gurudev touched small temples, large temples, gave schools to temples and temples to schools, and temples in residential colonies, built Institutes around temples and ashrams alongside temples, all with the only desire to protect the heritage, culture, value, wealth of India during a time when its value would go unknown, unrecognized and unsung.

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Gurudev in reaching the modern educated class, always had His roots in tradition;so too, even in delivering the scriptures to the masses, albeit in English, but His teachings were all based on Sri SankaraBhashya.

Gurudev in His lifetime promoted a number of temples all over the world. He had also received a few old temples from their erstwhile management and renovated them. The construction of new temples and renovation of old temples continues even today.

Somebody asked Gurudev, " ‘Remember, God is not different from you,located somewhere in the heavens’ -- please explain in detail the significance of going to the temples and of idol worship?’

The answer to this is found in the book In the Company of Sages page 27 and 28 Now your doubt is: Since this God is all pervading,including in your bosom,why should you go to temple,orfor that matter,why do we have the institution of prayer houses of God? The question is valid. This is a natural [question] for a Vedantic student. In the early stages of study,in the light of our philosophy,our institutions and rituals,prayers and worship,would strike any one as a meaningless anomaly, an unnecessary paradox.

To understand intellectually the one superreality is only the elementary stage; its fulfilment is in realising It in a direct,subjective experience,in yourself,for yourself. To reach that subjective experience, the student needs to worship the macrocosmic cause of the universe,in order to foldhis mind from its total preoccupation with his microcosmic world of selfish and egocentric joys and sorrows.

In a democracy the government of a country is present at every point within the frontiers of that nation. Yet,if I want to invoke the government for a permit or for help, I must reach the capital,approach the right departmental head,and invoke the government's protection or patronage.

Out of the few temples Chinmaya Mission received there are a few in Kerala. Lord SubrahmanyaAthiyambur,Kanhangad; SriBhuvaneswariTemple,Thrissur, Kerala. There are many small temples in CIF AdiSankaraNilayam, and one in Kanpur too that Gurudev took over and renovated.

Our BMI is the temple where the Lord lives. They have become dilapidated, unkempt and in need of renovation. This Gurudev did in mass scale where they will never again need maintenance or renovation.

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered on behalf of all the elders in Chinmaya Mission for whom Gurudev began the Chinmaya PitamahSadans.Extracted from VANAPRASTHA – A Journey Towards Realisation - Mananam's Celebration Series.

The Story of Bankhandeswar Temple, Mandana

Twenty kilometres from Kanpur, on the Grand-Trunk Road to Delhi on the MandhanaBithoor Road, is a tiny town named Mandhana, where people speak the most beautifully lyrical language, Awadhi. In this little town is a 200 year old temple of Lord Shiva, which was in the ownership of the Bankhandeswar Trust. The Trustees offered this temple, along with the land appurtenant to it at Gurudev's feet in 1983.



A small lamp was lit in this tiny little village,called BagdoudhiBangar, at Bithoor, 18 km from the city of Kanpur. Here covered by a thick foliage of bilva trees, lies a very old temple with a shivalinga – which local folk believe was 'self formed' or swayambhu. Since Lord Shiva as Mahadev in this temple, chose to dwell quietly in the forest, He came to be called – Bankhandeshwar. Local lore has it that there was a time when the cows came here on their own and poured milk on the shivalingam. Much later during some excavation, the Shivalinga was found, and devotees built a formal enclosure around it. Thus was born the Mahadev temple.

This temple in Bithoor town, on the left bank of the Ganges, is considered a holy place for pilgrimage. But the swayambhu appearance of Lord Shiva here should not surprise devotees; for this is the place where Shiva's ishta, Lord Rama's sons Luv and Khush were born, hence Valmiki ji's ashram is also at Bithoor.

Historical facts about this temple are very fascinating. Bithoor is reputed to have been home to many of the rebels of the 1857 mutiny, including Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi. Laxmibai – who apparently had her ear-piercing ceremony done here -- was

so fascinated by this place that after marriage, she had an identical temple built in the fort of Jhansi. It is said that (in 1830), the banished Maratha leader, PeshwaBajiraoII had renovated this temple. His adopted son, NanaraoPeshwa made this little town his headquarters and along with Tatya Tope and Laxmibai, had worshipped at this temple, it is said.

In 1936, a devotee from the village, Shri Ram Chandra Mishra, overcome by great love and devotion to this swayambhuMahadev, vowed to worship the BankhandeshwarMahadev every day, adding, 'I may live or die but the worshiping and chanting of the Lord's name shall continue here always...' And with that, he offered to the Lord roughly two and a half hectares of land. What is more, he transferred the land to the Lord as 'owner' and himself became His trustee! Thus was born the Shri BanakhandeshwarMahadev Temple Trust, on 21st may 1936.

As the years passed, and the traditions were honoured, the place began to fall to disrepair. With no resources at their disposal the trustees resolved to meet some NGOs and have them rebuild the temple.

One of the trustees, PanditDayashankar Dubey, the secretary, mentioned to the Trustees that CCMT's founder, Swami Chinmayananda was coming to Kanpur in Feb 1983, for a gnyana yagna, 'why not meet him and maybe request him?'

Gurudev's 344thGeetaGyan Yagna was being held at Moti Jheel, in Kanpur. During the course of this yagna, the trustees arranged for Gurudev to visit the BankhandeshwarMahadev Temple. On 9th February, Gurudev along with Swami Tejomayananda and a few others arrived at the temple at 9 am. As he took in the ancestry, history, and other details of this precious temple, one of the trustees asked if Gurudev would take the temple in his care?

Six months later...Gurudev formally began to oversee the management of the BankhandeshwarMahadev Temple and property. Ram Chandra Mishra ji, the original Trustee and caregiver-founder of the Temple formally handed over all the Trust papers to Swami Tejomayananda.

Just seven days later, Pt. Ram Chandra Mishra departed from this world. As if this was all that he had waited for - only to find a suitable protector of the Shri BankhandeshwarMahadev Temple.

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered on behalf of CIF – the temples restored by Gurudev at AdiSankaraNilayam.
Extracted from Unto Research, Chapter Temples—Mananam's Celebration Series

Every State in India will have a story to tell, a story about a temple revived, restored. At AdiSankaraNilayam, where CIF is housed, the legacy of Sri Sankara is reinforced by the very old temples sitting quietly on the premises. The Divinity enshrined in the temples forms the moorings for all the exalted activity and research that go on elsewhere on the premises.

In 1989 when this old property was bought from SankaranNambootiri, Gurudev restored the very old temples on its premises. In doing so, He verily restored tradition, He restored a fine art called worship, He restored to the people their faith.

Above all, Gurudev rebuilt temples in so many million hearts, hearts that had forgotten worship and prayer. That is the essence of this naam offered to Gurudev as Jeernamandiruddhharaka.

Melpäzhür Mana, where CIF is housed, is home to several temples — temples as old as, if not older than the Mana, which is over 1200 years old at least. They are traditional temples with a defined sanctum sanctorum, whose idols belong to an era gone by and over hundreds of years' abhiñekam and washing, have softened a lot of the detail.

Yet every morning when after a fresh splash of bathing water and a rub down, after the attending priest has adorned the deity with freshly ground chandanam and kumkum, the years of denudation is, as if it never took place. The moment the kadambam garland is placed around the deity's neck, it dazzles in the light of the single lamp and verily gazes at the devotee.

Melapäzhür Mana was once a larger complex, with the family owning several thousand acres, and it was home to as many as a hundred temples. By the time CIF bought the property, it had been whittled down to the eight acres that it is today. Today, AdiSankaraNilayam has seven temples on the premises.

So at AdiSankaraNilayam, it is as if different deities were drawn to the Mana to await the birth of ÇriÇaìkara! The attention that Gurudev gave to holding on to this tradition, these temples is unmatched.



The idols in these temples invite a closer look. The detailing is unique and their thousand-year-old story is compelling. Some of the detailing in the carving is intriguing. For example, in the Ayyappa temple, on one side is Goddess Bhuvaneçvaré and the other side is Mother Çakti— exquisitely carved in stone. And inside the temple, before the sanctum sanctorum, there is a stone carving that depicts a Brahmin couple. A lot of speculation has gone into deciphering who they could be. Gurudev retained this...

The restoration of the temples has meant the restoration of three important worship forms that are core to the premises: The first is Kalaçapüjä for Lord Ayyappa and Lord Kṛñṇa, (coinciding with Gurudev's birth star); the second is an annual püjä for Nägayakñé; the third —recently resumed after almost 40 years — the special Uttaram festival for Lord Ayyappa, a traditional celebration by the erstwhile owners of Melpäzhür Mana, a likely extension of the same devotion attached to the çabarimala hill.

Lord Ayyappa Temple

The idol of Lord Ayyappa in this temple is 'svayambhü' (emerging on its own out of the earth). This attaches greater auspiciousness and reverence to the temple.

Legend has it that one day the workers went to the backyard of the Mana to cut grass, when a worker's sickle struck a protruding stone and the stone began to bleed. Startled and frightened, they ran and reported this to the Mana elders, who conferred among themselves to trace the genesis of this event.

The story goes that an elderly nambütiri lady once lived at the Mana. She was an ardent devotee of Lord Ayyappa. Daily, she would walk two kilometers to an Ayyappan-kuòam temple at Vaòayäparambu – another village, to worship the Lord. When age made it extremely difficult to continue the practice, the separation from the Lord made her sad and inconsolable.

Astrological readings revealed that the same Lord, in deference to the elderly lady's prayers, manifested on his own (svayambhü) as a stone idol for her to worship in the Mana's backyard.

That svayambhü manifestation of Lord Ayyappa was idolized and later a temple was built around it. Today, it is known as the "Melpäzhür Ayyappan-kuòam temple." It remains the main temple of AdiSankaraNilayam as well, a temple and a tradition restored by Gurudev.

With that, were restored two related and core practices: a) The Uttaram Festival b) The Chittivillakku or the lighting of 1008 lamps.



Chuttuvillakku

A temple gains its energy from continued worship and in restoring temples Gurudev blessed the entire nation.

Uttaram is the janma-nakñatra (birth star) of Lord Ayyappa, and is celebrated at the famous çabarimala temple as well. In 2011, CIF decided to resume this festival as it was one of the oldest, most traditional, and dearest festivities that bound the villagers to the Mana and one which they had cherished deeply. Needless to say, the resumption of the Uttaram has been cause for great joy in the little hamlet town of Veliyanad.

The other is the cuööuvilakku tradition (chuttu = all round; villakku = lamps). This custom of lighting lamps all around the Ayyappa temple, is considered to bring peace and prosperity to the home and the world. This, in fact, is a very old Kerala custom, especially in the context of Ayyappa worship. Gurudev restored the temple and left the restoration of tradition to CIF to follow. And it did.

Sri Rama Temple



Among the many villages under the aegis of the Melpäzhür Mana was a village called Ponnmaanaadi (Pon+Män+Äòi meaning “Golden Deer Danced”), with a ÇréRäma temple. Ponmän refers to the golden deer that lured Sétä so that she wanted to possess it. That deer was in fact, Rävaëa’s uncle Märéca who had been commanded by Rävaëa to assume the alluring form of a golden deer to trick Sétä and thus distract Räma and Lakñmaëa. Local lore places the kidnapping of Sétä in this village Ponmanäòi!

The Räma Temple in Ponmanäòi had an idol of caturbhujaRäma, Räma with four arms. Over time, the temple grew decrepit and its upkeep became a challenge. Some sixty-to-seventy years ago, the Mana owners relocated the Räma idol from this temple to the Mana complex, and a temple was built as a tribute to ÇréRämaof Ponmanäòi. When Gurudev took over Melpazhur Mana, He ensured this temple was restored and the legendary worship of this idol.

Sri Krishna Temple



This is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva as the kirata – the hunter, a form He assumed to help Arjuna. The Mahäbhärata tells us the story of Arjuna, when during the Pandava exile in the forest, he combated with the hunter form of Lord Çiva for a wild boar.

In restoring this temple and the worship of Siva, Gurudev restored a valuable anchoring belief. KirätaÇiva is traditionally considered the käraëavar, — the eldest counsel to the Mana, in addition to being a tutelary deity. Since olden times, all-important decisions regarding the Mana and its residents were based solely on Lord Vettukorumagan's blessings. The idol of Lord Veööakkoruvan was re-consecrated in a newly built temple by çaìkaranNambütiri'sfamily prior to the acquisition of the property by CIF. The worship of Lord Kirata Siva as kaaranavar has thus been restored by Gurudev.

Sri Vettukorumagan Temple



This is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva as the kirata – the hunter, a form He assumed to help Arjuna. The Mahäbhärata tells us the story of Arjuna, when during the Pandava exile in the forest, he combated with the hunter form of Lord Çiva for a wild boar.

In restoring this temple and the worship of Siva, Gurudev restored a valuable anchoring belief. KirätaÇiva is traditionally considered the käraëavar, — the eldest counsel to the Mana, in addition to being a tutelary deity. Since olden times, all-important decisions regarding the Mana and its residents were based solely on Lord Vettukorumagan's blessings. The idol of Lord Veööakkoruvan was re-consecrated in a newly built temple by çaìkaranNambütiri'sfamily prior to the acquisition of the property by CIF. The worship of Lord Kirata Siva as kaaranavar has thus been restored by Gurudev.

DevéNägayakñé Temple



Snake worship is traditional to many parts of Kerala. It is traditionally believed that Sage Paraçuräma, who carved out this land of Kerala from seawaters, established snake worship for the general well-being of the place. All ancient Hindu houses in Kerala, therefore, had small altars for snake worship on their property.

The Mana, too, was host to several sarpa-kävus (small altars for serpents). Näga-püjäs were performed in these kävus, but with time, it became difficult to protect the kävus. Thus, a DevéNägayakñé temple was built in the Mana so that worship could continue. The idol of the goddess in this temple is considered unique for its exquisite carvings that have deep symbolic meanings. An elaborate püjä, called sarpa-püjä, is offered once a year to please NägayakñéDevé and Nägaräja Deva. Tradition is what holds a people bound to each other. Both the temple and the tradition are deeply revered at AdiSankaraNilayam and the people of the village.

DevéBhagavaté Temple



In the north-western corner of the Ayyappa temple, there was found a Bhagavaté-tara (tara is a small seat on the bare earth). This was examined and recommended to the Nambütri family that for the welfare of the Mana, a separate temple should be constructed where DevéBhagavaté could be distinctly worshiped. Thus, came up the DevéBhagavatétemple .

All the above temples stand as age old witnesses to the birth of various texts and bhäñyas written by ÇréÄdiÇaìkaräcarya and to date guard their protection and propagation at CIF.

To that One who relit the lamp in the temple of every heart, our prostrations.

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Restorer of Old Temples

'Jirnamandir' means dilapidated temples. 'uddharakaya' means the one who restores. Temples are like gyms where one goes for spiritual exercise! These are dedicated places where one can pray, meditate, do upasana, listen to discourses or perform rituals. Gurudev used to say a temple is like a school. It becomes a place of learning, a place for one's sadhana. Many old temples were renovated by Pujya Gurudev.

Chinmaya International Foundation or AdiSankaraNilayam at Veliyanad, is one such place. This is the birth place of AdiSankaracarya and was his maternal home. In the grounds of this property stands the 'illam' or the house where the renowned saint was born, a beautiful old building, now restored to its original glory. A lit lamp burns continuously in the room where he was born. This is a wonderful place and imminently conducive to meditation.

The Centre also houses an ancient Ayyappa temple built in the typical Kerala style, in accordance with Vastu principles forming the main deity. The temple complex is blessed with other small temples deities. These have been restored, in keeping with the old architectural style of that time. There is also a natural spring in the form of a pond where one can swim. From time to time spiritual camps are held here and seekers find new insights in this wonderful place for study and contemplation. Another very important feature of CIF is an old library housing many ancient and rare manuscripts. It is a place for research and is also known as the Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology.

When one pays attention to something it gains a special charm. For example if one looks at a particular flower, the flower becomes charming. Planets seen from afar have a different feel to them as opposed to items that we see at close quarters. Ancient temples with ancient deities and idols which have been visited by thousands of devotees acquire a special charm. A temple gains beauty when more people see it.

In Pandharpur we see the idol of Vithala with the feeling that ancient Realized Masters like SantJnanadev, Sant Namadev and Sant Tukaram have also gazed upon it. The very same temple then acquires a special charm. It is fascinating to think that we are face to face with same murti that saints in the past have looked upon. These temples which have been visited and seen by billions of people develop a certain strength, power and vibration. They have a certain powerful attraction. Great Mahatmas renovate and revive such temples and keep them alive for all time to come.

The human body is also like a temple.

Dehodevalayahproktahjivodevahsanatanahtyajet,

ajnananirmalyam, so'hambhavenapujayet.

The body is the temple and the Atman is the deity at whose feet we offer flowers. Before performing puja old flowers are removed (this is nirmalya) and new ones offered. If we worship without removing the decaying flowers, the ritual loses its significance. Similarly, temples also slowly disappear and vanish if neglected.

Our body is a temple, where the Lord or the Self resides in our heart as the deity. Presently it is neglected, a mere monument, as we have not worshipped it. Removing the nirmalyam of ignorance we should worship that deity as Soham. If worship is not taking place, it is not a temple in the true sense. It remains a mere tourist attraction, a monument devoid of special charm and beauty. But with worship and prayers the temple is restored and renovated to its original status.



Pujya Gurudev not only renovated old temples but also revived thousands of walking-talking temples, in the form of human beings! He gave the knowledge to remove ignorance and begin the worship of the Self in the heart. The body becomes a renovated temple, only with prayer, otherwise it is a museum piece with no value! Therefore, invoke the Lord in your heart with devotion. Perform worship by performing all the rituals culminating in the final surrender. When we thus worship, the body and mind become a temple.

It is interesting that some temples are structured like the body. As in the body, there are fivekoshas in the structure of the temple. Most Indian temples have a boundary, then an open court-yard. The outer-most kosha is the annamaya koña. Then one enters a circular hall where people are walking around. This is like the pranamaya kosha . The next chamber is likened to the manomaya kosha. Still further is the chamber of the vijnanamaya kosha . Finally one reaches the inner santum sanctorum. the Theanandamaya kosha is the heart or the bliss sheath, where the deity resides. The face of the idol can only be seen in the light of the diya lit with camphor.

Similarly, deep within our hearts is seated the deity of the Self. Our bodies are like neglected temples which have not been worshipped for long. We are the 'mobile living temples' that Gurudev energised and renovated!

OM JEERNAMANDIRUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

297. OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH

28-02-2016

OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH

Om Tapovana Sishyaaya Namaha.

Guru is the radio through which the Lord contacts the student. He is the instrument, (Sabdabrahman) receiving and transmitting electro-magnetic waves carrying sound messages. He is the activity or medium of broadcasting in sound - the subtlest Tanmatra - the vibrations which travel through the air and are sensed by the ear.

Guru is Brahman. Shabhda Brahman. Poojya Gurudev was tuned up to this frequency of His Jnaana Guru –Sri Swami Tapovanam – a mobile transmitter of Brahman who was Lord Himself. Shree Soumya Kasheesha Maheswaraaya Tasmai Namaha Swami Tapovanaaya. Poojya Gurudev in many of His talks has acknowledged that He is but repeating what he has heard from His Guru.

Gurudev continues: - A Guru, to a Seeker after Truth, is as absolutely unavoidable as a Shiva-Linga to a Shiva devotee. The Guru is the embodiment of his goal. Just as the bhakta sees no stone, but only his beloved Siva in the linga, a true disciple sees no faults in his guru. To the sishya, his guru is nothing but pure Consciousness, absolute Bliss, and eternal wisdom. Anyone who can elicit such a total feeling of faith and devotion continuously is our Guru.

To a Vedantin, a real Guru is the pure intellect within; the purified, deeply aspiring mind is the disciple. This is represented for us in the unforgettable scene in our Bhagavad-Gita, where, in a chariot between the two opposing forces, the Absolute teacher is preaching the Gita to the eternal disciple, Arjuna. When a pure mind stands aghast at the negativities arrayed against the comparatively smaller forces of positivity, in sheer despair it surrenders itself completely to the pure intellect, the Lord Krishna within. All such living Arjunas can even today hear the entire divine song in the inner Kurukshetra of their own bosom. Only, we must make an earnest attempt, and in faith wait for the critical hour when our minds glide into the voice-less state of true vairagya - the true Arjuna-stithi. (Arjuna situation/condition)

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa never went about seeking a guru; so too, all the masters of our own times. Sri Totapuri Maharaj had to reach Dakshineswara of his own accord to instruct the Mother's perfect son in the higher realms of meditation. Each one of you is equally sacred and precious to the Lord. When one comes to

deserve a master, he shall reach one to guide, to help and enlighten.

This I heard from Gurudev's Gurubhai, Swami Chidanandji Maharaj of Divine Life Society.

Brahmanandaashram. This was the abode of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj whenever He came down to Rishikesh. He always sat leaning against a wall, under the picture of Janardhana Giriji Maharaj, who gave Him sanyasa deeksha and the name Swami Tapovanam.

Swami Sivanandaji of Aananda Kutir and Tapovanji were great friends. P.B.K Menon (Swami Chinmayananda later) lived in Aananda Kutir as a sadhak those days in 1947-48. One day, Swami Sivananda called Menon and gave him a tiffin carrier with some idlis, chutney and sambar and told him in Tamil 'There is a Malayali swami seated at the Brahmanandasram, please go and give Him this Bhiksha."

Sivanandaji used to send south Indian breakfast every day for Tapovanji through Mr Menon. Thus Menon became the 'tiffin carrier' of Swami Tapovan Maharaj and was serving Tapovanji, much before He became Chinmayananda. Even though Menon met this Great Master again, during his trek through Uttarakhand at Utarakaasi, in 1948, he never knew that this rare ascetic Tapovanji will be his Jnaana Guru in the future,. He would know this only when His Deeksha Guru Swami Sivanandaji sent Him to Swami Tapovanji on the 25th Feb 1949, after giving him sanyas.

Tapovanji Maharaj, a mobile university, accepted Him. Gurudev used to tune up to Tapovanji's frequency and Tapovanji flooded through Him. Gurudev was a rare disciple (sishya) of Tapovan Maharaj, who subjected His entire instruments for Brahman (Tapovanji) to ride. Tapovan Shatakam and Wanderings in the Himalayas, catapulted Gurudev to Tapovanji.

Poojya Gurudev once said: - Who has said that the Lord is formless? They are blind—blind to His Presence. They are deaf—deaf to His Song which throbs everywhere. Those who read Wanderings in the Himalayas will develop in themselves the true vision to see the Unseen and to hear the Unheard. Wanderings in the Himalayas can open both your eyes and ears. Vedanta does its miracle in every student; makes the blind see and the deaf hear.'' Om Tapovana Shishaaya Namaha..

OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH

OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

It is the Grace of our Gurus we have been allowed to present our thoughts on this Holiest of Mantras.

The Guru is holy. The Sishya is holy. The relationship is holy. The results of this relationship are holy. Holy is the occasion to think. Holy is the occasion to commit. To be Swami Sri Tapovana Sishya is a fulfilment. There is nothing beyond it. The story is complete. Sri Tapovan Maharaj is an Avatara Purusha. Mere thought of Him purifies us completely. If we want Gurudev's blessings easiest is discover love for Swami Tapovan Maharaj. Naturally no ordinary person can ever hope to be His discipline. Nobody can stand His discipline. Gurudev served Him for 9 years. Sri Tapovan Maharaj taught Gurudev till His health permitted.
The knowledge gained reflects in Gurudev's reverence for His Guru our Grandsire. Gurudev refers to Sri Tapovanam ji in His Hymn to Badrinath as Sri Swamiji Maharaj, Sri Swami Tapovanam, Gurudev Sri Swami Tapovanam, great teacher Tapovanam, great Vedantin Sri Tapovanam and so on.

Sri Tapovan Maharaj was known to not repeat anything twice. If the student was not attentive, he would not teach him further.
In His introduction to Hymn to Badrinath, Gurudev says,
“Throughout Swamiji had been teaching the students who voluntarily reached Him with a request to teach them the Prasthana Traya. However it must be said that being a very strict disciplinarian, very rarely His students could remain for long with Him to complete their studies. I myself belong to the last batch that Swamiji taught, and even during my ten years of study and practice I can count some thirty-five people, who came with divine enthusiasm but, alas none could keep it up more than a couple of years.”

He

Did It - Celebration Series, Mananam Publication, pg 62

In fact Swamiji did not waste any precious minutes. Swami Govindagiri recalls, "Chinmaya practiced an intense sadhana (spiritual discipline)all during His period of study with Swami Tapovanam. I often saw him sitting all night in meditation in a quiet corner of the forest or sometimes on a boulder beside the Ganga".
Every so often, Swamiji would cook the meal received in bhiksha for every one (since the bhiksha received was uncooked wheat flour and dal)
Swami Tapovanam would give a quizzical look at the questionable nature of the misshaped, thick rotis brought to Him. One time, He was particularly amused. "See, one never gets to give up tapas (austerities) in these Himalayas. Not with Chinmaya's rotis!" Nevertheless, He would always eat them with good humour.

Here some extraordinary statement from Gurudev who reveals not only His relationship with His Gurus also we get probably first time Gurudev's achievement of Self realization:

“Chinmaya's work is dedicated to the Srutis (Vedic Wisdom)
That told me what Reality is;
To Swami Tapovanamji Maharaj of Uttarkashi

Who guided me to the end and pushed me into the Beyond;
And to Sat Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj of Rishikesh
Who showed me in this life how to live and act

In God as God!”

When I had once written a letter on Gurupurnima day and offered my pranams and sought blessings, Gurudev wrote back, “May my gurus blessings be on both of us.” A great day for men!

OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH!

OM TAPOVANASHISHYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Disciple of Swami Tapovan Maharaj

Many teachers in diverse forms come into our life and we learn different things from them. But in essence, the teacher is only the one Supreme Reality, manifesting in our lives in the form of beings, incidents and experiences. Pujya Gurudev learned from the many Masters that he came across. In the course of his spiritual quest, he was deeply affected by his meeting with Ramana Maharshi and later by Swami Sivananda with whom he spent many months at Rishikesh. It was through him that he finally met his Master and came to be known as the shishya of Tapovanji Maharaj.

Swami Sivananda sent him to Tapovanji Maharaj at Uttarkashi, with a letter of introduction. Unfortunately, Gurudev misplaced the letter and being very strict, he refused to teach him without any introduction. Somehow Gurudev managed to convince him of his sincerity, but even so had to go back to Rishikesh to get a letter!

Tapovanji Maharaj agreed to teach him but laid down some stringent conditions. He said he would teach only once, as he liked intelligent disciples and disliked repeating things! He also said that he expected Gurudev to remember whatever was taught

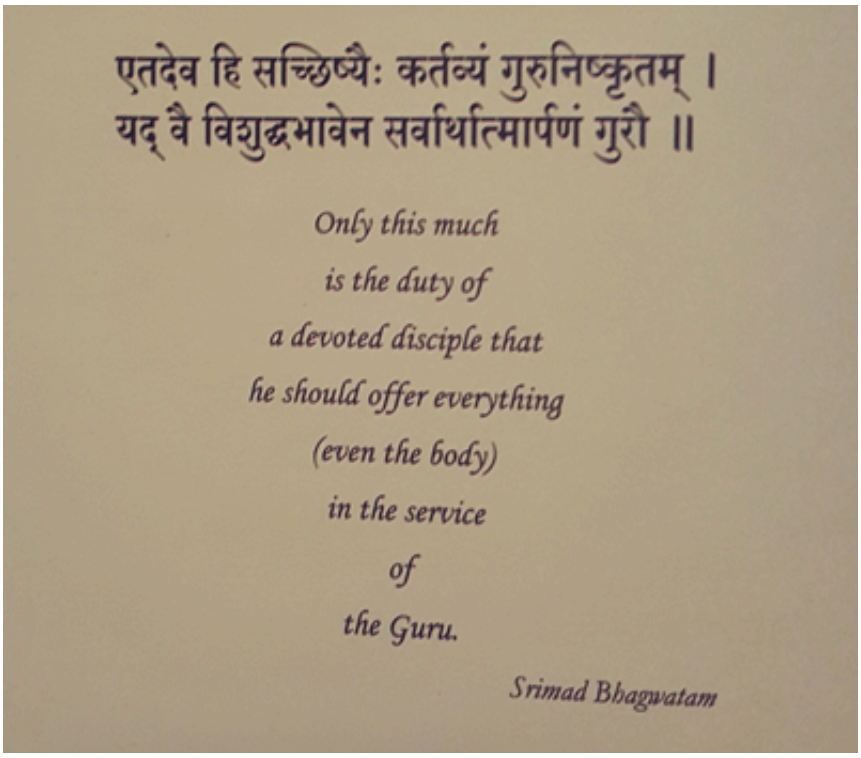
and answer questions that were asked of him. If, he failed to remember or reply then he would have to leave. Luckily, Gurudev was a good student. He stayed awake many nights, learning, studying and contemplating the shlokas he had been taught. His sincerity and hard work has benefitted us all.

Tapovanji Mahäräj was himself a great tapasvi, yogi and jïäni. He originally came from the south of India but after reaching the Himalayas, he never returned. He remained at Uttarkashi, only going up to Gangotri in summer. He never came down to the plains. He spent his time roaming the Himalayas, making frequent trips to Mt Kailash and Manasarovar. He knew the entire topography of the Himalayas and was considered a lion in the area. He loved and was fascinated by the mountains and the Ganges and had no desire to go anywhere else.

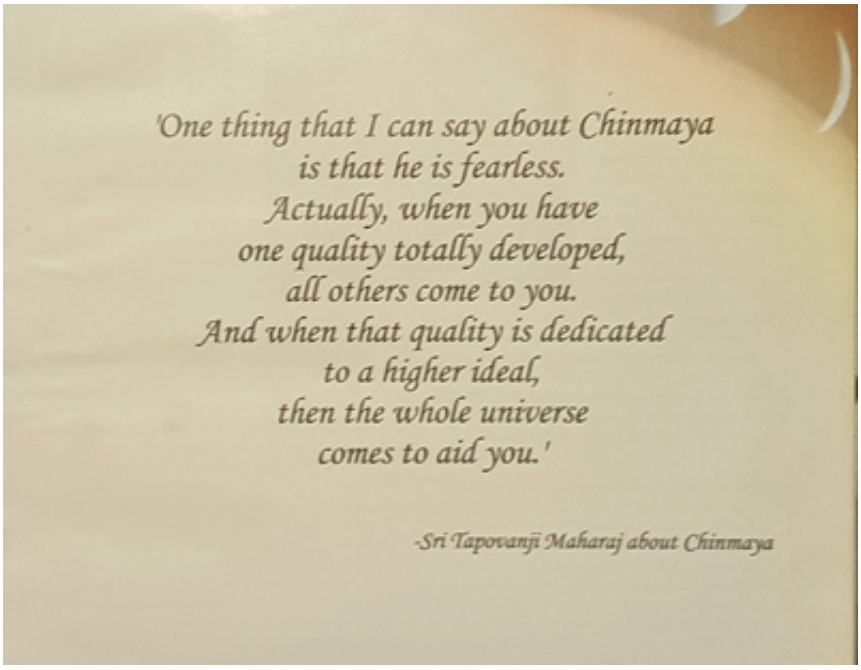
He regularly meditated in the Saumya Kashi temple at Uttarkashi and was well known among all the Mahätmäs of the area. Today, Tapovan Kutir, the place where he lived, is a place of worship, where people come to offer their respects. Swami Tapovan Maharaj was a great jnani.He is the source from which the Knowledge came to Gurudev. So, whatever we have learned has come from Tapovanji. The Guru-shishya parampara continues in this way.

Tapovan, his name signifies ‘forest of austerity’. Every day, during the summer and winter, he bathed in the Ganga. The extreme cold or heat didn’t bother him in the least. He lived an austere life in a simple one roomed mud hut. Once some devotees placed a soft pillow behind his back as the mud wall was not very smooth but he removed it saying that he would not like to get attached to such comforts. He was the very embodiment of tapas.

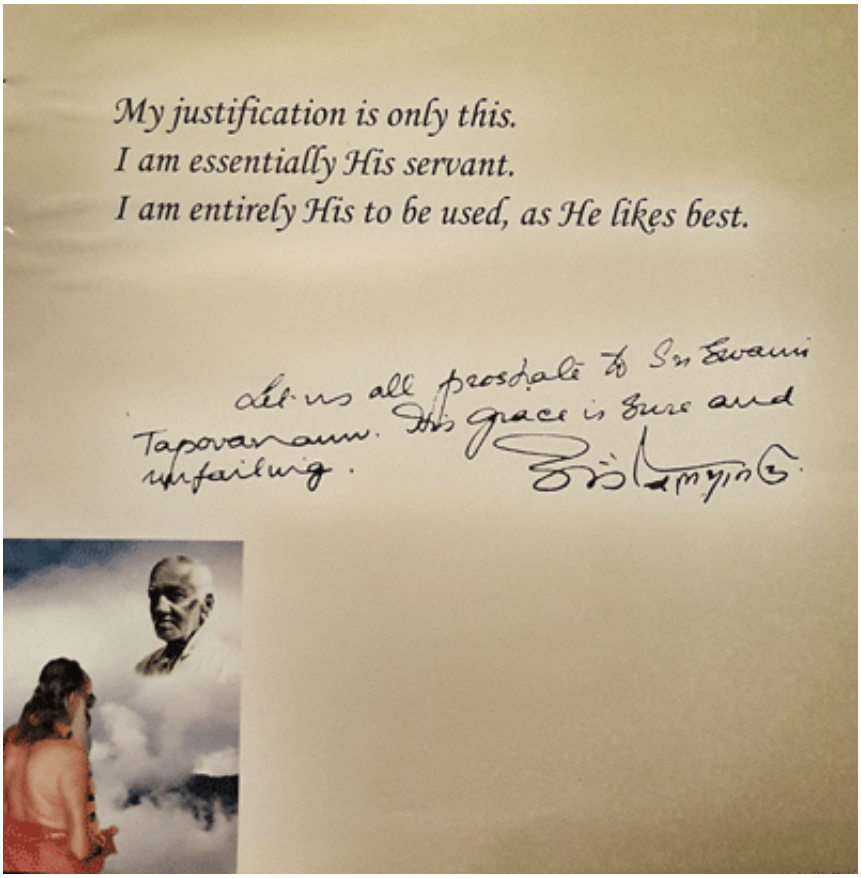
He has many literary compositions in Sanskrit, to his credit, of which ‘Wandering in the Himalayas’ is very well known. Herein he extols not only the beauty of Nature but also reflects on Advaita philosophy and the highest state of Realization.



Duty of a disciple



The Guru's words ....



The disciple's words ....

298. OM TAPASVINE NAMAH

29-02-2016

OM TAPASVINE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

* Salutations to one who was an ascetic, a tapaswin. Who has been doing lot of tapas. Tapa x Pata; pata means ‘to fall’; tapa is to rise. You go up, you evolve.

* When one is regular and consistent in tapas, one evolves. One of Gurudev’s quotes was on effort; he would say, “Victory would have been to the vanquished, if only they had battled a little longer! We often fail for lack of perseverance in our efforts. We leave our work half done in our impatience. Every job demands its quota of efforts. Never give up too soon."

* So what we need is tapas -- consistent perseverance in our efforts. As seekers, we must have this quality of perseverance. This is the very important quality. Often we allow our mind to wander, and it gets involved in things which are not important at all.

*Sunderanand ji once narrated an incident involving Swami Tapovanam. A very nice incident. Those days they would bring food from kali kamliwala – this great sevak of sadhus from Uttarakashi. So we are talking of the Himalayas, the deeps, food is taken from Kamliwala sadhu and taken up to where Swami Tapovanam lived. By the time they would reach up, the roti (Indian bread) and other food would become very cold. So when they all would sit to eat, they would heat it up and on some days they also needed to top up what they got as bhiksha with something they would cook themselves – maybe some dal or vegetables. Understand Kamliwale sadhu only pooled what people gave him and sometimes what he received could be just rice, or just bread.

Sunderanand ji says, how he once went and asked TapovanMaharaj for four aanas, or 25 paisa. Four aanas is now 25 paisa. A quarter of a rupee. So he asked Swamiji for 25 paisa. Why? Salt. There was not enough salt. ‘I will go buy salt for everybody …’. TapovanMaharaj looks at him and says for this you have become a sadhu? For salt? Do you get the message? Constant alertness, that is the message. Constant alertness, that is tapas. Alert to what? To what my goal is. To where I need to get and how fast. Alert to what I need to focus on. My sadhana. Constant alertness.

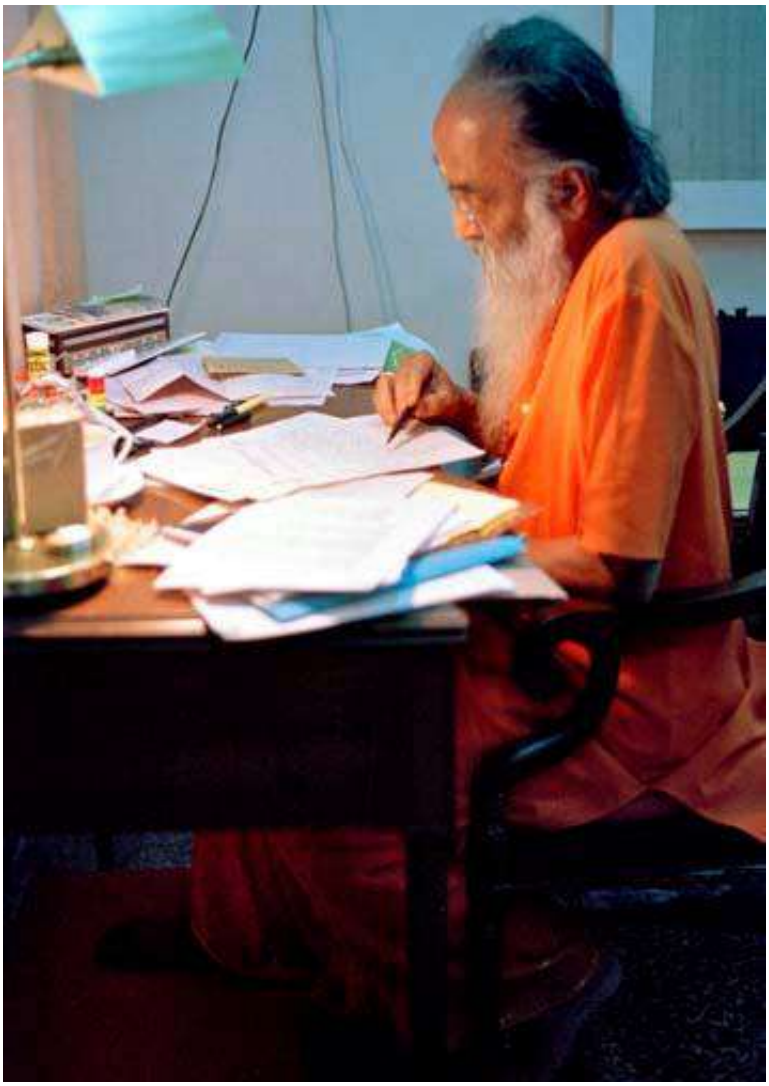
*Why you should be a victim of your tongue? Anything that we eat, is appreciated only in the first two inches of the tongue (where the taste buds are). Can seekers be bothered by that? What a fuss we make over these two inches and yet this part of the tongue can irritate us to a point that brahmavidya can be forgotten!

So Swami Tapovanam looked at him and asked, ‘For that you have become a sadhu?” But he gave him the four annas and Sundarananda ji went and bought the salt, cooked the food and served Swamiji, who appreciated the food too.

* But Swamiji went on to share something with Sunderanand ji. He narrated how sometimes he used to ‘wash’ his food in the Ganga. He would wrap the food in a cloth, tie it tight, then dip it in the Ganges. All the salt, pepper, spices, chilly etc would wash off. Then he would eat the wrapped food!

* This Govindgiri ji another disciple of Swami TapowanMaharaj was Gurudev’s

gurubhai, student of the same Guru as Gurudev's, who studied alongwith Gurudev at the same time. He used to say about Gurudev: 'We would see him sitting long hours on the banks of the river or in the forest, only trying to silence the mind.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

* Another thing about tapasya is that even after success comes to you, you do not give up. You hold fast to the tapasya as your anchor. Until he became popular and after he became popular, during both periods, Gurudev's tapas continued. Before it was all meditation, meditation and meditation. Live with minimum, and go as deep as possible in his pursuit and quest. When he became a pracharak, a travelling teacher, his tapas was work itself.

OM TAPASVINE NAMAH!

OM TAPASVINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Gurudev's life was molded in the environment the forest or garden of tapas,(Swami) Tapovanam.
Gurudev always stood by His values. To Him His physical needs were never in the agenda. Whatever was provided He lived with that. He suffered a lot in freedom struggle. Thereafter, coming from affluent family the conditions under which He lived and served His Master were exemplary even for most of the Himalayan sages.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Gurudev lived in a hut 4 feet high, not enough for one to even stretch comfortably. No electricity. Lived with food got from Dharmasalas. In that chill weather, Gurudev would make and give tea to Sri TapovanMaharaj at 4 am.

The austere life He lived is comparable to ancient puratana times. Gurudev used to wash clothes for Sri TapovanMaharaj and even had to face a challenging situation where Sri Tapovanamji with a purpose to convey a message called Him a 'liar'. Gurudev on instructions from Sri TapovanMaharaj lived for sometimeas a parivrajaka(a wandering monk living on food got through begging). He used to work 18 hours a day.

In Vishnusahasranama Gurudev comments inNaam122 (Mahaatapah) on the meaning of tapas. He says, “The term tapas in Sanskrit has three meanings. 'Knowledge '(Jnana), Prosperity (Aiswarya),and also 'Might' (Prataapa).”

We see that Gurudev had all these three in ample measure.

He Did Itpg 74
Swamiji wrote of this journey:
Thus, it was in May 1951,I walked down from the heights of Gangotri to Rishikesh, and from there moved to Delhi with a plan to set out on an all-India pilgrimage,visiting all the important spiritual centres,to see how others were serving the Hindu brethren. I traveled on foot some six months; living on bhiksa (begged food),sleeping in ashrams,temples, and under way-side trees. Swamiji [referring to Swami Tapovanam] was correct-- it was quite an experience in rubbing off the ego. Education,social status,family connections,prejudices,sham values-- these were no longer mine. When people do not know who you are, they consider you an inconvenient begger, a worthless monk,an unproductive member of the community. And they insult you with looks of abhorrence as if you were something the cat dragged in. If you ask me,this kind of discipline is the best cure for the ego-disease.”

He Did It – pg 90
Both Swami Sivananda and Swami Tapovanam were extremely pleased with Swamiji's progress. A letter dated January 20,1952, addressed to "Swami Chinmayanandaji," was quick in coming from Swami Sivananda. It read:
You have asked the aspirants to observe brahmacharya (celibacy), and a sattvika diet (pure simple and light food), and not to go to cinemas during the period of the grand yagna worship. It is very good;this is tapas(austerity).
May the Lord bless you and your work!

A letter also arrived from Swami Tapovanam dated January 22,1952.
“Therefore,diligently and constantly practice with long and intense pursuit, the Paths of Devotion,Selfless Action,and Yoga. One who has thus purified and disciplined his inner personality comes to experience intimately the Absolute Truth beyond all qualities,conditionings, and limitations,and attains Godhood.

May you all reach that Eternal State of Perfection and Divinity in this very birth. May the blessings of the Upanishad Rishis be ever upon you all."

To that most dedicated of disciples who underwent great austerities, our prostrations!

OM TAPASVINE NAMAH

OM TAPASVINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi and NCR

Om TapasvineNamah

Salutations to the Ascetic

Tapasvi is the one who performs different types of austerities or an austere person. According to the scriptures, to attain the Supreme, we have to perform tapas. Folklore is full of stories of great rishis performing austerities in the forest. Even devatas have been known to maintain a strict discipline over many years.

One meaning of tapas is that which helps us to rise. It is the opposite of pata, which means to fall. The definition of tapas is - ekagramtapocayate – to focus our attention towards the goal is called tapas. We all have this tremendous power and energy within, which we can utilise to attain any goal, whether spiritual or material. This energy is not properly chanellised and is thus wasted. To harness all this potential and direct it towards our goal is called tapas. Included in this is focusing of energy, single pointed vision and consistency of purpose, without which we are unable to achieve anything in this world.

This can be better understood by the example of the sun's rays being focused through a magnifying glass. The light thus focused becomes very powerful and can even burn objects like paper or cotton. In fact this energy can even start a fire. We see the sun's rays everywhere but they do not burn anything. They gain this power only when they are concentrated and focused on one point.

Our thoughts are very much like the rays of the sun. They run in every direction and get dissipated. So though we have this tremendous power and energy within us, it is ineffective because it is not focused. If we were to focus our attention on a particular point, we would also be able to harness all that energy and use it in the best possible manner. The physical body, the mind with emotions, thoughts and ideas

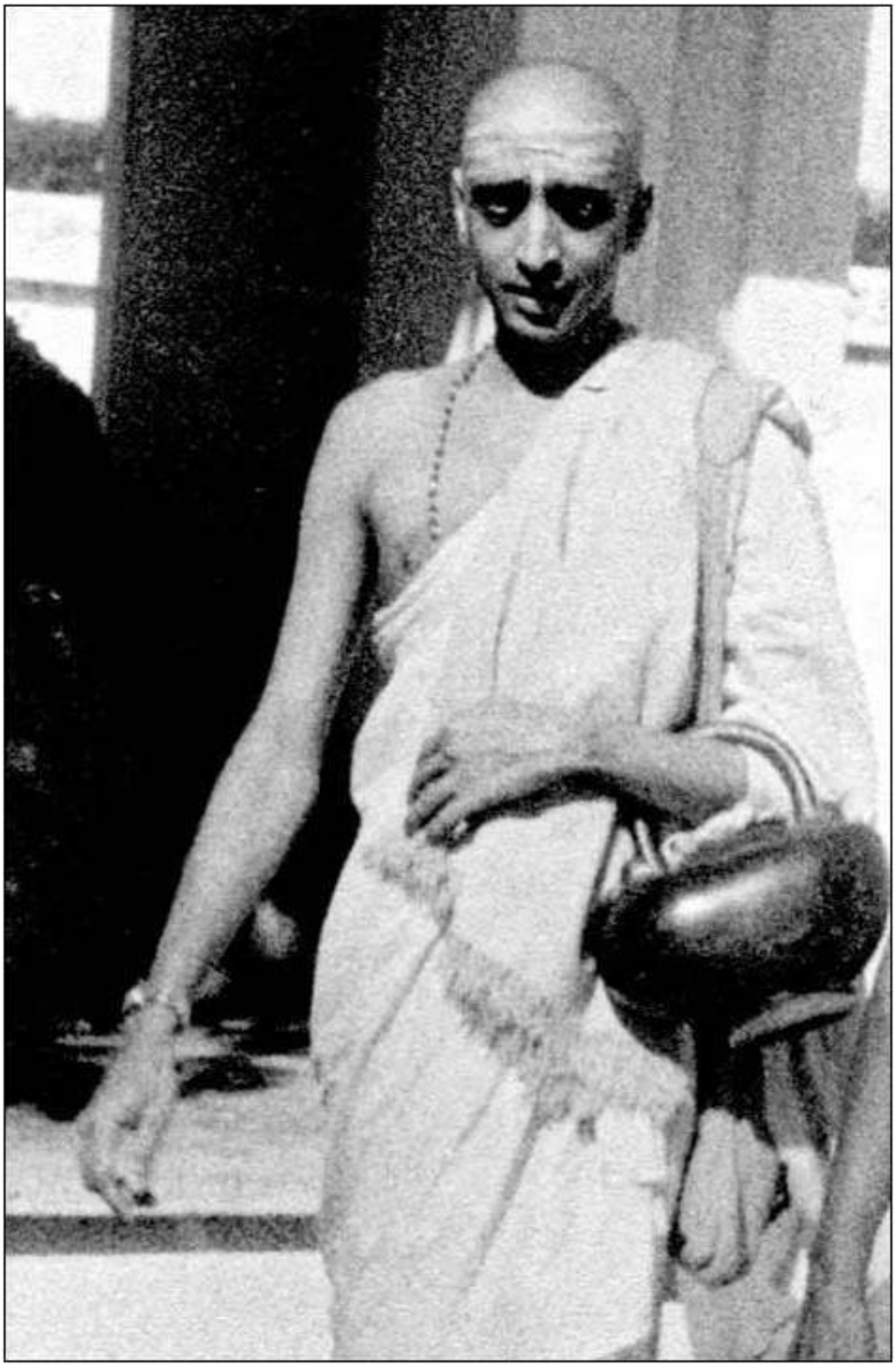
all have to be focused towards the same goal. With this concentration when we work towards a goal we are bound to be successful. This in short is tapas.

The Ramayana tells us of the story of how Paravati got her wish of marrying Lord Shiva through concentrated tapas. Lord Narada told her that she would have to perform austerities to gain the Lord in marriage. Parvati took his word for it and went into the forest. She stayed there for years together meditating on Lord Shiva. A stage came when she lived on only leaves. Later she survived only on air and water. Her concentration on Lord Shiva was total. The Lord was pleased with her devotion and married her.

Great Mahatmas like Gurudev have this tremendous power of concentration. By paying attention for a short while, he would come up with the most wonderful things. People would be grappling with problems for months together. Finally they would bring the matter to his attention. He would focus his attention on the matter for a few minutes and then arrive at the right decision!

Swami Vivekananda also had this tremendous power. On a visit abroad, he visited a library and borrowed one volume of the Encyclopaedia Brittannica. The next day he returned it and took another volume. This pattern continued for a few days. Observing this the librarian was amused and asked Swamiji whether he was going through the pictures in the book. Swamiji replied that he was reading every book. He asked the librarian to question him on any topic from the volume he was returning. At random, the librarian opened a page and asked him a question. Swamiji not only gave him the correct answer but he also told him the page number on which the topic was!

In school we were taught to read with our tongue. Later, we started reading in the mind but that is also speech. This is the power of speech and faster than this is the power of the mind. We look at people with our eyes but read them with our mind, physically and emotionally. With just a glance we ‘know’ the person. Small children read each letter, then we read whole words and finally even take in the meaning of a whole sentence at a glance. It is possible to train the mind to do this. Swami Vivekananda’s mind must have had the ability to grasp the whole thing at a glance.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

It is possible to direct the power of the mind in any direction. Through this we can

gain some siddhis or extraordinary powers, but this is not the purpose for performing austerities. The main purpose is to be able to drop our ego, the sense of 'I'. In UpadeshaSaramRamanaMaharshi says,

ahamapetakamnijavicharanam

mahadidamtaporamanavagiyam.

In tapas we undergo hardships. We give up many things and focus our attention. In the end we drop our ahamkara also. This is the final goal of all our austerities.

Gurudev was a great tapasvi. Every morning, he would be up at 3.00 a.m. and at his desk replying to the hundreds of letters that he received. After which, he would take the meditation class, followed by the morning class, breakfast and meetings. After a short rest, he would again be available for meeting people. In the evening, after the class and dinner, he would retire to bed around 11.00 p.m. He maintained this gruelling schedule for years together. It is on the strength of this that the whole structure of the Chinmaya Mission was built and stands even today. If all the letters he wrote were collected together, it would amount to several truck loads! Such was the dedication with which he worked.

299. OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

01-03-2016

OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda ji,with his permission

*Salutations to the destroyer of sorrows of devotees.

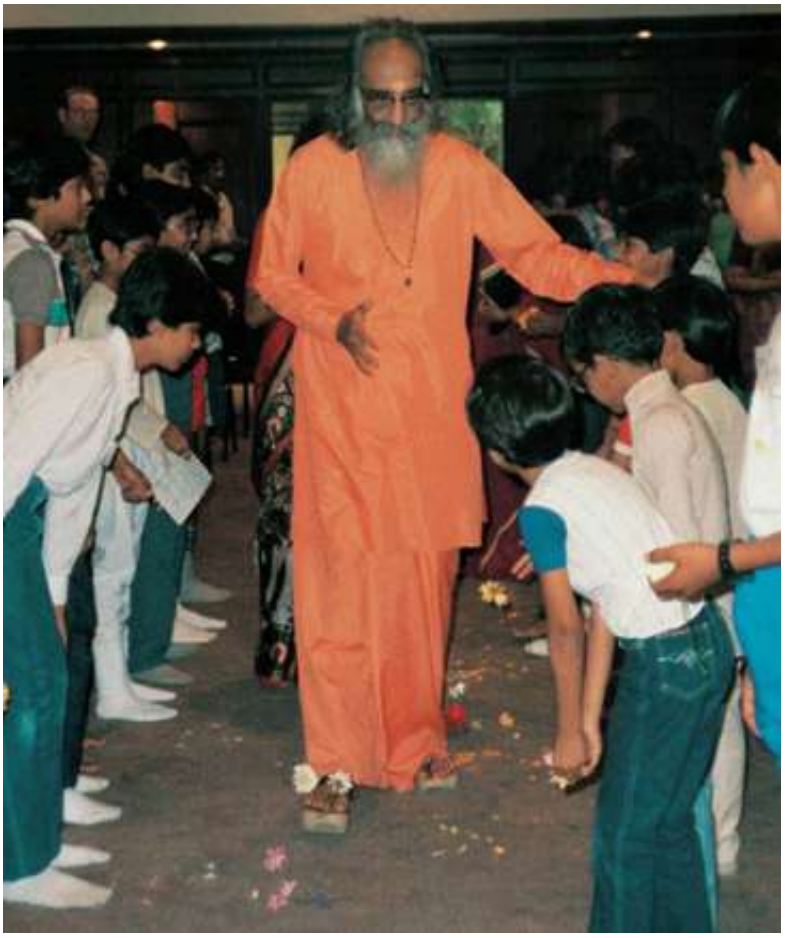
*Taapatraya – the known sources of trouble - which are natural to samsara, can be easily destroyed if we are connected with the masters. What does this mean?

*Gurudev gives the example of taking a dip in the Ganga. There are areas marked out as bathing ghats where people are directed to for a dip. Other points in the Ganga are not recommended or safe. At these bathing ghats, there are chains embedded to the walls; you hold the chain when you take a dip in the waters and that way the currents cannot take you away. You lose your grip, and you find yourself in the Bay of Bengal. That is what Gurudev used to say. That is how severe the currents are.

But if one holds on to the chains, the currents are in fact enjoyable! So here is Gurudev's counsel: if we are connected with Him, we can actually play in samsara. The currents of samsara will not wash us away. The sorrows which can come from the unknown, known and within would disappear. But we need to remain connected with Him. Sometimes just a glance can remove all sorrows. These are corroborated by the experiences of his devotees!

*'Just one look', says Vivekachudamani, 'from the corner of your eye you just look at me once.' Or just one thought, or just one touch. These are some of the ways in which a master initiates his disciple.

*Sri AdiSankara prays to the goddess at Meenakshi temple, Madurai. He says 'look at me just once, I know all the things will be cleared for me. One look one glance. In Kanchi the goddess is Kamakshi. To Her he said, O mother just touch me once. In Kashi it is Visalaakshi; he says think of me once; you think, not I think of you. You think of me, just once. That is how with one glance of the master, the sorrows which we have can go. Just that one glance. There are people, whatever was theirburden, it disappeared with one glance of the Master. Sometimes he doesn't speak he just puts his hand around, knocks your head. That's all.



A touch a knock on the head a glance...Thats all it takes to destroy your sorrows...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

A touch, a knock on the head, a glance.... That's all it takes to destroy your sorrows...©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*As long as we are connected to the source, to the Guru, the sorrows go. Om taapnaashanaayanamaha. Any kind of sorrow, a seeker will overcome by just thinking of the guru. Rememberthis; it's power is not estimable or knowable. You face obstacles, you face difficulties ,you face problems, you find something difficult to overcome in your sadhana – whatever form it takes, once you are conscious of it, invoke the teacher and see that obstacle vanish, move away.

Many hindrances are self created and we may not know how to get rid of them. But once you become aware that they must be removed, ask for that sincerely. You will find that weakness in you disappearing. The sources of sorrow – be they from withon or without or from the unknown – all of them wither, perish. This is my experience, that difficulties simply go, only thing is we need to be connected. If we are connected, there is no sorrow at all. Om Tapnashnayannamaha. The sorrows will not

come. And if they do come, then you will have the strength to deal with it, overcome it. Sometimes in few seconds, the sorrows are eradicated.

*If people ask me you how did you get to be with Gurudev, and my reply will be because of bikes. One crazy vasana called riding. He took charge of that, employed it and could sublimate it. And he could keep me with him because of that. All of us. You get to stay with him 18 hours a day when he is in town. Morning class - pilot and come back. If he is going on a school visit? Pilot and come back. Breakfast and bhiksha pilot and come back. Lunch - pilot and come back. We escorted him or piloted his vahana....and the next morning we were back in our garb, even before Gurudev openedhis door!

And this also, is a different kind of love. And he was aware that his presence can transform people.He allowed us our indulgences because he knew these boys are interested, they will change. He was conscious that in his presence transformation can go on! So he called us 'escorts.'

*Soon it was the last day of his talk. Next morning would be our last pilot ride with him to the airport. And the sudden end when he would walk out of the car and tell us, 'Take off the Om flags now...' and he would be gone for that year. We could expect him now after a full year. The very idea was heartbreaking and painful.

*And gradually it was getting unbearable. How to stop the mind from chattering so much! I was the last one by the door.

*Gurudev looked at me. He could verily scan my mind! And then he spoke to me, "Tomorrow onwards, you escort your mind towards Him. If obstacles come, say move, they will obey..."

It was tremendous. Huge. That moment should never have ended it felt. That whole week he called us escorts, escorts, escorts. And on the last day of the yagna, he was saying so simply, now you escort your mind towards Him.

Wherever you go whatever tapas you do, study in Sandeepany, etc... in the net analysis, we will realize this is all we have to do. All that we need to do in this life is escort the mind towards the Lord. It needs to be escorted. Obstacles will come, but their nature will depend on how well we escort the mind.

The next morning was our last pilot job for the time being. I gave Gurudev a copy of the Bhagvad Gita for an autograph, that small pocket edition. He wrote, "Escort...."! It's a beautiful autograph.

This is my experience of the tapas of Gurudev, of he as taapanaashanaayah. Salutations to him who destroys sorrow. You remember him, obstacles will go, invoke him obstacles will go. Obstacles from the unknown, from the known, from within – all these will go. You need to only know how to invoke him, how to connect with Him. You only have to have love and you have to be sincere. That's how the invocation is done. What else is an invocation? Invocation is not a ritual. That's only a means. It's not how well you perform ritual, but how much you love, how much sincerity lies in your invocation.

*Gurudev could demolish our sorrows with one look, with one word, with one touch! Instances like these are not even the tip of an iceberg. How many thousands have experienced release from sorrow and difficulty! How many thousands.....! Om Taapanaashanaayanamaha.

OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

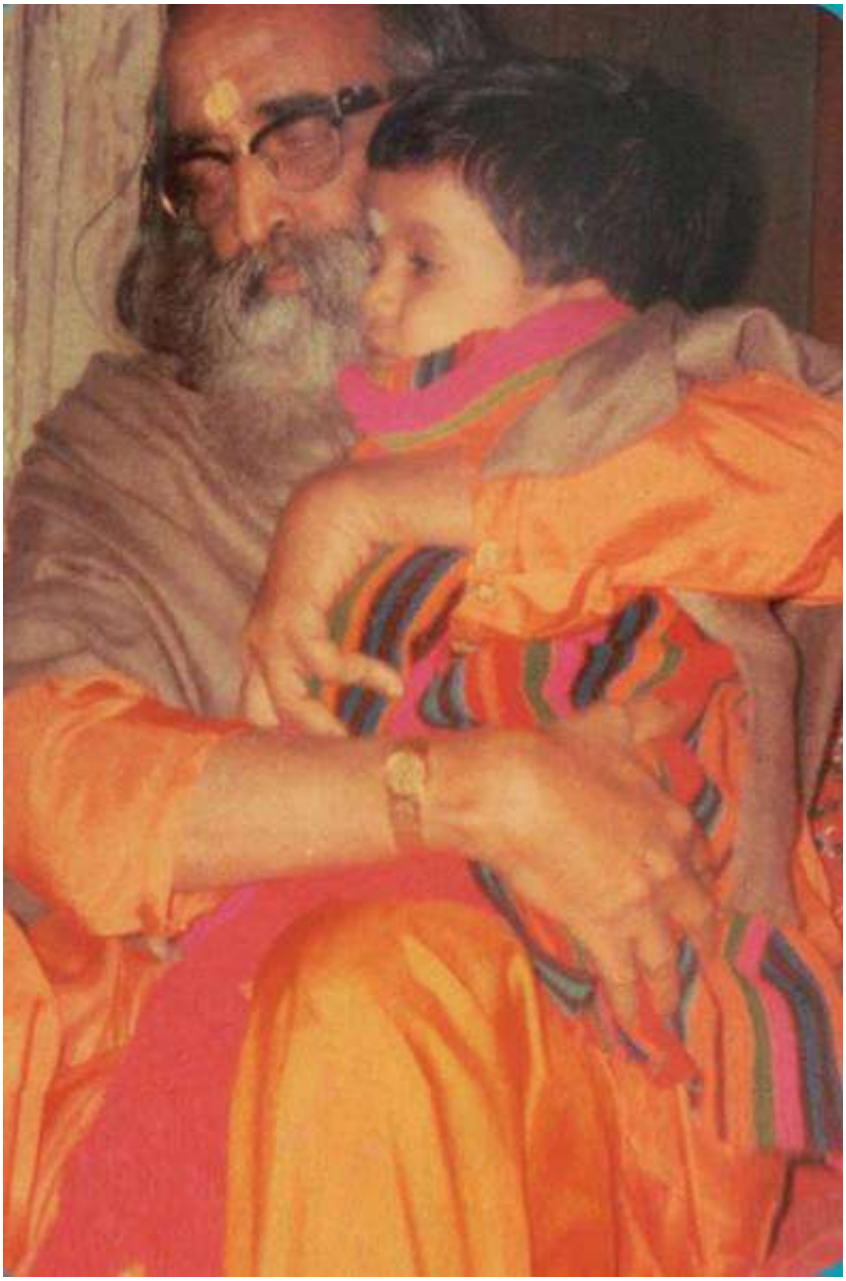
Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

This Naama like all up to now, is all guided by Gurudev. But in this I had been exposed to several dimensions and thoughts. I am not sure I will put them in the right order. So if you the reader, feel they have to be re arranged then do so. This whole job is beyond my capacity and also age. But it is His love. My deficiencies never curtailed His love. His plan for me exceeds my estimations. With prostrations, not afraid of failing, I place myself in His hands for ever.

Taapa comes from Taap heat, boil etc. In usage it means anguish, afflictions, sorrow etc. We have broadly three types of taapa called taapatraya: physical, emotional and intellectual. All our life we are trying to get rid of these and gain happiness. Duhkhanaasha and sukhapraapti.
That this is the fundamental pursuit of all specially a spiritual seeker is well brought out in verse 35-36 of Vivekachudamani. There is a story regarding these verses. Gurudev was conducting a lecture onVivekachudamani in 1963 at Chennai when the mission pledge was also dictated extempore. I happened to be there.
When Gurudev chanted these verses everyone I knew there, who even though they did not know Sanskrit, including somebody who is not so emotionally connected, also shed tears. That was the power of these verses. Verse 35 starts:
Svāmin namaste natalokabandho kāruṇyasindho patitaṁ bhavābdhau |
Mām uddhara ātmīya kaṭākṣa dṛṣṭyā ṛjvyā atikāruṇya sudhābhivṛṣṭyā || 35||
35. O Swamy, O friend of those that bow to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I bow to thee; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of birth and death, with direct glance of thine eye, raining nectarine compassion.
durvāra saṁsāra davāgnitaptam dodhūyamānam duradṛṣṭavātaiḥ |
bhītam prapannam paripāhi mṛtyoḥ śaraṇyam anyat yad ahamnajāne || 36||

For us verse 36 is more important.Gurudev gives the translation "I am being roasted in the blazing infernal fire of change; I am being tossed by thecruel storms of

misfortune; I am terrified (without and within)....O Lord! Save me from death; I seek refuge in thee,for I do not know of any other harbour wherein to seek shelter.



“I seek refuge in thee.....for I do not know of any other harbor...”

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Every person comes across these challenges. We try to solve them. The very solution

brings another challenge. They are endless. In this, peace is just an interlude between two challenges. One in a rare one having analysed the problem seeks permanent solution and in his search he meets a spiritual master. The answer to this pursuit is Vedanta sastra,the rest of vivekachudamani. The guru does not give solutions from the tangible world. Having assured him "you are not lost in a dream you are dreaming you are lost" --Gurudev makes him understand that the problems belong to BMI and he (the jeeva-seeker) is different from them. He is the Eternal Blissful Consciousness. Thus though the search begins with the afflictions of the world, solutions were found in transworld. The problem was not solved but dissolved. This is what Gurudev was doing. "Refuse to worry" "Keep smiling "

The spirit of the Guru's love is brought out in verse 37 wherein it says the guru is:
śāntāmahāntonivasantisanto vasantavallokahitaṁ carantaḥ |
tīrṇāḥ svayaṁbhīmabhavārṇavaṁjanānahetunānyānapitārayantaḥ || 37||

Gurudev says -
On understanding the essence of Truth in ourselves, we gain a freedom from the sense of finitude which was ours so long as we identified ourselves with the body,mind,and intellect.
Verse 45
On the rediscovery that our spiritual nature is pure knowledge
Uncontaminated by any trace of ignorance,we come to enjoy our divine heritage of perfection and Bliss -- ever beyond even the penumbra of any misery thereafter.
The above is solution for all miseries (taapas)

Our Gurudev rose above His physical afflictions and ever spread cheer everywhere.

NaradaBhakthiSutra 61
"Never entertain anxiety ".
"Don't worry,"
“never mind whatever happens”
.--- this is the attitude for a true seeker to follow. There is Narayana; He is the Reality. All these are from my All-loving Narayana alone--somehow hold on!

Every Breath a Teachingpg 304and305
The last good-byes – three-day sorrow cure.
Anjali Singh

After Gurudev's mahasamadhi, Anjali Singh was going by train to Sidhabari,feeling very sad. She remembered a similar triptogether with Gurudev,some years before. She was feeling very sorrowful,as she had been feeling for many years,as long as she could remember.
In Sidhabari,Swamiji offered her strawberries with cream,which he knew she loved very much. This continued for three days. At the lectures she felt her sorrow starting to fade away,feeling Swamiji's love and compassion and the fulfilment of knowledge in her intellect. At the third day's lecture Swamiji said:
"Why are you expecting happiness from the world? The poor world has no happiness to give you. It is like looking for water in the desert. The Desert has only a mirage to offer."

Although Anjali had heard such statements before,this time the truth of it penetrated to the core of her being. She felt her sorrow lessen to a good one half of what it had been before.
This is a typical case of Gurudev removing distress of the devotees.

To that remover of sorrow and distress, my prostrations!

OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Destroyer of Afflictions

Tapa means afflictions. Tapanshanaya is one who destroys the afflictions of others. Afflictions fall under three main heads – ādhyātmic, ādhibhautic and ādhidaivic – tāpa at the individual level, with respect to the immediate surroundings and at the cosmic level.

At the individual level, the afflictions are known as trivdhatāpa. At the level of the body is disease. At the level of the mind is mental diseases and at the level of the intellect, sorrows regarding the family or finances. With respect to society or the surroundings the afflictions are known as adhibhautic. Ādhidaivic are the troubles that come from the macro level – from the nation or from Nature. Natural calamities like floods, famine or cyclones come under this heading.

All these troubles create afflictions in the minds of people. The Teacher is one who removes these disturbances. Devotees would come and pour out their troubles into the sympathetic ear of Gurudev. One minute he would be consoling someone and in the very next minute, he would be congratulating another. People brought him their joys and sorrows. Specially in times of sorrow, we need the support of the Teacher. People would come with news about illness. Someone would be under tension because of having lost a job. Yet another would want to know whether to takesannyäsa or not. He relieved them of all their problems.

Once a student preparing for his exams came to Gurudev. He was having pre-examination nerves. Gurudev told him to take out a handkerchief and put all his worries and anxieties into that. He then told him to knot it up and give it to him for a month. The boy went away cool and calm because he had given away his worries to Gurudev. He used different ways to remove people’s anxieties and give them the strength to go forward.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

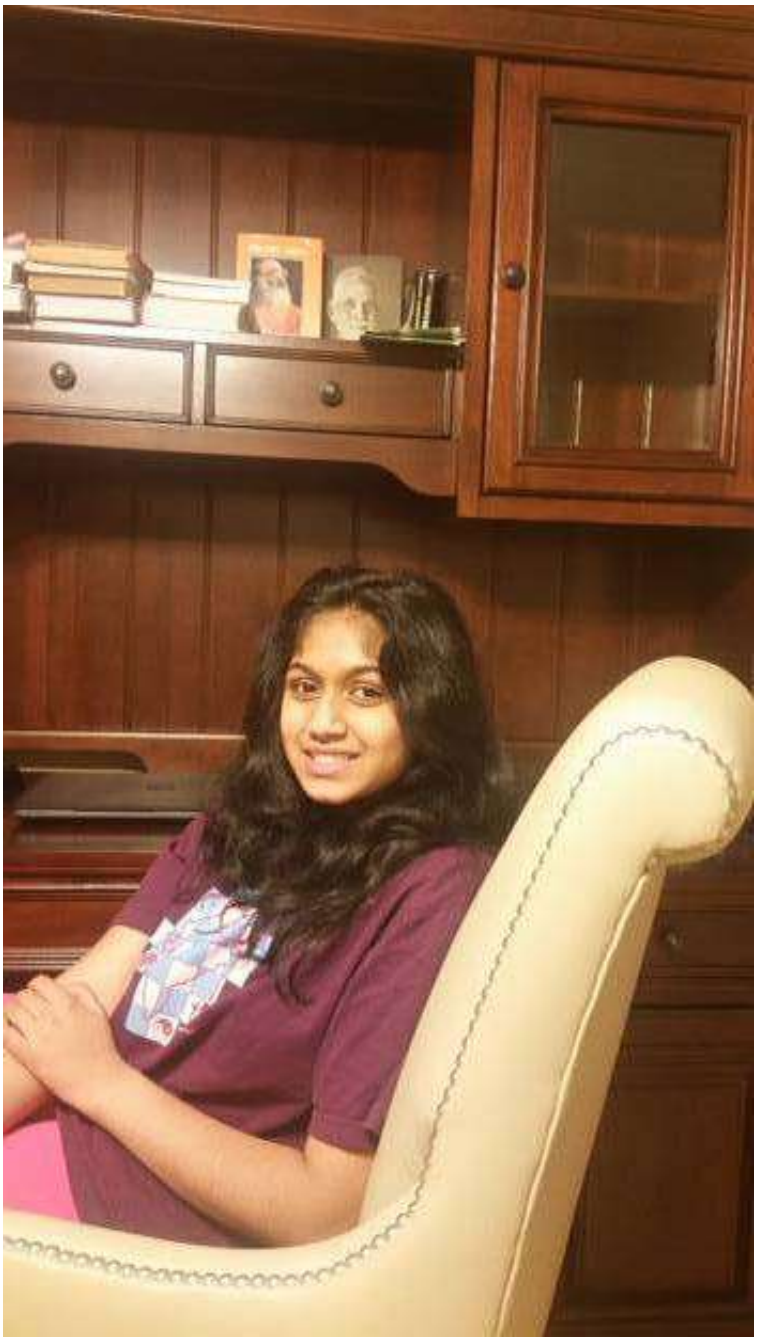
OM TAAPANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

300. OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

02-03-2016

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Bhavya, age 14 (daughter of Shri Chandrashekar Pitta), student of grade 8, North Carolina



The depiction is of the naam Om TeerthaswaroopayaNamah.



Theme -

JIva standing on a rocky platform partaking a drop of jnana as tirtham, can aspire to cross over to the other shore - Gurudev's OM with the vast backdrop of infinity.

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SwaminiSupreetananda,erstwhile ACHARYA Chinmaya Mission Mangalore,currently residing at CM Bangalore



SwaminiSupreetananda ji with Swami Brahmananda ji

It has been a traditional practice in cultured households to call one's father as 'tīrtharūpa' while addressing a letter or writing document. This epithet is used to refer to any respectable elder person or an elderly relative such as an uncle or an elder brother. Tīrtha means a person or a thing worthy of respect. It connotes purity, holiness and virtuousness.

Sanctified water that is offered to God is also called tīrtha in as much as it is sacred and holy. Water used to wash the feet of the holy and the revered is called Srī–pāda-tīrtha. It is sacred and sanctifying. Its power of purifying the body and the mind is tradition-tested. It also promotes one's spiritual welfare. Tīrtha, theholy water purifies the whole environment as well. At the end of a ritual like a yajna or a yaga, tīrthaprokshanamor the sprinkling of the holy water is a common practice. During rituals and ceremonies like housewarming etc. tīrthaprokshanamis a customary practice in order to sanctify the premises.

Sacred places and holy shrines are called tīrthakshetra-s. Waters in certain holy water-bodies like a river, tank or a pond is also called tirtha. Usually these sacred places and water-bodies are sanctified by the presence of great seers, saints, sages and acharyas. All those places visited byGurudev Swamy Chinmayanandahave also stood sanctified. They are all today hailed as tīrthakshetras.

Even as SriShankaracharya who travelled all over India throughout its length and breadth, sanctifying everyplace he visited, Gurudev Swamy Chinmayananda also travelled throughout the globe giving discourseson the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. He not only sanctified the places he visited, but he cleansed the minds of millions of people all over the world. Born in Kerala, he took the lamp of Indian spirituality all over the Indian subcontinent and all around the world, travelling by air, road and on waters, illuminating every nook and corner with the light of spiritual wisdom.

His illuminating discourses have illuminated the head and hearts of one and all. The torrents of his spiritual talks have been so sanctifying that not a drop of this vākpravāha is wasted. Still his holy words in the form of recordings continue to sanctify the whole world. His very existence has indeed been sanctifying and it continues to be so forever. Hence we adore him saying Om tīrtha-svarūpāyanamaha. He is alive for ever. Omjivanmuktayanamaha.

Like people going to the temples or sacred rivers not only drink the tīrtha there for themselves but also carry it in bottles and other containers to all those whom they want to sanctify, let all of us who are purified and feel fulfilled by the blessings and teachings of Gurudev spread around the sanctifying wisdom of his words all-around for the benefit of the posterity. Let his grace enable us to keep the lamp lit by his mission bright forever. Om tīrtha-svarūpāyanamaha.

Swamini ji wrote her reflections in chaste Kannada. We are most grateful to Dr. RamaswamyIyengar, Head of Department, Philosophy Arts and Culture, and Spiritual Studies at Amrita Vidyapeetham University, for translating Swaminiji's text. Dr. Iyengar was thefirst Director of CIF [1998-2003] appointed by Pujya Guruji.

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH



Theertha is a holy place it can be a place of a temple or many temples; it can be rivers or confluence of rivers. It can be holy tanks associated with the puranas.

These have become sanctified because holy people either visited them or stayed there and did penance or wrote or sang about these places.

Narada Bhakti Sutra 69 says Teerthykurvanthiteerthani, meaning they make these places holy by their association or if they are of puranicrelevance, then enhance the sanctity of the sacred places.

In Vishnusahasranamanaam691, Gurudev says Teerthas means vidyaas.

Tapovanprasad Feb 2016 page 6,Gurugeeta 1-83 is quoted:

Tapatrayasantapthanamasanthapraninam Ume
GururevaParaa Ganga Tasmai Sri GuraveNamah.

O Parvati! For the restless jivas who are scorched by the three fold fire (aadhibautika,aadhidaivika, and aadhyatmika), the Guru alone is the holy Ganga. Prostrations unto the Guru.

The spirit of this Namah is that the guru purifies the devotee. People like me who reached Gurudev were completely indignifiedhuman beings. Just like I had no inhibition to say I was imperfect today I have no hesitation to say my Guru my God made me close to a saint. This is what Teerthas do.

There was a very rich man in Chennai who had lots of unpleasant habits. He used to say ‘religious people like Swamiji will not even recogniseour presence.’But Gurudev madehim feel totally comfortable and allowed (people like him) to change through sheerly His love.

Every Breath a Teaching pg 164

God and God's worship

SwaminiNishtananda

In retrospect, the Swamini recalls: "He knew I was blocking myself from a great experience, that of worshipping His holy feet,because of false notions. He made the thought come up in me that I must perform the Puja. He made me bow down so that He could bless me. There never could have been another opportunity. He made the 'most extroverted'part of me bend. Such was His compassion. He gave without reservations,without counting the fitness of the person. Like sunlight and rain, He showered His grace on all."

Every Breath a Teachingpg 221

Teachers and teaching(preamble).

Sweepers go out and clean the street gutters, and in the process they themselves get dirty. Then they need to go home to wash themselves and their clothes. They are then ready to go out and get dirty once again. So it is with my Brahmacharis and brahmacharinis. I send them out and they get dirty. They come back to me all

dirtied up and with a lot of patience,a touch of the whip,and a lot of love,I clean them up and send them out into the world again.
Tvameva Mata cha Pita tvameva

twamevasarvam mama deva deva.

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Sacred One.



Prostrations to the sacred One..... (family member of Shri Y.T. Tarkas)

Tarthasvarupaya is of the nature of tirth. Pilgrimage centres are called tirthasthsnas. Tirtha means that which helps us to go across or taryati. It is that which helps us to cross the ocean of samssra and go beyond bondage and sorrow. Places of pilgrimage

have beautiful temples and are often situated near bathing places. By spending time meditating and bathing in such places, the mind is purified and we go beyond this samsara.

There are different types of tirthas. Shiv bhaktas go to Varanasi, Krishna devotees go to Mathura and Vrindavan. This provides us with the opportunity to focus on a particular diety or sadhana. In the world also we have special centres for business and for the different arts. To understand fashion better one may go to Paris or Milan. For gambling Las Vegas is the centre. To go into the film industry one would have to go to Bollywood or Hollywood. These are new age pilgrim centres.

Every religion has pilgrim centres of their own. The Muslims go to Mecca and Medina, where as the Christians go to the Vatican or Jerusalem. The Guru is himself a Realised Master and wherever he goes is a place of pilgrimage. A walking talking place of pilgrimage, he helps people to cross over the ocean of samsara.

tirthakurvantitirthani

sukarmikurvantikarmani

sat shastrikurvantishastrani



Naradaji in Narada Bhakti Sutra says that a Mahatama makes a pilgrimage centre into a pilgrimage centre because of his presence. Shirdi was an ordinary town till Shirdi Sai Baba started residing there. It then became a pilgrimage centre. The small town of Tiruvannamalai was blessed by the presence of Ramana Maharishi and today is known the world over as a place of worship.

Gurudev's chose Sidhbari as his final resting place and for us the ashram is a place of reverence. Mission members from all over the world come to pay their respects at his Samadhi sthala. TapovanKutir in Uttarkashi was sanctified by the form of TapovanjiMaharaj. Chinmaya Vibhooti built as an expression of our gratitude to Pujya Gurudev is another place of pilgrimage for the Chinmaya family. Though he did not bless it with his physical presence, this tribute to his vision, work and life will remain alive and fresh through the years to come.

Even articles used by the Mahatma have the potential to bless. Please worship Gurudev's padukas or his clothes. Articles used by Gurudev are displayed in the Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan at Chinmaya Vibhooti. Devotees feel blessed by their presence because it helps them purify their minds and attain the Supreme.

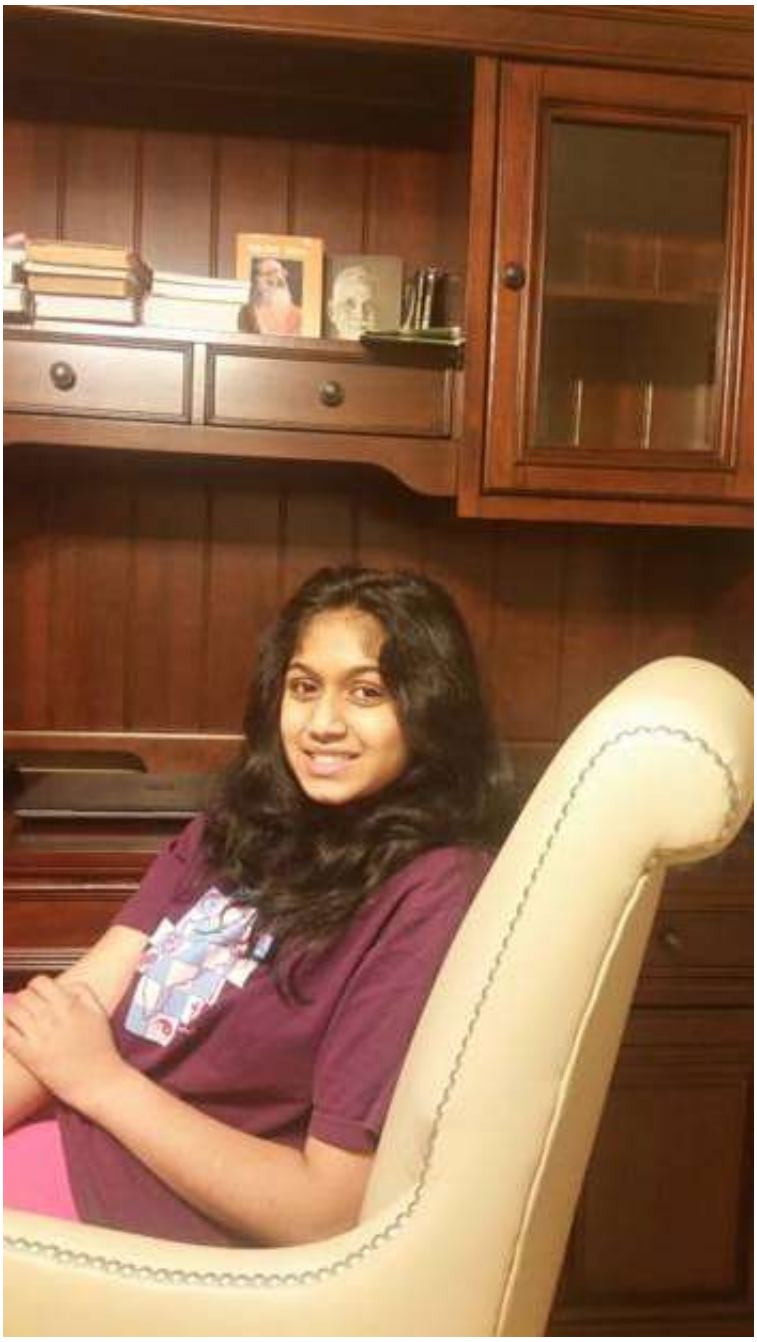
OM TEERTHASWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

301. OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

03-03-2016

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

Offered by Bhavya, age 14 (daughter of Shri Chandrashekar Pitta), student of grade 8, North Carolina, USA



Theme: Om Painting



Chidabhasa - Gurudev's OM in the middle is a perfect reflection in a Satwic medium. The satwaguna which Gurudev had in abundance. The Brilliant One

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

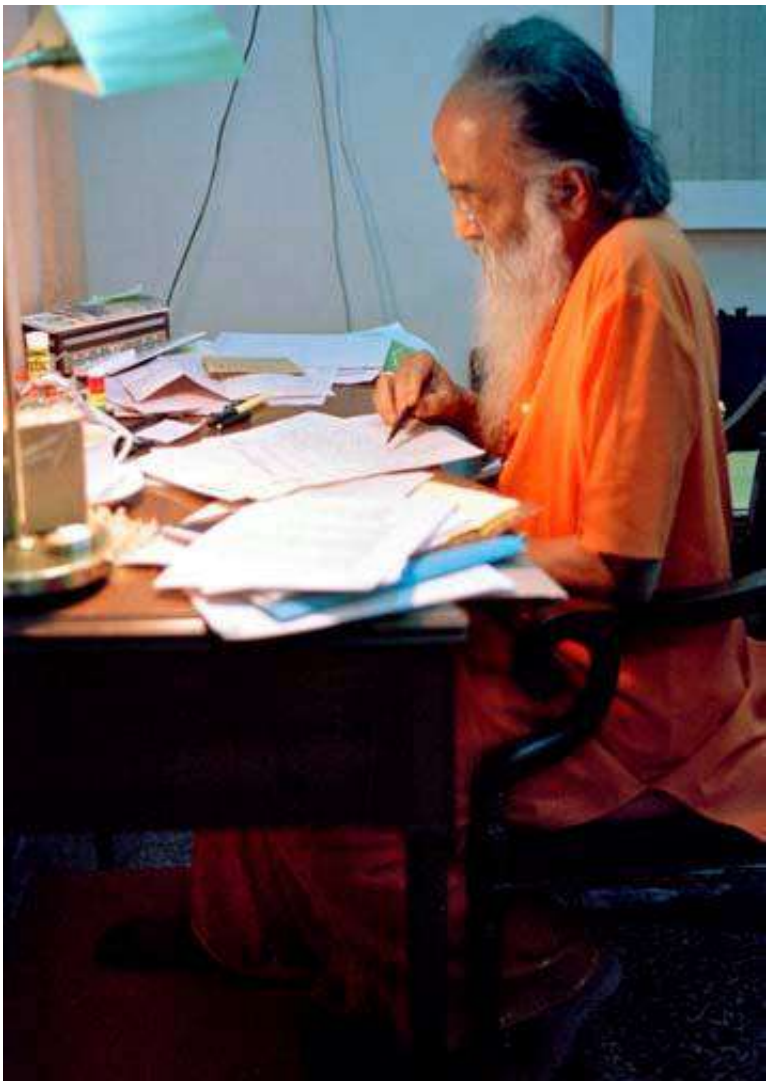
OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda ji with his permission

*Brilliance is radiance, splendor, effulgence. They include awareness, alertness, bringing out the best.

*Tejasvinealso means one who is predominantly in sattva guna. Gurudev always operated from sattva guna. When we operate from sattva guna, when our mind is poised in sattva guna, there is clarity and the results productive.

*Brilliance is excellence in every action. In every thought. And in Gurudev we can see -admistrator - par excellence, spiritual teacher - par excellence, generator of funds - par excellence. Brilliant in every way: Thinking – brilliant. A true Brahmin (one who loves Brahman) with excellence in thought; a great Kshatriya – with excellence in administration; and what a leader! A royal sage, a raja rishi. A sharp Vaishya – excellence in revenue management and fund generation.



Everything par excellence ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

*To understand the nature of pure brilliance, one needs to go deep into it, because on the face of it, it will seem ordinary. Take his attention to devotees. Gurudev considered all devotees to be divine expressions. This was the temple ground on which he served devotees! Be it even a simple letter, he would reply to it with single-pointed love and attention. And no matter who it was at his door – a king or a worker, a minister or a pensioner, he gave of himself.

*Such was his brilliance that drew everyone's attention. Why? Predominantly sattva guna. He operated beyond the mind. See in all the letters, we read his exhortation - watch your thoughts, watch your thoughts! This alone can help us go beyond the mind. As long as we exist at mind level we are dealing with doubts, with confusion, with options, with choices. Sattwa is choiceless. Once we are beyond mind, we can dominate with sattva guna, for we are in the relams of sattwaguna.

*In Gurudev's actions, one sees that he did everything with absolute involvement. He studied for only two years, 1949-1951, with Swami TapovanMaharaj-- as a student. What he studied were a couple of Upanishads. Then whatever Gurudev learnt was self study. So focused. That is again a quality of sattva guna. The quality of sattwa is such that once cultivated it expands exponentially to include all thought. It works on its own too. Just two Upanishads taught by Swami Tapovanam, became the software for assimilating all other texts that Gurudev studied on his own! Just two Upanishads. If the software is right, all processing delivers right.

*So if we can try, nobility in thinking will also develop. This full involvement, dedication to a task at hand, to a job entrusted to us, to a responsibility – these are the qualities, the hallmarks of great people.

This then is the brilliance that we see in all acts of Gurudev and we know now that such brilliance was a function of continuous abidance in sattwa, which is our sadhana.

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

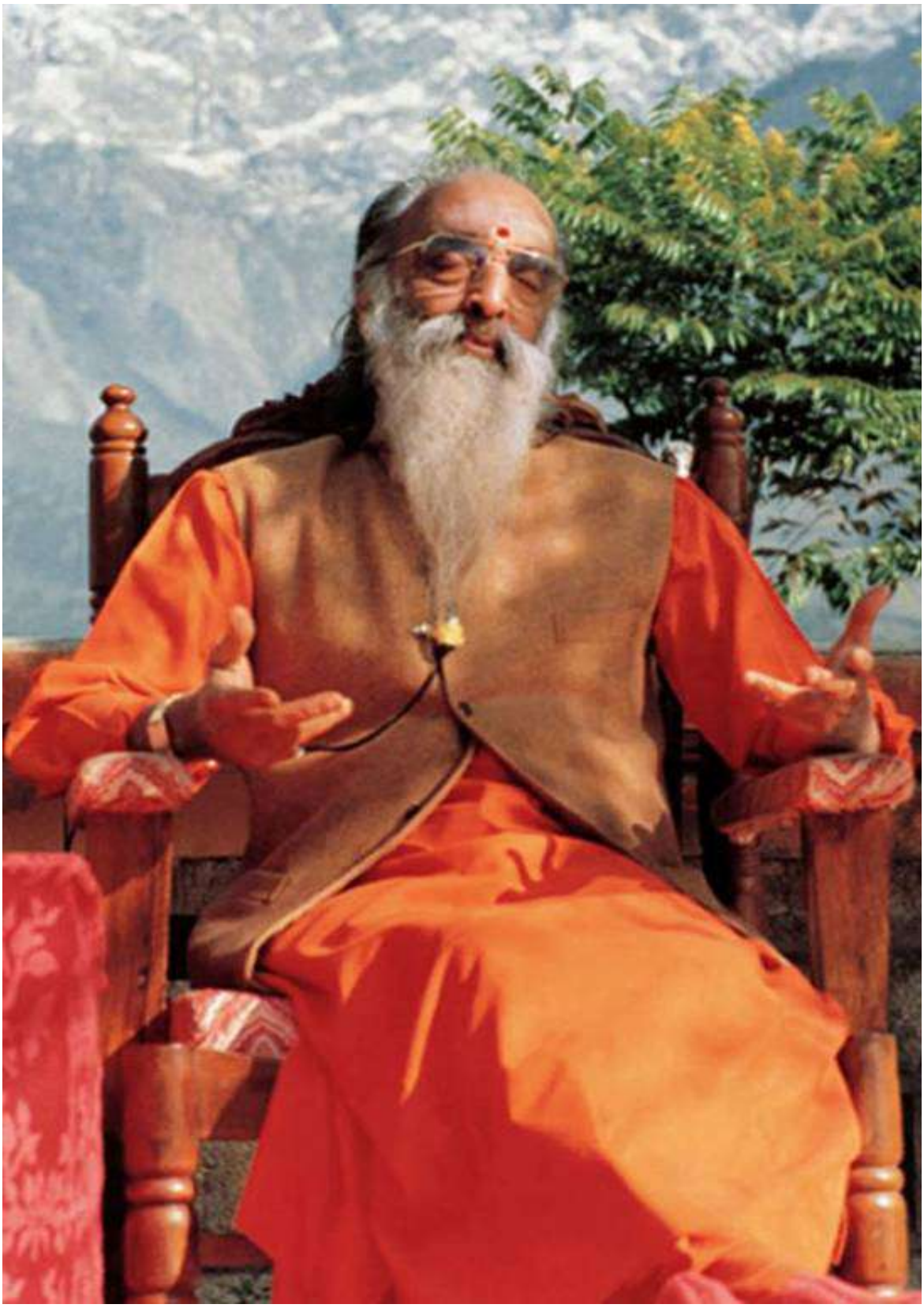
Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Brilliant One

Tejasvi means one who has teja or brilliance of body, mind and personality. People who follow certain disciplines to attain something in the world, in the process gain a certain strength, which in turn reflects in the personality. This glow on the face is what is teja.

I had opportunity to meet the Prime Minister and noticed this quality in his personality. He was an ordinary citizen till he took over the reigns of office. Suddenly, the whole situation changed. He took over the responsibility of the whole country. The focus was directly on him. In his position, he met and interacted with world leaders and leading dignitaries from all walks of life. All this reflected in his face and his whole personality.

Teja is of different kinds. It can come through power, position or even wealth. But the teja that comes through spiritual practices like japa, following the path of righteousness or study of the scriptures has a different power. Even those who do their duties faithfully acquire this quality.



Tejasvin....!

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

ShivajiMaharaj once gave the guards of his fort instructions that no one should be allowed in after sunset. It so happened that one day the king himself was delayed and reached the fort after the appointed hour. The guard was firm and refused to let him enter. Shivaji was pleased with this devotion to duty and the word of the master. The personality of those who unshaken, abide by their duty, takes on a different glow.

Hanumanji's whole personality took on a special glow when he went to Lanka. Even Ravana was scared of him. He wanted to know who he was and how he could stand so fearlessly. Hanumanji replied that he was the sevak of the Lord, through whose glory Ravana himself had gained all his power and kingdom. Even Angad was armed with thistejas, when he went to meet Ravana. Faith in God, in goodness, in righteousness gives this tejas and nobody can stand in its path.

Lord Krishna and Arjuna fought the Mahabharata war in a special chariot, gifted by the devatas. After the war finished the Lord stepped off the chariot. As soon as He did this the chariot caught fire and was completely destroyed. The chariot was only sustained by the presence of the Lord. When He stepped down, the chariot got burnt. The chariot is like our body. Its charm is due to the presence of God. When the prana leaves the body, it loses all its charm.

The beauty of our bodies belongs to the life force. Mahatma Gandhi stood for non-violence and truth. His charisma was so strong that even the British were scared of him. Those who fought for India's freedom had a strong sense of patriotism. Even the British might could not withstand the tejas they had. Ultimately, they had their way and the country got its freedom.

But of all the different types of tejas, the greatest is the tejas of a Self-Realised Master. All other forms are lesser than this.

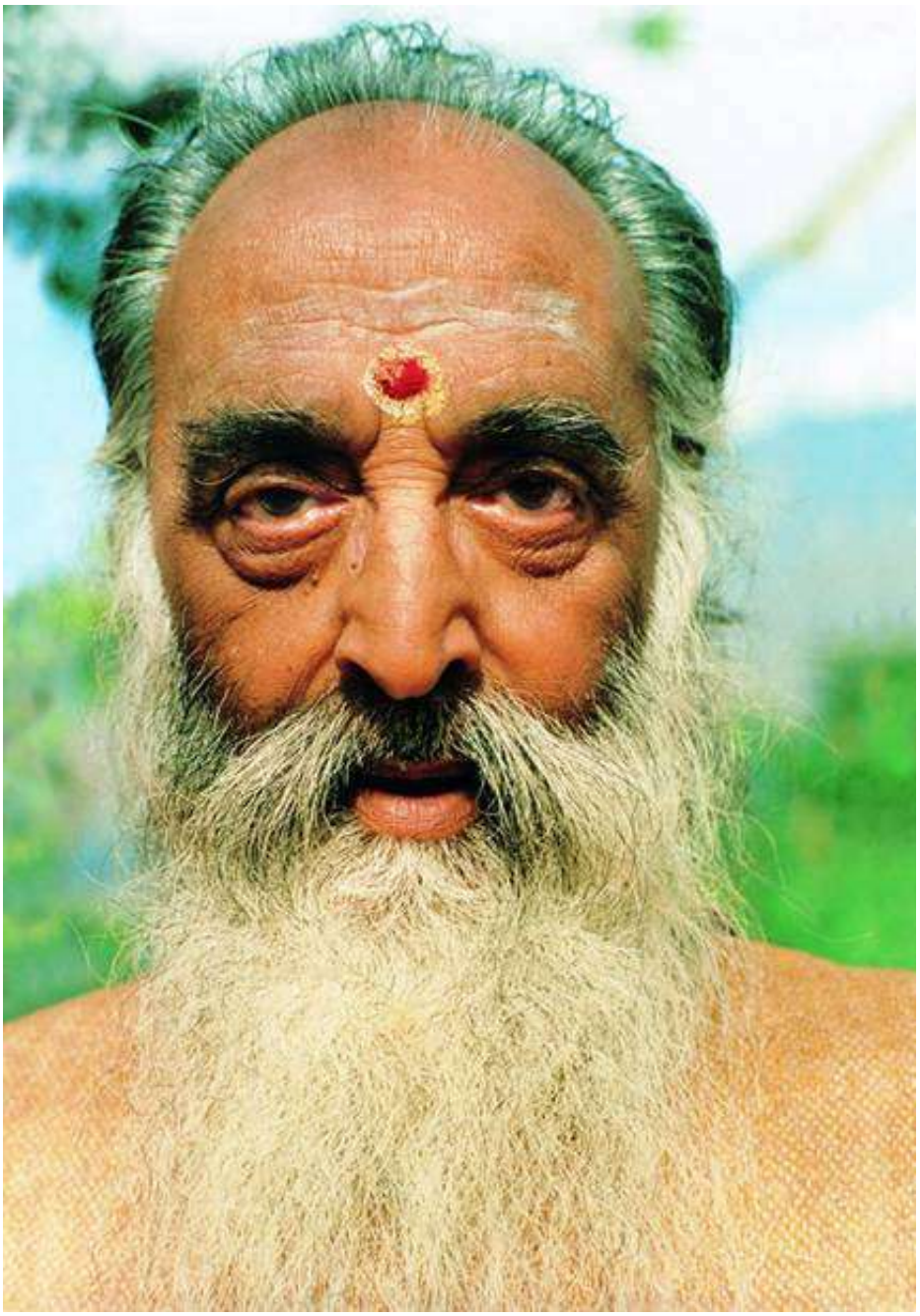
OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Salutations to the brilliant One.

The life principle involved with matter is Ojas; when it evolves it becomes Tejas. Tejas has several meanings the spirit of the word remaining the same. In BG 7:8 it means brilliance. In verse 10 it means splendor,valour, etc. It also means energy. Gurudev had brilliance,splendour,valour,energy, and also charisma.



Brilliant, splendorous ,valorous energetic...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Gurudev used to caution us merely by looks do not conclude somebody to be spiritual. Even with good food and rest somebody can have a glow in their face. Gurudev each day had different food and to make devotees happy, He would eat even though some foods were not good for His health. The food never conformed to His health. Sleep again He never had enough. Yet He and His intellect were always bright.

When Gurudev returned to Sandeepany after His very first overseas yagna, it was in the early hours, say around 2-3 am. Yet He called for the Brahmacharisto assemble and He addressed them. Normally people complain of jet lag!
There was a glow in His eyes, unconditional love in His heart, brilliance in His intellect, and alertness in His responses.

I have seen in the early years Gurudev wearing very cheap cotton shirts. But on Him they were lustrous and looked rich. His words and thoughts were mesmerising.

I had a Christian friend who was not a devotee of Gurudev nor had he ever spoken to Him. He would say "There is something in Swamiji, that when He walks from the aircraft every one spontaneously move to the sides!

Gita Chapter 14, there is a verse which describes this state. Verse 11 says when through every sense in this body,the light of intelligence shines,then it should be known that Sattwa is predominant. Though Gurudev is gunateeta the relevance here is the brilliance manifesting through every sense in this body.

Every Breath a Teachingpg 102

Blessings and transformations-overpowering energy

Rudith Emir

I remember a time at a temple in Michigan when,toward the close of the Paada Puja in the newly consecrated space, I stopped in front of Gurudev and did my prostrations. As He handed me a small sacrament (prasada) from the Puja He looked into my eyes and said "Salam Aleikum" -- this in reference to the fact that my husband is a Muslim. I responded "Aleikum Salam"--and made room for the next devotee. But as I moved away,my head reeled and my entire body shook as though hit by a wall of force. The energy filling me was so over powering that I hid my face in my hands and cried for some ten minutes or more.

TapovanPrasad

December 2015, pg 36

Maharajah Devendrapal Singh

I can never fully describe the spark that emanated from His personality especially the eyes. He merely had to glance at us,and our body would become still and mind would be uplifted effortlessly. It was like being in a different world altogether.

TapovanPrasad2011 August pg 23

Swami Chinmayananda - The Many Splendoured Master

by LeelaLaksmi Narayen

A room seemed flood-lit when He entered it and fragrant with subtle thought when He left it.

To that Brilliant, fragrant One our prostrations!

OM TEJASVINE NAMAH

302. OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

04-03-2016

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vilasini ji of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Salutations to the one who is beyond the body



In all the time that I knew Gurudev, travelled with him, worked with him, I never saw any hint of anxiety about his health.

After his open heart surgery, I got clearance to visit him in the ICU. He could barely talk. To reduce the pain in his chest bone and his rib cage which had been sawed open, he was given a pillow to hold on and press in. In this condition he received a few visitors, one at a time. When I entered his ICU room and stood by his bed and saw his feeble condition, I didn't know what to say. I had no words. So a complaint tumbled out, "Swamiji, they wouldn't let me come in until now..." And he made a mock frown, commiserating with me. I had gone to cheer him up, and he ended up cheering me up. Such was his fearlessness that he never needed cheering, even two days after a serious operation and in a very frail condition. He was completely unidentified with the body.

After Swamiji's bypass surgery, he cancelled his programs for two months. Swamiji was staying in remote homes to convalesce, one in the countryside. During this time he still replied to his letters and met whoever came for Satsang. One of his doctor's, ApparaoMukkamala, told him he must take a walk every day to regain his strength. We rather expected that Swamiji would ignore this advice. But the doctors and of course the coterie of devotees around him were relentless that Swamiji must follow these doctors' orders. He amazed us all one day by suddenly getting up and going out for a walk in the countryside. Everyone scrambled to follow him, but the amazing thing is that he was walking so fast, that we had to actually run to catch up, and got winded as a result! Someone mentioned that perhaps this was too fast and would be bad for his health. To someone who has no fear, this fell on deaf ears. Gurudev just laughed. This went on every day until he moved on to another city.

To that One who never identified with the body, our prostrations.

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri D.V. Pillai,Chinmaya Mission,Los Angeles



Seen here with Gurudev

Our Pujya Gurudev has repeatedly asserted that it is identification with our body that is the root cause of all our miseries and suffering. Having identified with the body, we spend all our time and energy catering to its endless needs.

He, Himself, worked 18 - 20 hours a day for the benefit of others, seemingly indifferent to His own comforts and convenience.

With all His physical limitations and frail state of health, He readily agreed to do a marathon camp for 6 weeks, to professionally videotape all 18 chapters of the BhagvadGeeta.

It was in June 1991, at Krishnalaya, California. To cover 701 verses in that camp, He had to take 4 lectures a day, each lasting one and a half hours. It was summer and the temperature hovered around 95 degrees most of the time. Since the talks were held in a tent, no air conditioning was possible. To add to the discomfort, high intensity lights were focussed on the stage making it a veritable oven. Yet, Gurudev as you could see in the videos, gave no hint of the unbearable discomforts, and, transcending the physical realm, He carried on in His own inimitable style to accomplish the task He had undertaken.

After each lecture, I drove Him to His kutia, where He would literally collapse into His chair, revive Himself and come back for the next talk. On one occasion, after the morning talk, Gurudev suffered an acute attack of congestive heart failure. The medical recommendation was strict bedrest, oxygen inhalation, intravenous medications and close monitoring of the heart. We offered to cancel the lectures, so He could get proper treatment for this life threatening condition. Gurudev declined it all . He asked for 2 diuretic pills and said He will rest for a short time and He would be fine. Sure enough He was fine not only for the next lecture but also for the rest of the camp.

Through His suffering and unbearable agony, He has given us an invaluable treasure for posterity.

This was the clearest practical demonstration by a Mahatma, rising above physical limitations for His higher purpose.

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

The root cause of the fall of man from his Godhood is identification with body. Therefore a Brahmagnani is dehateeta, beyond body.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

We had examples of Our Paramaguru Swami TapovanaMaharaj, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, BhagavanRamanaMaharshi to name some. But with Gurudev it is a wonder that the body with a heart mostly damaged, known to have been functioning barely to the extent of 15-20 per cent, just a year before His MahaSamadhi, completed the Vivekachudamani yagna, delivering discourses a few hours a day, and a year before that, the complete Bhagavad Geeta discoursing four hours a day, beats all logic.

Even with good health at 75-76, people are unable to talk without getting tired. And then to talk the way Gurudev talks, forcefully, effectively, even loudly four hours a day and laughing through it all – is astonishing. These lectures delivered at the height of an ailing body, are to-day available in the form of DVDs for the knowledge to benefit everyone. It is pure unconditional love for humanity. He broke all rules, used His tapas to live and do that work for us.

Gurudev said "love visualised is action." His life was just that.

Here are are a few extracts to show His transcendence of the body.
Every Breath a Teaching pg 272

Beyond the body I am not the body

BharathiSukhatankar, Belgaum, India

BharathiSukhatankar was preparing the syringe for Swamiji's daily injection of insulin. He took the syringe and the alcohol saturated cotton and dabbed His thigh with it, ready to give Himself an injection. She found it painful to watch and turned her head away, looking out of the window.

"Why are you looking away?" Inquired Swamiji.
"Swamiji, it's painful for me to watch," replied Bharathi. "Doesn't it hurt you when you do it day after day?"
Swamiji's reply was simple and direct: "When I say, 'I am not the body', I am not the body!".

Page 271
A letter written to a devotee in Singapore in spring 1992 shows how He viewed the role of the body within the larger scheme of things:

Made up of five elements, the body is a nest of diseases and pains. To cater to its demands can be a twelve month, twenty-four-hour job -- and yet it will suffer. Use it as an instrument for seva for others. Trees give
fruits to others; the trees eat none. The river never drinks, but it's waters are meant for plants, animals, and humans. The sun, the wind -- look around. In nature, man alone wants to live for himself and perpetuate! Leave it alone. Let the body run its course. Let us live our life peacefully in Him, the Bliss. Look after the body as a workman tends to his instruments.

Page 276

"Don't Ask"

Swami Subodhananda

Once,when Swamiji had just arrived at the airport, Swami Subodhananda asked Him "Swamiji,how is your health?"
"Don't ask", said Swamiji. I'm using this as much as I can. If you ask she (the body) will think she's important."

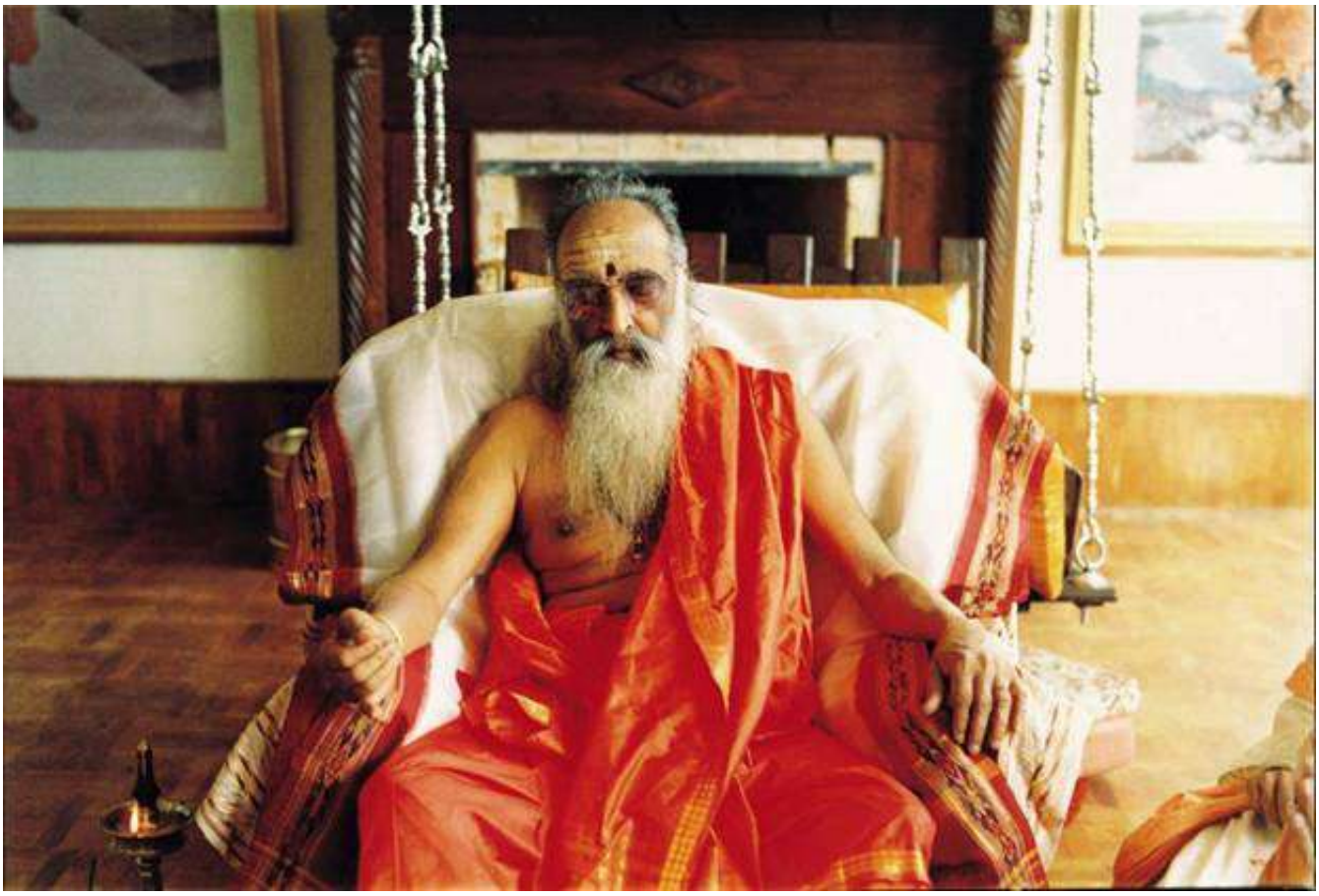
To That One who transcended the body which He used as an instrument for His devotees and the world, my prostrations!

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One who is Beyond the Body



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Deha is the body. Dehatita is one who has gone beyond or transcended the body. When we are asleep, we transcend this gross body and are in another world

altogether. On waking up we come back. Similarly, in the state of meditation, we transcend the body but return to the body identification. The Mahatma is one who has transcended the attitude, 'I am only this body.' He is one who identifies with the whole world. He is no longer confined or limited by the physical body. The whole world has become the body of the Mahatma and he has gone beyond the body identification.

During his last years, Gurudev's heart was functioning to only 27% of its capacity and he had lost the sensation in his feet. Despite this he continued giving discourses. He said that he would continue to speak, spread the message and serve for as long as he lived. Just before a lecture, someone asked him about his heart and diabetes problem. Quickly he said, "Don't talk so loudly. I have not told my body all this. If it comes to know, it will collapse! So just keep it a secret." Even the doctors wondered how, despite all these problems, relentlessly he went on and on. This is the state of one who has gone beyond the body. They have understood that the body is only a dress or an outer covering.

The scriptures say,

"väsääsijérëäniyathävihäyanavänigåhëätinaroparäëi

tathäçaréräëivihäyajérëäni anyänisaàyätinavänidehé. (B.G 2.22)

Just as we remove old clothes and put on new clothes, so also we change the body." The only thing is that we never consider the body as a dress. Only one who has gone beyond body consciousness can have this attitude. There is then no fear of death. Fear comes from attachment to the body. Also if there is fear, there can be no spiritual progress. TheGita cites abhayam or fearlessness as one of the most important qualities in a seeker.

If we are attached to the body, we are aware of its qualities. We know that it is constantly changing, constantly dying. It is like a person falling from a very tall building. The person is constantly falling, till he reaches the ground. When we celebrate our birthdays, we are actually approaching death.

When we are attached to the body there is fear and where there is fear there is restriction. Fear of death restrains and is therefore called yama. This fear of death restrains us from doing various things. We do not wander in the Himalayas, jump from a height or go into the ocean because of this fear of death.

This fear of death or attachment to the body stops us from meditating. The greater the attachment the greater is the fear of death. In spirituality, the first step is to accept one's immortality. If we accept that we are the body, then what is the question of immortality? A Mahatma is one who has transcended the body consciousness and so is dehatita.

OM DEHATEETAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

303. OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH

05-03-2016

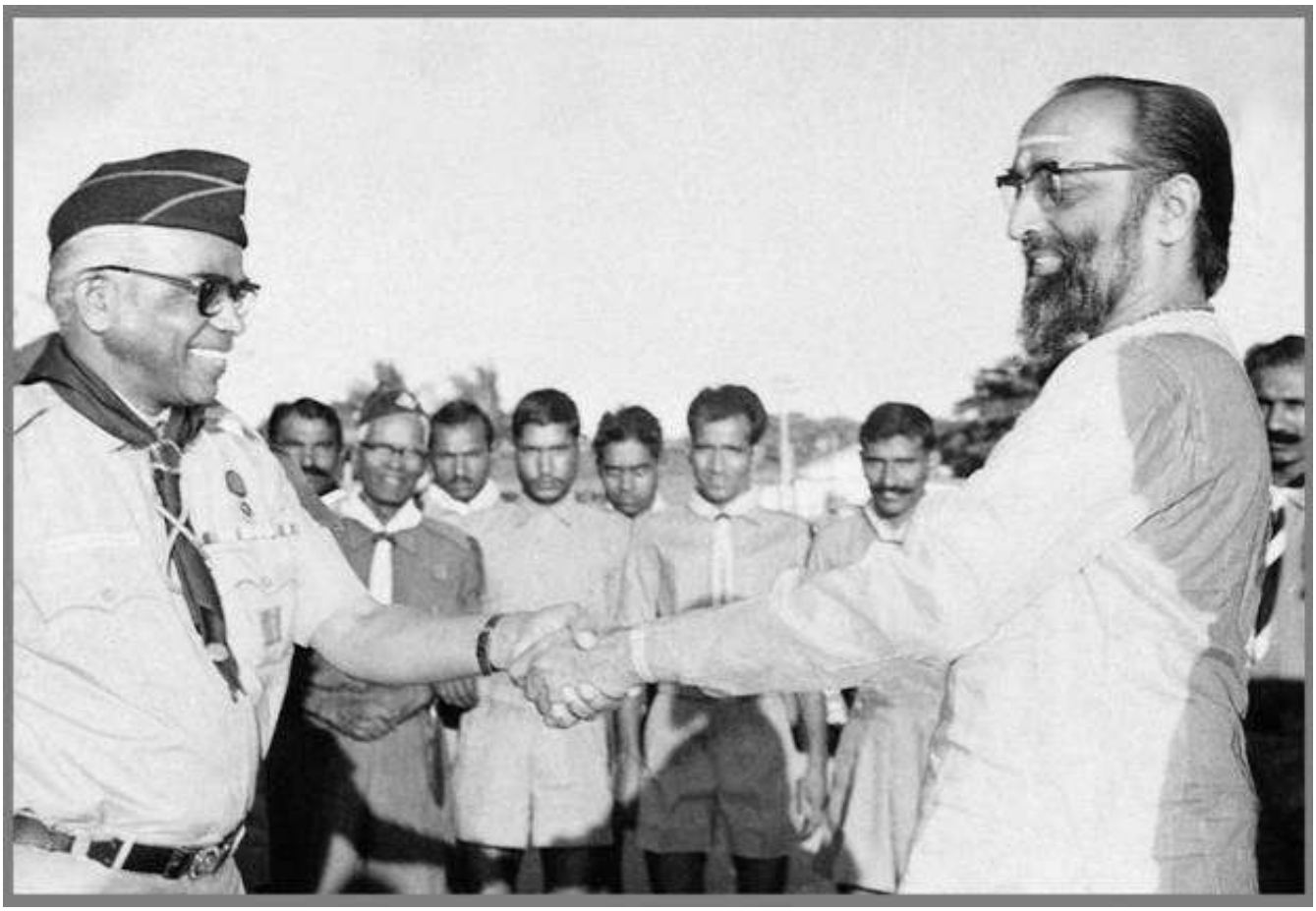
OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda ji with his permission

Salutations to him who is beyond the pairs of opposites.

*We witnessed the coexistence of dvadvateeta at all three levels in Gurudev. At the level of the body, (as we saw Him as dehateetaa) -- comfort or no comfort, he was the same. He was as joyful in the king's palace as he was under a tree. And he never complained about anything at the body level. Whatever came, he accepted. Including illness – he took the medication because he had to, and did not identify with aches and pains.

*At the mind level – People incessantly admired him, appreciated him, praised him. He was the same!Sometimes people let him down - say to the level of betrayal. How did he respond to it? Never ever he commented on the people who let him down. Not even once. Not once!



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*At an intellectual level what does dvandvateetah mean? It means you know outcomes are not controllable and you are not scared of outcomes that won't be suitable. You are ready and able to handle failure.

This is intellectual dvandvateetah. To be aware and accepting. Gurudev was like that. When things failed, he was aware and he accepted it, and above all he did not botherabout it, afterwards. He had an aerial view of life, he knew what could succeed and what need not. He factored all this into his work. This is a fine leadership quality.

* That is why Gurudev used to make us learn through projects. Project is not an activity. It is also self-unfoldment. So many little lessons lie there in the detail..

We produced a book: 'Awakening Indians to India' which sold 2,85,000 copies. A book with 550 facts, published by Yuva Kendra members. Now you understand? A book to be compiled with 550 facts on India, in 500 pages. See how much growth lies within. How much they had to read about India to develop 550 facts in 500 pages. Reaching out across the country to 2,85,000 people! We had to contain the

costs to Rs 23-24 per copy. We earned Rs 25 as entry fee on that event, per person. And we applied the revenue to production. Perfect break-even. 3,00,000 books were printed, so that was Rs 75 lacs.

Think of how the funds were managed, handled, budgeted, spent, documented, saved, accounted, protected, negotiated...Just one event – printing of the book, no other expenses included here. Therefore, deciding on the cover, who would design, what should he/she be paid, what quality of paper, why not a better or lower quality, who would print, what is a good price, what is not a good price. Deciding all this in a boundary of Rs 75 lacs.

Can we estimate what is the growth and learning in finance management of the people who handles this project? At the age of 18 or 19, you are thrown into the deep and told to bring out a souvenir. How much you learn! It's all growth with lessons in dvandva.

*These are seeds which are sown with the intention to grow valuable humans. How many such seeds Swamiji must have sown cannot even be imagined. Their results can never be seen immediately. Their results sprout much later and unravel gradually.Gurudev had that vision where he saw the larger picture. That's why success and failure did not bother him, because the vision was far beyond these. From that kind of vision, we see growth for everyone; evolution for everyone; learning for everyone.

In this manner, at the body, mind and intellectual level if we can keep the big picture before us and greater good of all, the pairs of opposites will not cause us to lose our balance. And Gurudev had that vision. We learnt it only from him. And it's a joy when we can look at everything with this vision!

To that One who is beyond the influence of the pair of opposites, our salutations.

OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH

OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

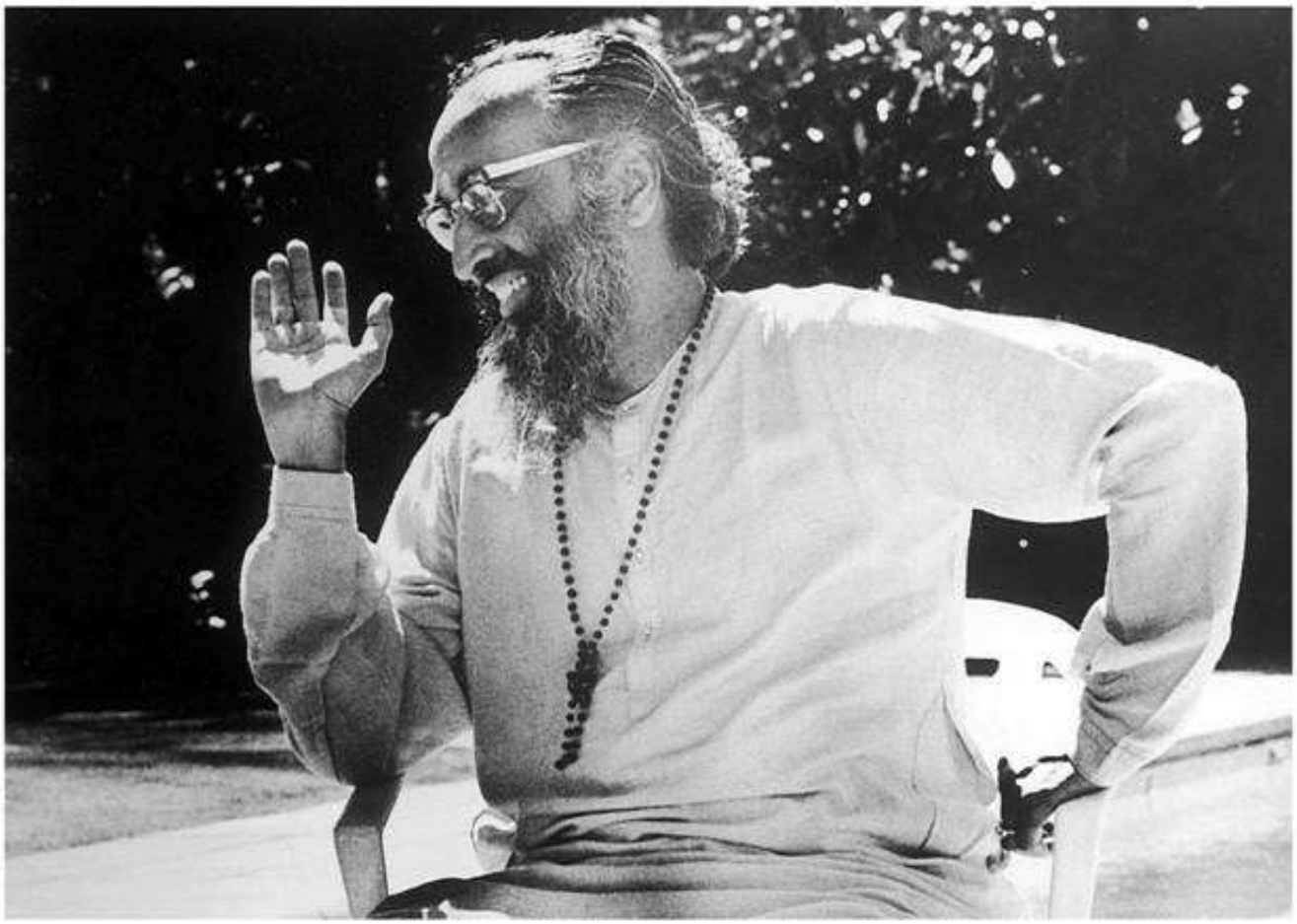
Salutations to the one who is beyond the pairs of opposites

Our Guru parampara follows Advaita. All our Masters have realised this state beyond duality. They see the Lord alone in all, everywhere, at all times. Their experience of Advaita is in spite of duality. A gold smith when he sees earring, chain, and bangle -- in spite of their differences, he knows all of them to be gold. The differences are

only name and form.
Names and forms have only words as their support.

Gurudev's famous example makes this clear: When you take the murthis of Sri Rama, Laksmana, Sitaji and Sri Hanuman, for selling, the goldsmith pays for the weight of Gold (in the idols) and not for other consideration.
One who sees the one in the many goes beyond death and enjoys infinite Bliss.
Yathananyatpashyatinanyatsrunotinanyatvijanathi tad Bhuma.
YovaiBhumathadamrutam. Tat sukham. [Sanatkumara to Narada, Chandogya VII:24:1]

Thus our Gurudev was always living in that Non Dual Consciousness.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Here is Gurudev's write up on Advaita in His commentary of Hymn to Badrinath 4-6:

An individual who has risen from the state of the ego into the "fourth " Plane of Consciousness (Turiyam), he, thereafter lives the experience that the Consciousness

in him itself is the Infinite All-pervading Reality.
This experience is called True Knowledge (samyakgnana). To experience that the meditator himself is divine in his core, but not to recognise the same Divinity thereafterwards everywhere around him, is only a partial knowledge, at best a fanciful imagination. The waker cannot experience that he has awakened, and still insist that his dream wife and dream children are living in the world of his dream; on his awakening, the world projected by the dreamer is entirely scrapped.

Every Breath a Teaching page 266

Beyond the body one's arms and legs

VilasiniBalakrishnan

During the round-the-clock watch at the Houston hospital, especially after the initial intensive care days, devotees were continually streaming through to offer their help. Swamiji was never alone.
We asked him, "Swamiji,do you ever get tired of having people around you all the time?".
Frail as He was, He roared back at them, ‘only if there is hate in the heart does one get tired of people. Do you ever get tired of your arms and legs?’

Page 317

Who was He? Unspoken question answered.

SwaminiShivapriyananda (formerly Brni. Sadhana)

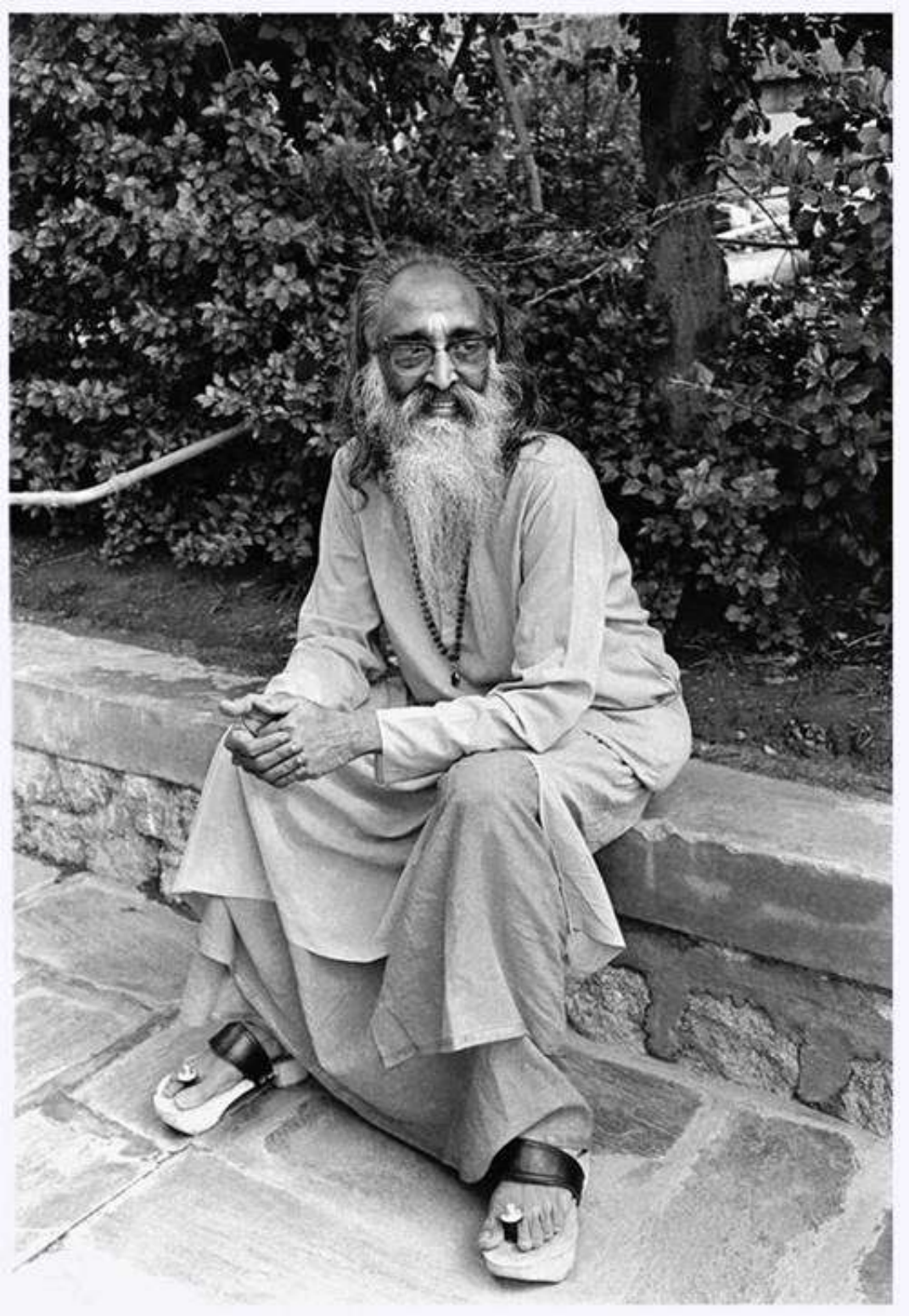
One night the three devotees were again following Gurudev. They walked in pin drop silence; only the sound of the Padukas could be heard. His tour finished, Gurudev approached His kutiya, went up to the steps as on previous nights, turned, stopped, looked at the three with a look that seemed to look right through them, and said: "I am Siva, I am Krishna, Jesus, Devi, Buddha, Mohammed-- and much much more ". Then he walked into His Kutiya. Shivaram closed the door after Him.

OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH!

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi and NCR

Salutations to the One Beyond the Pairs of Opposites

Dvandva is pairs of opposites. Dvandvatita is one who has gone beyond opposites. The world in which we are living is made up of pairs of opposites. There is an opposite to every experience. To every positive there is a negative. We experience joy and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, praise and censure, day and night, love and hate. Generally we like one of the opposites. We like gain but not loss. We like victory but not defeat. We like praise but not censure. We like one thing, not the other. So what happens? We try to hold onto the thing we like. We just do not understand that the opposites go together. They are two sides of a coin. If we take one side, the other comes automatically. It is there, hiding behind.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The constant struggle to attain one thing and run away from the other is samsara.

We run towards joy and away from sorrow; run towards victory and away from defeat; run towards success and away from failure. One cannot escape because they both come together. The scriptures say that there are two ways in which to combat this phenomenon – either accept both or reject both. Do not try to divide or separate them. If one accepts joy then one must accept sorrow. Also, if one accepts success then one must accept failure as well. Not only should one learn to face success one must learn to face failure also. They are part of the same coin. If we know success and do not know how to deal with failure, there will be a collapse if there is failure. Health and disease go together. If we accept one, the other will follow. We must accept both or transcend and reject both. There should be neither interest in success or failure. This is the path or renunciation.

Accept success if it comes. Also accept failure if it comes. Welcome life if it comes and welcome death if it comes. In this way we can transcend dvandva. With such an attitude, we become free from the bondage of this world. These are the only two factors which bind us. There is no third thing. If one is not bound by pleasure and pain or by success and failure, then one is free. If pleasure is special and pain is not so, then one will run from pain. This itself is the cause for bondage.

Traigunyavishayavedanistraiguëyobhavarjuna says the Gita (2.45) . The Vedas are in the framework of the three gunas. Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to go beyond this framework by becoming free of the pairs of opposites – Nirdvandvonitysatastoniryogashemyaatmavan. In other words, accept everything and then respond to the world. It does not mean that if one has fallen, one should not do anything about it. Accept both the joy and the sorrow because they come from the same source. We tend to become excited when joy comes our way and start quarrelling when there is sorrow. God gives us both joy and sorrow, so we should accept both with the same degree of equanimity.

Our bonding should be with God, not with what He gives. Suppose a friend brings you a gift. Should your attention be wholly on the gift or should you spend your time interacting with the friend? If we choose the first option, the friend would surely feel offended. Whatever we have is a gift from God, whether we like it or not. In both circumstances, we must keep our attention fixed on the giver and not on the object that has been given. In this way we can transcend the dvandva.

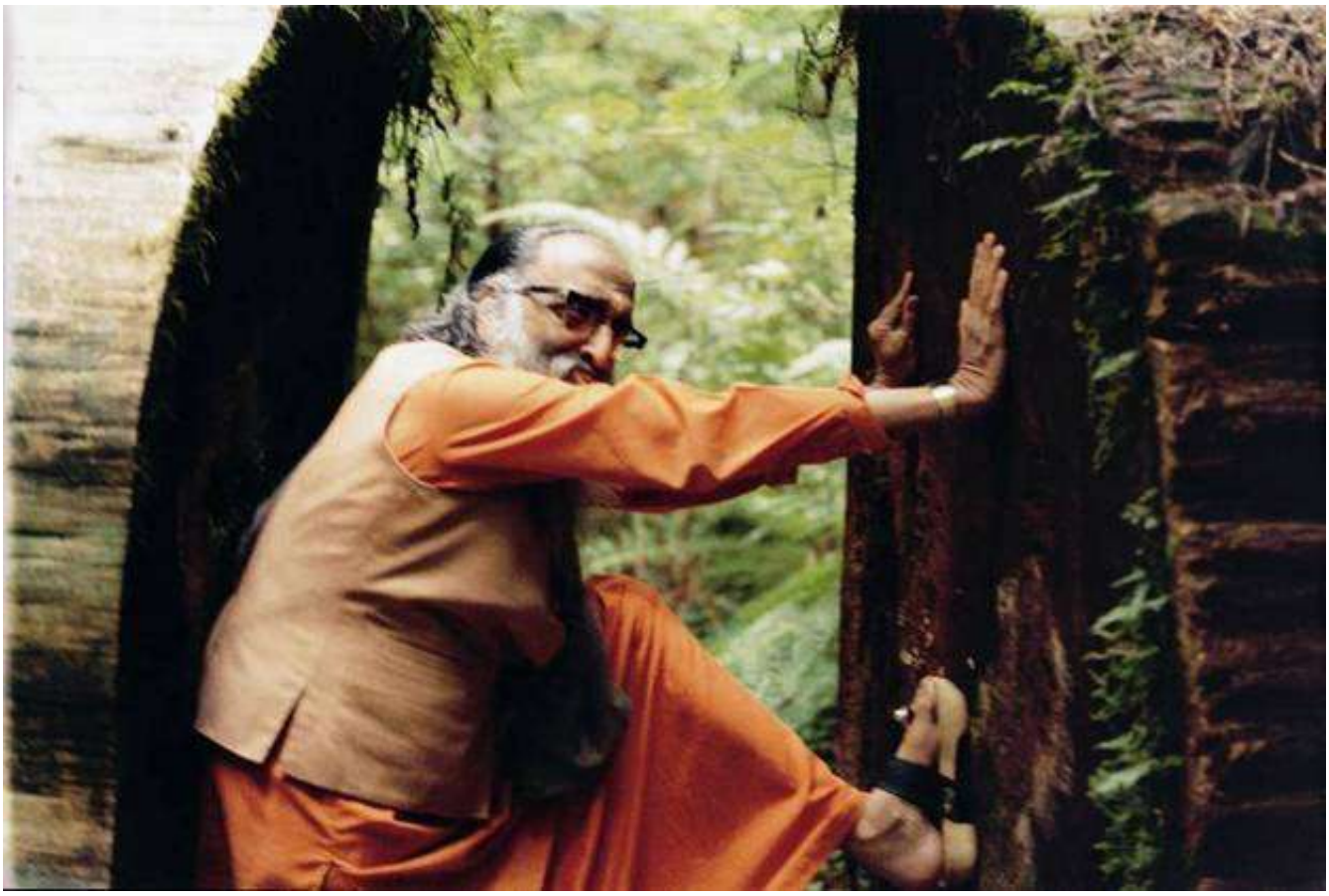
OM DVANDVATEETAAYA NAMAH

304. OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAY NAMAH

06-03-2016

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P. Eswar, CM, Mumbai



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Parama Pujya Gurudev had come for Bhiksha to the house of study group sevika Hemantini Bhatia ji, next to the S.I.E.S High School, Matunga Mumbai.

The area sevak had brought a long list of projects to be implemented in the area. He had even got the item printed on Inland postal letter paper. Gurudev had just a good look at it.

On the top of the list was, 'Eye Donation when a person is dead'.

"No!" says Gurudev! "It needs lot of planning and meticulous coordination. Let us stick to what we have been doing – study group, Bala Vihar, Tapovan Prasad, and ensure that these are taken up as 'saadhana' to ensure unfoldment of our personalities. That would be our "Pooja" to Him!"

You know He meant business and has our well-being at heart! He is very clear about what He wants His sevaks to do!

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAY NAMAH

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

A Brahma Gnani is a Sthithapragna.This means one whose wisdom is steady.
He is above likes and dislikes. He has not to please anyone. For Him the Lord and decisions that establish the Supremacy of the Lord alone is important. Hence He is firm on His decisions. Also because a Gnani is fearless, he does not have to compromise.
A Gnani is firm in His convictions, judgements. His decisions and actions are all born out of love of Lord and His expressions.

He does not yield to threats or pressures.

While Gurudev participated in Freedom struggle as a journalist he did not divulge any information to the British. He underwent so much of torture, the British were afraid he may not live in the prison and fearing public reaction they threw Him on the road.
When Gurudev wanted to talk in Chennai on Geeta in English the orthodox not only denied Him any place they cursed Him that His tongue will fall off and so on. He kept His resolve and most of those who opposed Him in fact became His devotees.

Hemu ji with his study group in Chennai



Gurudev was known for His adherence to time. Regardless of who the person was (be it a VVIP or government authority), He did not wait for them to arrive; if the appointed time was up, Gurudev began His yagna.

There are anecdotes of wealthy and affluent/influential persons committing to fund the entire cost of construction or cost of land for schools, but in return asking that some seats be set aside for them every year. Gurudev is known to have refused/rejected their offering saying "sadhus do not accept anything with strings attached."

Every Breath a Teaching pg 35

Work- Saying 'No'

Anonymous

One time during His lecture tour in California, Swamiji was reviving some materials used in management consulting, that a devotee had brought in as a sample of how executives are being trained to work with less stress and greater detachment. "Train yourself to say 'no '-- with a smile," He advised. "Many of our problems arise from not knowing to say 'no'.

Every Breath A Teaching - Pg 20

Discipline 6 am class

Swami Chidananda

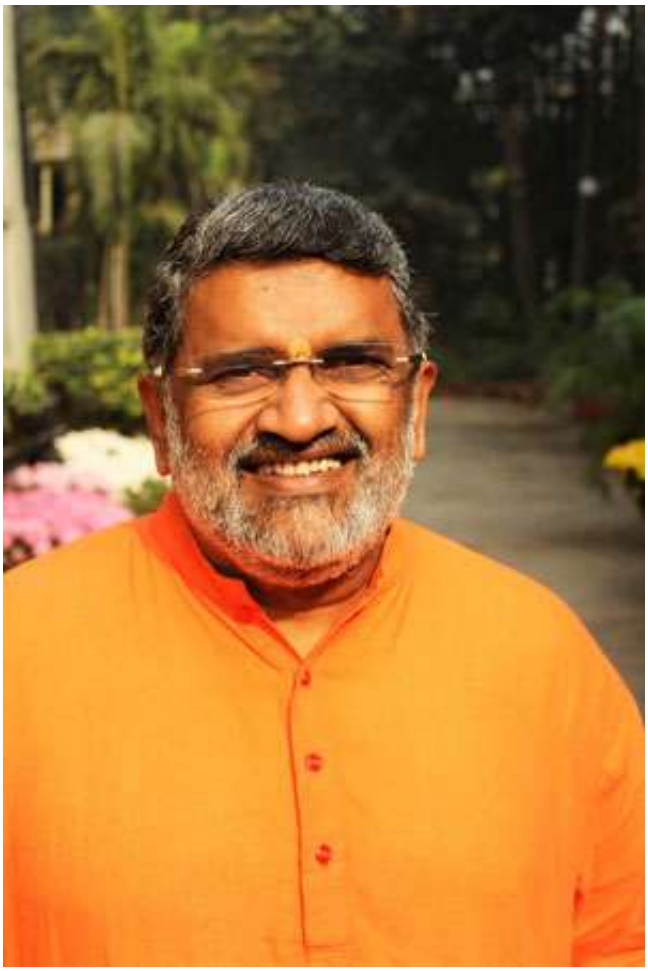
Once in Bangalore, the morning classes by Swamiji were announced to be at 6-30am. Some people living in a slightly distant area of the city urged the secretary of the local Mission centre to request Swamiji to make it 7 am instead. The young man rather inexperienced, went to Gurudev a day before the whole programme started and conveyed the demand. Swamiji listened, paused, and then, in a tone of utmost consideration, said "All right make it 6am."

That was it. Surprisingly, the group that wanted the session moved to 7 am were at the class every morning before 6, before most others!

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAY NAMAH

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAY NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Om Dridhanishchayaya Namah

Salutations to the One of Firm Resolve

Dridhanishchaya is firm determination. Dridha means firm and nishchaya is determination about the Supreme Reality. This quality is very helpful for seekers because then they cannot be disturbed from their conviction about truth, goodness and values. Those who do not have this firm conviction are shaky about their values and the truth. They are assailed by doubts.

One Mahatma sitting by the banks of a river saw a scorpion drowning in the water. He tried to lift it out. The scorpion stung his hand. He dropped it and picked it up again. Again he was stung. This went on for a while, till he was able to keep it on the ground. Someone observing this whole drama asked him why he bothered to save the scorpion when he was being continuously stung. The Mahatma replied that it is the dharma of the scorpion to sting and it did not give up its dharma, so why should I give up mine? This is firm conviction.

Parvatiji had decided to marry Lord Shiva. She said, “Let anyone tell me to the contrary, I will not listen. Even if Lord Shiva were to dissuade me I would not listen. If I cannot marry him in this lifetime, then I will wait till the next, but marry him I must!”

The attainment of the Supreme depends on the firmness of our resolve. Suppose an announcement is made to a group of a thousand people, requesting someone to come up and sing. Though, there may be several singers in the crowd, they would hesitate to come up on the stage. Many would even contemplate going up but will fail because of indecision. Only the one who decides will go up. Only when we resolve can we act on it. There is a different type of feeling. The look on the face is decisive.

Suppose we went parachute jumping. We were all ready waiting to jump off the plane. We may all agree to jump, but as the time comes near, we may get palpitations. Suddenly, one decides to take the plunge. The decision pervades the whole body and mind. The entire system is infused with certain energy. A powerful resolve is reflected in the eyes of the person and then no one can stop that person.

The Gita says that the only difference between the asadhu and sadhu is the resolve. A person who resolves to attain the Supreme is a sadhu and a person without this is an asadhu. Good qualities and goodness of heart are not enough to qualify. It is only the right resolve that makes the difference.

In spiritual growth the main consideration is neither the understanding of the scriptures or the sadhana. These are minor issues. We become sincere seekers only when we resolve to attain God? Everything else is secondary.

Swami Vivekananda tells an interesting story of a yatri going to a Shiva temple. He came to a point from which there were many paths and he did not know which to follow. He reached a small tea shop, where he deposited his luggage and sat down to have a cup of tea. While sipping his tea, he inquired about the way to the temple. The man behind the counter gave no reply. Again he asked but got no response. Finally, he told the man to keep the information to himself. He just got up and started walking. As he did this, the person told him which path to take. The now irate traveller wanted to know why he had not told him so for so long. The man

replied that many people ask the way to the temple but have no intention of going. So he has stopped answering these questions. But when he saw the intention, he told him the way.

Similarly, on the path of spirituality people ask random questions. Sometimes people even ask questions on behalf of their neighbours and friends. They are really not interested in the pursuit. When we decide to attain Brahman, even the Lord cannot stop us. This is the strength of firm resolve.

In his youth, Gurudev was a lawyer, then a journalist. Then he decided to see what happens in the ashrams. He was completely fascinated by what he saw in the Sivananda Ashram and resolved to study the scriptures under Tapovan Maharaj. There was no stopping him. On the completion of his studies, he set out to spread the message of the scriptures all over the world. Even his Guru stopped him but he was firm in his resolve. The rest is history!

To that One of firm resolve, our prostrations!

OM DRIDHANISCHAYAAYA NAMAH

305. Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

07-03-2016

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

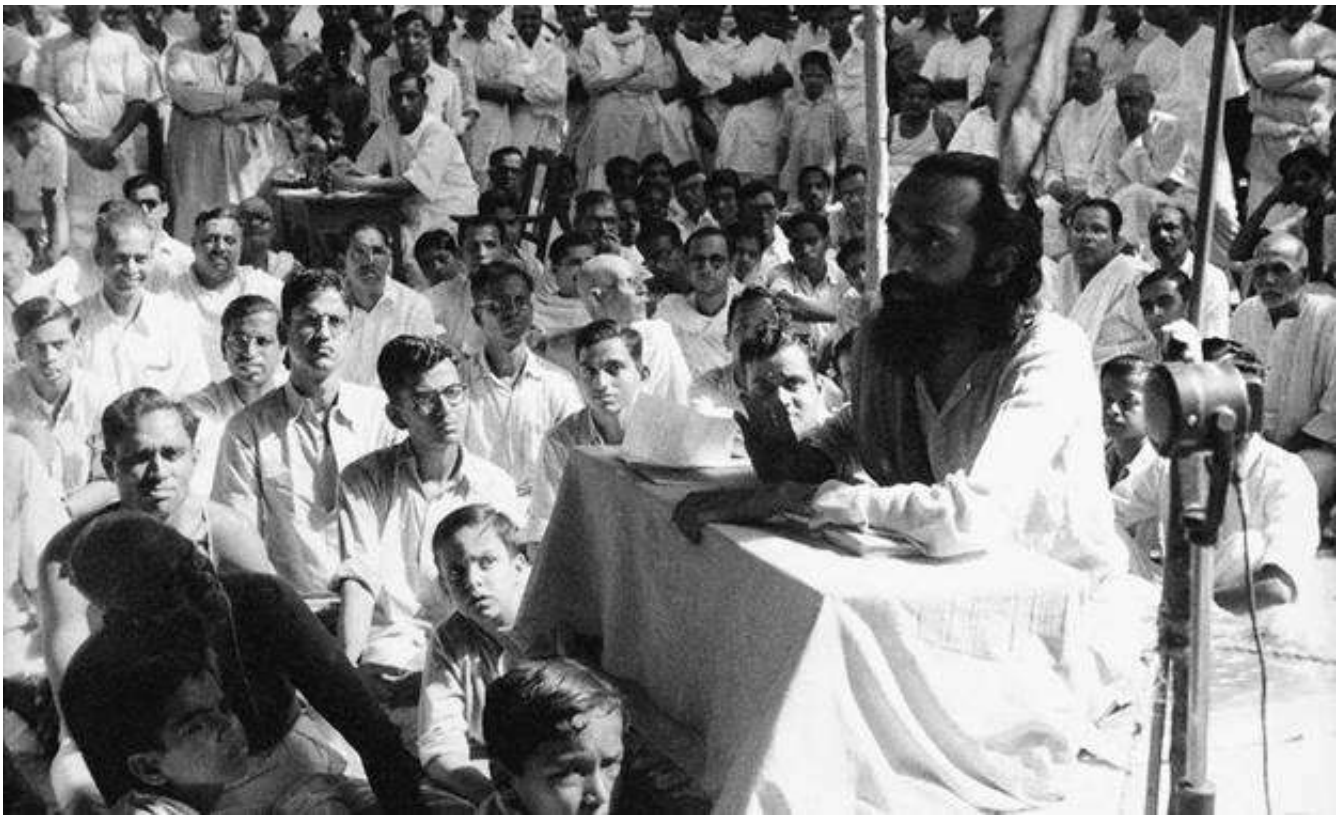
Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda ji,with his permission

Salutations to him who is established in dharma.

*What Gurudev did for religion and culture cannot be estimated by anyone. Hewas himself established in dharma, and he also established dharma.

* During medieval India, to market a new thought, a new philosophy and present it as all new, or ‘not in the Vedas’, was easily acceptable because at that time Hindu philosophy and followership was dwindling; Gurudev could have easily started something new. Why, with his educational background and worldly wisdom he had, Gurudev could have easily carried it off as a new-age philosopher.

But he didn’t do that. He said we will retain the culture and work with it. Sankara did that. He examined what misunderstandings there were about Advaita and he set that right with his commentaries and bhashays. Gurudev enhanced that further by contemporizing Vedanta, making it relevant to changed times.



Relevant to changed times...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

*Why start a new system, a new faith? To start something new is not very difficult. How many new age philosophers have come up. To become like that is very easy. But to retain the old, like Sankara did, is not easy. Sankara first understood why the old system was being denied, rejected or not being used. He examined the socio-economic changes, the changes in society and the changes in the social structure. And then he reshaped Advaita!

Gurudev always says – to rebuild a old building, to renovate and to reconstruct that is difficult. To start a new building is easy. An old building has to be supported. It is always difficult. Few masters, chiefly AdiSankara, and Gurudev, alone have shown the grit and determination to sustain the old, revive it. Gurudev went one step further: he refreshed and contemporized the old and made it relevant for the changing society.

*Both Gurudev and Sri AdiSankara have shown us what Dharmasanssthaapana really is. It is the protection through restoration, revival, renewal, relevance and rejuvenation. Many others have contributed to this revival and restoration. Dharmasamsthapaka.

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu–CM,Chennai

Though Bhagavan (Advaita) transcends dharma no one who does not follow dharma can ever reach there. As Gurudev always says dharma sastras are codified after the lives of the realised masters. They having transcended BMI have no reason to behave contrary to dharma. Thus dharma is the basis of harmony in this life and necessary for the state beyond death.

But dharma is very subtle. It is based many a time on the results. That which does maximum good for maximum people or,that whichbrings maximum happiness for maximum people for maximum time, is dharma. This being our Mission motto, it is clear thatSwamiji championed the cause of dharma.
There are commentators who says essence of the Bhagavad Gita is dharma. Their argument is based on the first word of the Gita being "dharma" and that the Gita ends with the last word "mama". Hence Geeta basically is mama dharma.

Also "dharma kshetraykurukshetray" means ‘kshetraykshetraydharmam kuru’ – in all endeavours (kshetrekshetre) follow dharma. Since dharma is subtle, to decide on dharma one has to base it on the welfare of the Total. Hence SarwadharmanparithyajyamamekamSaranamVraja [Abandoning all DHARMAS, (of the body, mind, and intellect) , take refuge in Me alone;]

Sri Gurudev was all inclusive. He was traditional in His values modern in His approach. He has opposed superstition or blind faith. Yet He kept the tradition alive not merely through the Sastras but in teaching the scriptures He adhered to the Sri SankaraBhashyas.
To maintain tradition and emphasise its value in our everyday living, He has conducted butter ceremonies for mothers-to-be, Anna prasnam ceremonies for infants, Akshrabhyasas for the child ready for learning, upanayanams for the child coming of age, built numerous temples, revived old temples, conducted SahasranamaArchanas,akhandanamaJapas and so on.

Though He had no need to do Japa that too with a Mala, in order to set an example to others, when He was sitting in the audience or otherwise free, He was always doing Japa with a Mala. He was always adorned withvibhuthi and Chandan.



Traditionally adorned, always...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

In the initial years of His work, He conducted Havan, avabhruthasnanas etc. He went out of the way to explain the harm through non vegetarian food. Sri Gurudev introduced Matru Pujas and to this day others are emulating it in a big way.

“Gurudev”Tapovan Prasad Dec 2015page 18 bottom box:

Use the main righteous path; avoid by lanes, the narrow thorny,unrighteous path. We must start and constantly keep unto the right path to reach the Supreme,our Goal. Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him page 105

Shri K R Baliga Madras (Chennai)

“Like AdiSankara, who rejuvenated our Dharma at a time when Hinduism was in a turmoil, our Gurudev has also been able to remove our blinkers of modernism in this material world.”

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who Established Righteousness

paritraaNaaysadhunamvinashaya cha dushkritam,

dharmasamsthapanarthayasambhavamiyugeyuge. (B.G.IV.8)

Bhagavan takes avatara for three purposes - to protect good people, to destroy the bad and to establish righteousness and order.

A mother takes avatara, when she appears on the scene to settle a quarrel between her children. First she advises them to stay quiet. If nothing happens, she beats them up and restores the peace. Bhagavan is like our mother. Now and then when we fight, He comes to set things right. He takes the form of great mahatmas, good thoughts in the minds of people. Sometimes He manifests in the form of Rama and Krishna. Actually that is nature. When things go wrong, suddenly someone appears to set them right. Even among people, we find one person takes the role of leader and re-establishes order.

Gurudev came at a time when India was in a state of turbulence. We had just gained independence and there was confusion regarding various issues. Some among the long list were - our culture, our dharma, the meaning of dharma, and the meaning of secularism. Even today we are unable to understand the true meaning of secularism. Being secular, does not mean freedom from righteousness.

There must be a proper attitude towards all religions and dharma should be given due respect. Politics cannot be above dharma. Nothing is above dharma. Only God is above dharma. Dharma or goodness should permeate every aspect of life -- politics, governance, social life and even family life. In this, Mahatmas play a very important role. They are able to explain the situation and put it into proper

perspective.

Gurudev used to say that though the scriptures have been there for so many thousands of years, it is still important for Mahatmas to reinterpret them. Scriptures remain the same but they have to be explained in modern language. The times are changing so fast that the language one generation understands is not the same as the other. Forget about another generation, even within a year or two, we perceive language changes. People of our generation understand one language and our youth speak another. How much they understand this language is hard to say. They have their own language which is also wonderful. So one should be able to explain or talk to them in their own vocabulary. The scriptures have to be converted into different words.

Gurudev was a master in this play. He used modern terms to explain words like yagya, devata, ishvara and jiva used in our scriptures. If we do not understand some parts of the scriptures or think they are not applicable to us, then it means that we have not understood them clearly, or that they have not been interpreted properly. Gurudev's firm belief and understanding was that scriptures are meant for all people and for all times. They are eternal.

To understand this one must read Gurudev's masterly commentary on the Bhagavad-gita. It reinterprets the whole scripture in modern language. In the 3rdchapter he explains the word 'devata'or rain as the productive potential. There are many such examples. His formulation and use of the BMI chart was a great revolution. Mahatmas of olden times did not use any aids for teaching. They would sit under a tree and speak, oblivious of whether people listened or not. It was a more passive style. But times have changed and today we have access to different inter-active mediums.

His BMI chart became very famous. From a distance people could see it and note down all the details. Through this they understood the whole philosophy that Gurudev wanted to convey through the Gita and the Upanishads. It was a powerful tool and one of the most revolutionary things he did. By using modern terminology, he reinterpreted the scriptures and established dharma once again. Establishing Chinmaya Mission and the setting up of various activities for children, youth and others, was part of dharmasamsthapana.

Gurudev believed that the family is one unit of society. To make the society strong we have to make the family strong. When families become weak, the society becomes weak. When families break up then society breaks up. Western countries believe that the individual is one unit of society. This is a more individualistic concept. When husband and wife fight, they are treated as individuals. Each one wants to know, 'What is my profit and loss? What is the trouble for me?' In times of difficulty they go their separate ways. Decisions are based on the individual. But our culture focuses on the family and not individuals. In finding solutions husband and wife are not the only ones to be considered. The children and even society are taken into consideration. The complete structure and way of looking at things is different. And that's what Gurudev firmly believed. To bind the family together, he formulated programmes for each and every member of the family – children, youth, ladies, adults, senior citizens.

A Mahatma talks or works with a great vision. We may not realize its impact immediately. Realization dawns with the passing of years. In time, we understand the impact of his actions and decisions. Even now in America and other places, Bal Vihars are happening on such a massive scale. In some centres like San Jose, about 1200 children attend these classes every week. Parents accompany their children and attend the adult classes. They understand the benefits and appreciate its impact. His work of dharmasamsthapana is continuing and the Mission is also growing. This is the wonder of great Mahatmas. Our country has produced many spiritual giants, like Gurudev and Swami Vivekananda, whose aim has been to establish dharma.



1954 Rewa. Gurudev held a Kathopanishad yagna here at the behest of his good friend

KK Sharma, His friend in the Lucknow University. Later he joined the IAS and became the Chief Secretary of Vindhya Pradesh. He invited Gurudev to come to Rewa, Gurudev spoke on the Kathopanishad to people who did not understand English but attended due to their Boss's (KK Sharma) orders. In this pic Gurudev is leading a group (Sharmas included) to immerse the ashes of the Havan kund in a river nearby. Great tradition upheld!

Om Dharmasansthaapkaay Namah

306. OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

08-03-2016

OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Salutations to the intelligent and discriminate one

A Gnani though He is Gunateeta (beyond gunas), yet in the transactional world He is ever established in Satwa (nityasatwastah). Satwa is predominantly intellectual.
Even if this be the case, Gurudev's range and depth are extraordinary. I have heard Gurudev talking the subtleties of botany, zoology, physics, music, dance, automobile engineering ...to name a few!

His observations of political, economic and social systems, their maladies and remedies are brilliant.
He could look far beyond the obvious in people and their intentions, by a mere suggestion. There were occasions where He refused major donations knowing the implications of receiving such donations. In most of these cases the organisers are baffled. Here is a case where Sri Gurudev by merely seeing somebody cautioned the organisers and proved He was right.

Swami Chinmayananda as I knowpg 11&12,

Shri Unni Nair.

One man asked me if he could help me in the store. I went to Gurudev to ask Him if the man could be appointed. Gurudev looked at that man and said, "Don't believe him. He is a crook." I was very surprised! Three days later, we heard that the man had been arrested because he had looted lakhs of rupees posing as the Assistant Store Controller in the Railways.

Let us see the way Gurudev explains BG 15:1

For this tree-of-life "THE VEDAS THEMSELVES ARE THE LEAVES". Now to compare Veda-'knowledge,' to the leaves of the "Tree" is not quite inappropriate. Leaves are areas from which the water contents get evaporated in all trees, and this, in its turn, creates the 'osmotic-pressure' in the roots and facilitates the roots to draw more quantity of nourishment from the earth. Cut down the leaves of a tree and its growth is immediately stunted; the larger the number of branches and leaves, the greater is the tree's dimension and growth. Where there is greater knowledge, there

we are sure to find a greater flare of manifest-life.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Now please see BG 9:25, where Gurudev explains lokas, specially the Bhutaloka.

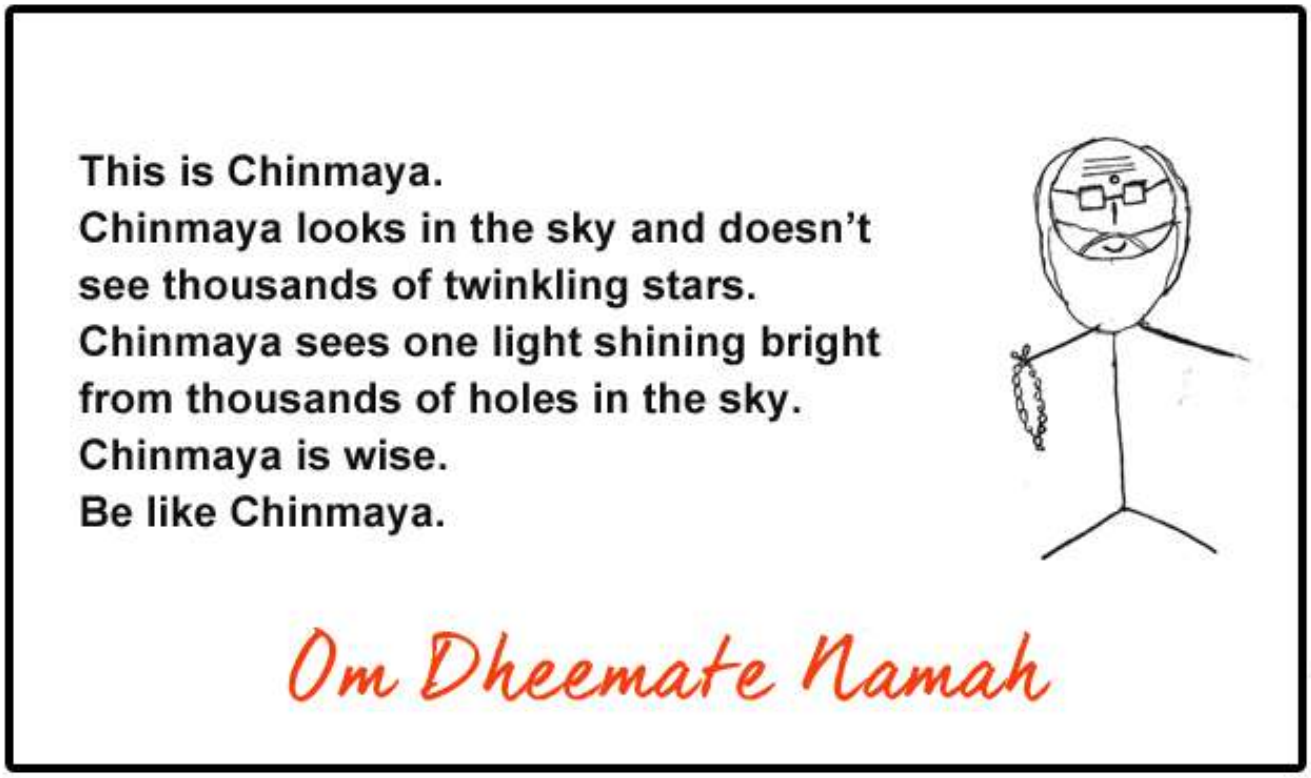
Devas, we have seen, represent the various sense-organs, through which we experience the world.Similarly, here also, the plural noun 'Devas,' may be taken to mean "the entire field of all physical experiences." Those who are courting the external world of joys and successes consistently and with the required amount of devotion, come to gain that field of demanded experiences.

Accepting the term 'Pitri' as denoting the 'ancestors,' 'votaries of ancestors' would mean 'persons who are enthusiastically alive to the cultural purity and tradition of their ancients, and who are striving to live up to those ideals.' The active quest in the field of "objective-sciences" is a part of man's hunt for knowledge, and therefore, the "worshippers of the Bhutas," are the secular scientists who try to observe, codify and systematize the observed knowledge of physical nature and behaviour of things and beings as it is now done under such classifications as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Zoology, Botany, Engineering, Agriculture, Politics, Sociology, Geography, History, Geology, and so on --- an endless array of specialised lines of investigation, adopted, pursued and accepted by the modern world

Finally my personal experience during construction of Sri Rama Temple at Sidhabari. Opposite the temple there was not much of place for people to stand. There was a 30 feet fall. Seeing this and appreciating the need for space in front of the temple, Gurudev built a storied building for a Nurses Training institute in such a way that the roof of that building joined with the front of the temple thereby enough space was thus created before the temple.

OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

OM DHEEMATE NAMAH



OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji,Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR.

Salutations to the Intelligent One

Dhi means buddhi, dhimate meansbuddhiman, intelligent. One who has dhana (wealth) is called dhanavan (wealthy), one with buddhi (intelligenc) is called buddhiman (intelligent). Though we all have intelligence everyone is not called intelligent. Many children own cricket bats but just having a bat does not make one a cricketer. Similarly, just having intelligence does not make us wise. It is a tool

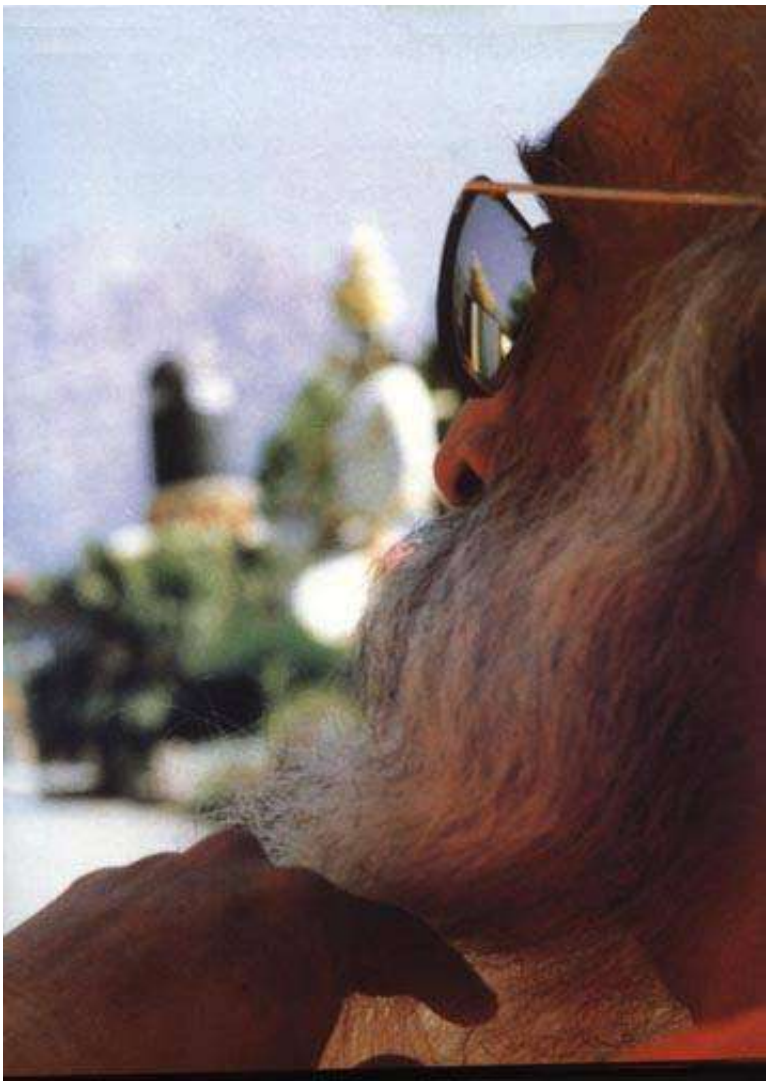
and has to be cultivated and used. A screwdriver is an instrument, with which one can open a clock and check it out. Similarlybuddhi is an instrument through which we gain wisdom, understanding and conviction. As it becomes strong and better, this conviction in turn, uses the intelligence. Understanding and wisdom in using this instrument is called buddhi. If we use it properly, we gain right knowledge. With right knowledge, we further make even better use of it. So one compliments the other.

Some people have sharp intellects, but their convictions are wrong and so they use it for wrong purposes. Ravaëa had a great and very powerful intellect but his vision and convictions were faulty. He used his intellect to suit his warped philosophy. The intelligent people in the world use their intelligence, according to their philosophy and wisdom. The scriptures say that with the help of the intellect we can attain God. With the help of the intellect we can take right decisions in life. With the help of the intellect we can understand the difference between atma -anatma (Self-not Self), puëya - papa (merit-sin). Buddhi plays an important, discriminatory role in arriving at the right judgement.

Those with intelligence and wisdom are called dhimate. Gurudev was both intelligent and wise. He could just take decisions properly and quickly. He understood not just spiritual matters, but even worldly affairs, completely and holistically. During yagyas, people would write down their questions and give them to Gurudev. He would read them and answer extempore. The question-answer sessions with him were meaningful and interesting. It is important not only to understand what is asked, but to know what the person is trying to ask.

Sometimes we ask one thing but want to know something else. For example, a person may ask, 'Why did God create this world?' An academic teacher would answer the question at face value but the spiritual teacher would go deeper. He would understand the reason for this question and answer accordingly. The questioner here could be frustrated with life and be wondering why God created the world. So the real question is: "Why am I unhappy?", or "How to get rid of my unhappiness?", but it is coming out as, "Why did God create the world?" So the answer should be to that question, not to what he is asking.

If the spoken question is answered, the person will not be satisfied. He will go home more frustrated, because his basic question still remains unanswered. Therefore, it is important to understand the questioner and to address the real issue. This requires a deep understanding of human nature and human psychology.



Intelligent...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Then again Gurudev had to take decisions on matters pertaining to the Mission and its functioning. He had to attend the different Trust meetings and decide various issues, which also required understanding and wisdom. His wisdom encompassed people, the Supreme Reality, and also Nature. In Sidhbari, he would sometimes look at the mountains and say that it will snow and sure enough, it would. He was in tune with Nature.

OM DHEEMATE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

307. Naam 48. OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

09-03-2016

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vilasini ji

Salutation to the Courageous One who walks the right path

The Bhagavad Gita says that one of the fruits of spiritual growth is freedom from fear and worry. Swamiji wrote, “Fear is the expression of Avidya, spiritual ignorance. Where there is (spiritual) Knowledge, there is fearlessness. In Sri Krishna’s enumeration of twenty values of life, fearlessness (abhayam) comes first.” (Gita XVI:1 commentary).

We all marveled at how fearless Swamiji was. He was undaunted. Many of us would comment that in his presence, we felt that nothing terrible could ever happen. It was the feeling of being with the Lord of the Universe. There was a sense of safety and security, like what I remember as a small child feeling with my parents. And if anything tragic happened, it all took a different light in his presence. We could begin to see the larger picture, the vision God might take, of anything that happened and be at peace. Even now, when we are tuned up to His presence, this feeling of being at peace with all that happens around us envelopes.

There are some teachers who use body guards around them. These body guards are trained to keep people away and to protect their teacher. In all of Swamiji’s travels, among crowds of tens of thousands of people, Swamiji never had a body guard. The concept didn’t even arise. It is like saying that God needs protection. There was no fear for Swamiji’s safety. For more than three years I traveled with Swamiji in his car on the way to his talks in various cities in India, where thousands of people were waiting for him and crowding to see him. There was never a need or a thought that he needed protection! He truly was living in God’s grace. By his example, we all around him learned how to relax and surrender to God’s will.



Undaunted ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Fear includes fear for self as well as the wave of fear that spreads among those around you, for you and for themselves. It also includes the aftermath of a fearful moment and hence distraction. There was only one instance I experienced of someone getting aggressive with Swamiji. In a small town in California in 1981, Swamiji was giving talks on the Gita in a local school auditorium with an audience of a few hundred people. About half way through the talk, there was a disturbance in the middle of the hall. An unfamiliar westerner stood up and loudly interrupted and asked some question. Swamiji told him to hold the question until the end of the talk, when he would answer. The man then shouted, “He is false!” People turned around aghast. The man got up and walked out of the hall. Swamiji’s only reaction was to mutter to himself, “Poor man,” which we only heard later on the video recording.

Suresh Balakrishnan had just met Swamiji during this yajna, and he was deeply affected by this episode and saw how intensely Swamiji wanted all to benefit from his talks and be freed. After this spontaneous exclamation of compassion, Gurudev didn't miss a beat in his talk. He picked up again just where he left off, and in a few minutes we were all listening and laughing as though nothing had happened.

So, not just Gurudev was not distracted, his audience too remained unaffected by a potentially fear-causing episode.

Gurudev was an endless beam of love, an endless ray of divine brilliance. And there is no space for fear in that blazing light of Perfect Being and Grace.

Swami Sivananda, Gurudev's Diksha Guru, writes about fearlessness:

"One who sees His own Atman in all beings, and all beings in his own Atman he becomes fearless. He is not deluded by the objects of the senses. Sorrow melts away before his sunny gaze of bliss. He is not afraid of anything; nor is any one afraid of him. Bliss fills his very being. And, this bliss is infectious. Everyone who comes into contact with him is injected with this bliss. He is not particularly attached to any object or being. His heart flows out to one and all, animate and inanimate. He perceives Unity in diversity. He lives in the one Great Present. There is neither a past nor a future for him. There is neither a 'here' nor a 'there'. He sees nothing but Pure Consciousness."

That is our Gurudev!

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

Dheera is translated as 'wise'. It is also used as 'brave'. Dhi is intellect. One who sustains by intellect is dhira. In the case of the usage as 'brave', it refers to one who stands firm by his conviction. A spiritually wise person will never compromise with his values, irrespective of the consequences.

Sri Rama was an example. In recent times it was Mahatma Gandhi. We had also examples of Guru Govind Singh's sons though just adolescents, they gave up their lives instead of yielding to the pressure of conversion.

Gurudev stood by His conviction during the freedom struggle and did not yield.
Many years later, during Indo Pakistan war, Gurudev cancelled His program to go to the war front and give moral support to the Army.
Once a political meeting wasorganised next to the venue where Gurudev's yagna was being held. Pressure was brought upon Him to cancel the talk. Gurudev refused and the political group had to withdraw their demand.

In Chapter 16, verse 1 of the Bhagvad Gita, the very first quality of a divine person is stated as Abhayam,fearlessness.

In Kathopanishad this quality is projected in 2-1-2 and 2-2-12&13. Here though the common meaning is ‘a wise one’, it is also true for spiritual pursuit for, here too one has to be uncompromising and brave.

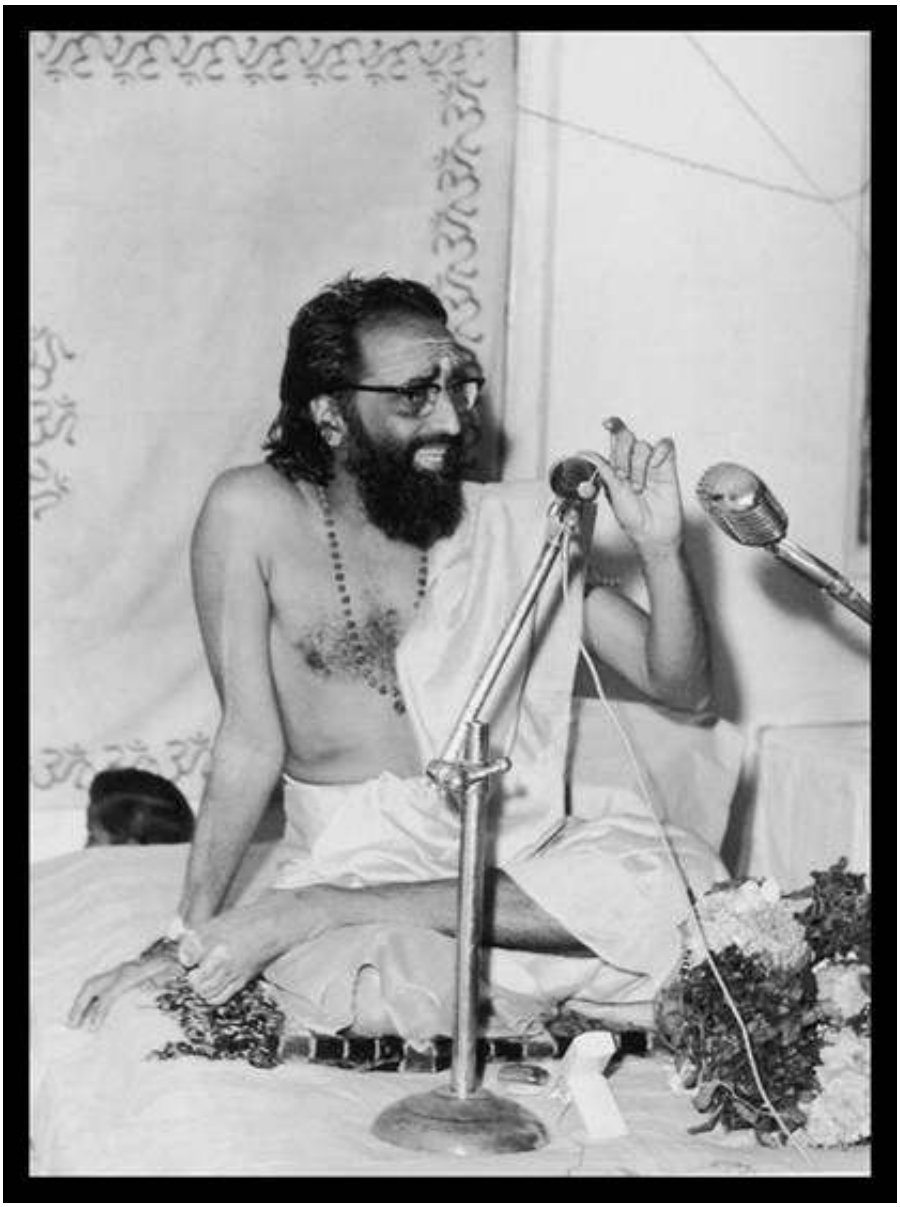
In the Feb. 2015 issue of the Tapovan Prasad, pg 3, Sri SriTapovanMaharaj is quoted:

The search for Truth is not a sign of cowardice, laziness. On the other hand, it is the mark of bravery, enthusiasm and intelligence.

He Did Itpg 96

Let us be Hindus : The Jnana yagnas begin

Each day, Swamiji and His uncle would go out to look for a place,starting with the most logical of places,which included temples. But the Brahmin orthodox priests would have none of it.
Just when it looked Chennai would have to be put on hold, a Muslim friend,who had a large vacant palace, offered the use of his property for forty-one days. There was just one problem--the Arni Palace was haunted. "Well, l havenever seen a ghost," said Swamiji quite amused. "This looks a good opportunity!"



Not even a small ghost....

Sure enough,the flickering of kerosene lanterns did call up strange images as the group of listeners dissolved into the night. The disappointed look on the faces of the yagna committee was obvious. "Don't worry; others will come tomorrow night. You will see!"reassured Swamiji. "You have done your part;now leave the rest to the Lord ".

Within a week, the crowd had grown beyond all expectations,and the hall in the palace was abandoned for a canvas shelter on the spacious palace grounds,complete with platform and microphone.

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

Since Courage is the theme, it will be apt to reproduce here a story from Shri K.K. Rajan, Chief Sevak and Trustee, CIF. This story was carried in June bearing number 59.

59. When the Lion Roars, the Jungle shakes...

It was in 1969-70. Gurudev had a yagna in Ernakulam and was staying at the home of Smt. Janaki Menon -- she was his college batchmate.

Shri K.K. Rajan ji had the day off at work being a Saturday and so he had gone from Trivandrum to meet Gurudev.

One morning while they were there, the principal of Sacred Heart College, Thevara came to invite Gurudev to address the students of the college. He wanted Gurudev to come the next morning.

The same evening a group of students representing some kind of Students' union came and said 'Swamiji you are not welcome to our college we will not allow you to address anyone.'

They sounded menacing and everybody advised Gurudev not to go. It used to be a notorious college, known for rowdyism. Gurudev said, I know there is rowdyism in this college.

But to the students he said, 'I have been requested by your principal to address you. And I will cancel the program only if the principal tells me to. Otherwise I have accepted the invite, so I will come. So if you want me to not come, then go get me a letter from the Principal or have him call me.'

CMK Marar was the Secretary, CM Ernakulam. A nervous Marar and others said again, 'Swamiji it will better if you cancel the program. '

Gurudev said," Yes yes, Patayeppa College in Chennai and Sacred Heart - Thevara-- I know very well, but you leave it to me.'

Next morning, Gurudev set out for the college. The college was just a five minute walk away from the Menon home. He said to everyone, "Nobody need come with me."

Then he saw Marar ji and Rajan ji look at him with baleful eyes. Gurudev relented, 'Ok come,' he said and all three went.

A short distance from the college gate, they could hear the howling and shouting at the college. At the gate the principal was standing with a garland and he was nervous. Despite that garland, the principal went up to Gurudev and said, "Swamiji better to cancel the program ..."

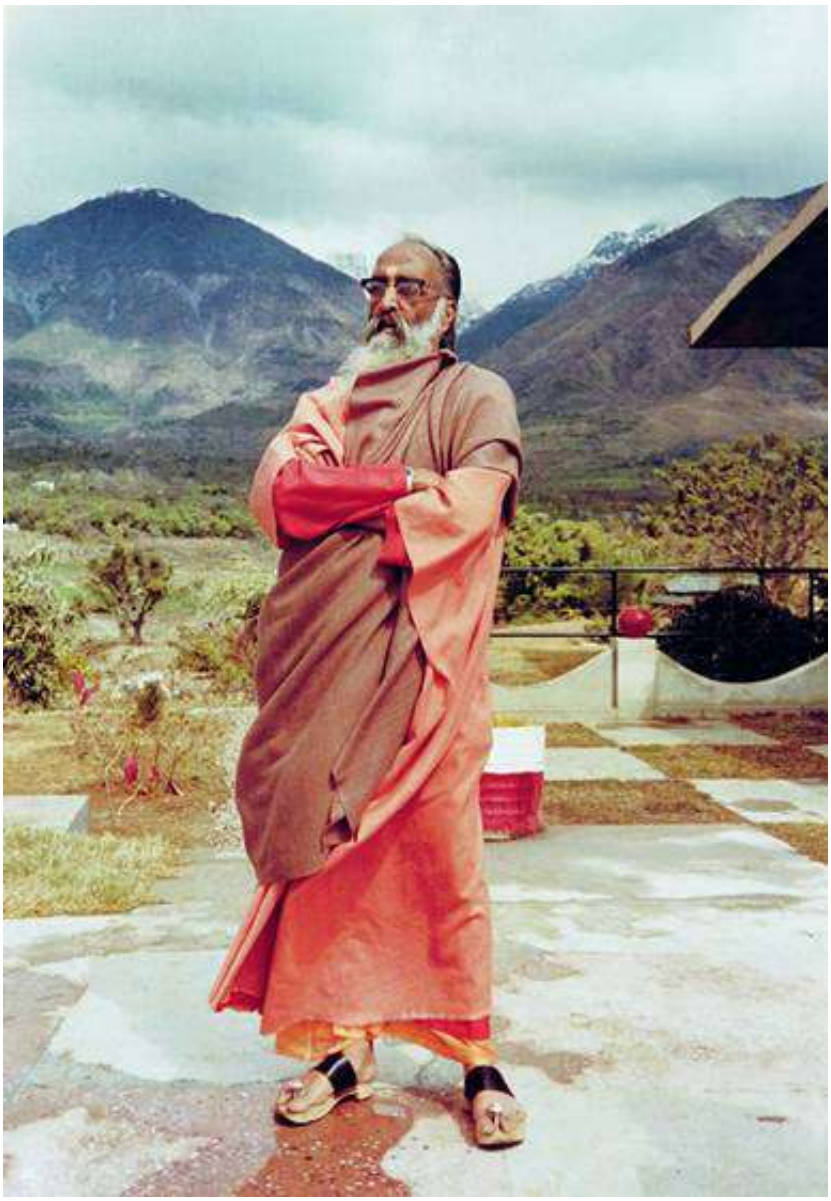
Gurudev did not listen to him at all. He knew this college well as he was a resident of Ernakulam and he would have visited it many times. So he would have known where the auditorium was.

Once again the principal and the staff members requested him to not address the students.

But Sw did not listen to any of their pleas. He was walking so briskly, his tall frame, his long strides, his pace was so brisk that the others were verily running to keep pace as he headed for the hall.

He walked into the auditorium and got on the stage and taking the mic, he began mimicking the howling of the students that sounded like that of a jackal, for 3 long hoots. Ooooh ..... oooh... exactly as the students were doing.

Then he said to them, "I can do it better than you!"



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

With the first howl, the crowd had become virtually silent and still. They did not expect a Swami to do all this. Now who would have!

Gurudev was very good at mimicry, says Rajan ji; in college he was known for that. And here he stood heckling exactly as they did.

A thick silence fell on the overcrowded auditorium. There was pindrop silence, says Rajan ji. Then Gurudev spoke: "I have also covered this period during my college days ....." and beginning thus, he spoke for one and half hours and everybody heard him in rapt attention. Says Rajan ji, "He started talking in Malayalam - he said on the way I saw a buffalo which has its mouth, belly and anus in the same line and till

this moment you were all behaving like that buffalo. ...."

For one and half hours there was such silence as he spoke and spoke and spoke. Says Rajan ji, the way Gurudev had grabbed the stage straightaway, the welcome speech happened only after his speech ended!

The same boys, came and apologised. They surrounded him with such eagerness, talking, chatting, and engaging with him with such joy. "Forgive our mischief," they said. 'We thought it will be a religious talk but you have mesmerised us with your speech. The next time you come to this town you must come here again.'

Gurudev's courage in facing this crowd rendered young Rajan ji and Marar ji speechless. All they could do was walk close to him as he inched towards the car. Yes 'inched' because the students were all around him, talking, smiling, cheering him. Many were touching his feet, many were prostrating....

Says Rajan ji, 'It took 30 minutes for Gurudev to reach his car! And what a speech... fully embellished with jokes in Malayalam, quotes, metaphors..... never heard him speak like that ever!'

(From the collection and memory of Shri K.K. Rajan)

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda,Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Wise

The word dhira has many meanings. One meaning is wise. Another meaning is one who has staying power (dhairya). An example of dhairya would be to continue walking, when one is too tired to even lift a leg. Dhairya, dhiraj, is not only the ability to dare but it also means fortitude, stamina, staying power, confidence. It is all these different words put together. The English language requires so many more different words to explain this one word dhairya.

Dhairya is resolve, stamina of mind and staying power under all circumstances. It is also the ability to overcome difficulties and obstacles in life, despite everything to keep moving forward; to remain courageous in the face of all calamities. The word dhairya comes from dhi, meaning understanding or buddhi. So it also means conviction, fearlessness, fortitude, staying power, courage, intelligence.

Guruji once told a beautiful story of two friends who were travelling in the forest. Along the way one of them felt tired and wanted to sleep. The other friend agreed to guard him from the wild animals in the forest. The tired man put his head on his friend's lap and went to sleep while the other stayed awake on guard. Suddenly the sleeping friend sensed something on his neck. He opened his eyes and saw his friend cutting his throat with a knife. He said nothing. He merely looked at him and again went to sleep. After a while he woke up. The friend said, "You opened your eyes, saw me cutting your throat but without saying anything you went back to sleep." The man who had woken up said, "I just thought something was biting me. I opened my eyes and saw you cutting my throat. I knew that you are my friend, so it must be for my welfare. But, anyhow, now that you talk of it, what exactly were you really doing?" The friend said, "A snake wanted to bite and kill you. I was awake and asked the snake if there was anything else that could be done so that you do not have to die?" The snake promised to leave if he got a little of your blood. So when you opened your eyes, I was taking some blood from you. Taking it, the snake quietly went his way."

This story conveys the strength we gain from faith. The same holds true for dhairya, or conviction. When a person is convinced about certain things he becomes fearless. He is infused with a special kind of courage. Hanuman went to Lanka with confidence. He was absolutely fearless because of his conviction, trust and faith in God. Very often we say, "I do not have the confidence". Perhaps we don't have the proper trust, faith or understanding of life. Maybe we don't trust God enough and so courage deserts us.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Dhairya is very important in a seeker's life. Often during our spiritual journey we lose confidence. We become dispirited and wonder how far more we have to go. We entertain doubts and sometimes think, "I don't know whether I am doing the right thing. I don't know whether my mind is becoming pure or impure. I don't know if this is the path or there is some other path. The other person has a better mantra than mine or a better Guru than me." Many a time this confidence needs to be restored. Gurudev had this ability to restore and inspire confidence in the seeker.

OM DHEERAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

308. OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

10-03-2016

Naam 49: OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swamini Radhikananda (formerly Brni.Arpita Ayers) resides and teaches at the Chinmaya Mission St. Augustine center of 'Chinmaya Govardhan,' a serene and beautiful 17- acre ashram on the outskirts of the historical St. Augustine, Florida.

THE LION OF COURAGE:DHAIRYA-PRADAYA NAMAH

One of the many glorious aspects of Pujya Gurudev that affected me very personally was that of Dhairya-pradaya, here taken in its meaning of “the one who gives or instills courage”. When I first met Gurudev I was fearful of life, confused and despondent like Arjuna in the first Chapter of Gita. Previous religious teachings, upbringing and various life-experiences had contributed to a basically fearful, pessimistic view of life.



From the moment I met Pujya Gurudev in Washington, DC, in 1978, he sang my heart alive through his teachings on the Bhagavad Gita and his living example. Divinely dynamic, cheerful and full of enthusiasm in every movement, look and word. Whether just walking or eating, writing letters, meeting people personally, or speaking from the dais, his every action radiated self-assurance and courage, every word thundered fearlessly from the infinite depths and breadth of his Being. Nothing caused him trepidation or indecisiveness.

Everything about Gurudev showed me that fear, timidity, inhibition and self-consciousness had no place in true spirituality – because it wasn't our true nature and, therefore, wasn't real. Such negative or weak responses were only a mask created by identification with false notions of body, mind, and ego, a bundle of past memories.

Of the many personal experiences I remember with regard to this teaching from Gurudev, two especially come to mind. A year or so before joining the Vedanta Course at Sandeepany I was in Boston accompanying a close family member for a major operation she was to have at a hospital there. By God's Grace it turned out that Gurudev was in Boston at the same time giving a Jnana-Yagna at MIT and I was

able to get to his morning lectures before going to the hospital each day. When a devotee suggested I ask Gurudev if he could visit my family member in the hospital, I was thrilled at the thought but was much too shy and hesitant to ask him myself. Luckily, the devotee himself asked on my behalf and Gurudev then called me to sit near him. He stared deep in my eyes and said, “No confidence!” And at that moment I was shocked to see his eyes turn entirely white, without iris or pupils. A shudder went through me. Only a shock, he must have known, could get the message through! [As it happened, Gurudev did come to the hospital, and I am eternally grateful!)

Another time, after our Vedanta Course was completed in 1988 under the sublime guidance of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji, a few of us westerners got to attend Gurudev’s first International Camp in Cochin. As is well-known, Chinmaya Mission Camps always include discussion groups as an essential part of the day’s program. On the first day of the Camp there was an announcement that discussion groups would be organized according to alphabetical last names and that each would have a designated leader. Myself and others stood prayerfully nearby as Gurudev walked out of the hall at the conclusion of his talk. Surprisingly, Gurudev came straight up to me with his face about two inches from mine and stared deep into what felt like the very marrow of my soul saying, “And you will have to lead one of the study groups!”

O! The terror that shot through me at that moment! The fear of having to “lead” a large group of people I did not even know (and whom I figured probably knew Sanskrit a lot better than I did!), of being an easy target for criticism and possible failure in mine or other’s eyes. But there was no escape from Gurudev’s penetrating gaze. It had to be done. He always made us face our biggest fears or demons in whatever form they might come for each of us. One just had to do one’s best and learn to leave the rest. In this way Gurudev showed us how we must free ourselves of our “personality shackles” in order to be our true Self.

Nowadays the image of courage that impresses my mind most strongly is that of Gurudev as a young Swami riding around in the back of a bicycle rickshaw (in disguise) announcing his own Gita Jnana-yagnas with a megaphone in hand because, as yet, there was no other means of publicity!! To me this picture of Gurudev says it all (as it is displayed on the huge mural painting at Chinmaya Vibhooti): his utter bravado, uninhibited daring and firm determination to do what he felt was right to do, without waiting for anyone else to approve of or do the work for him, to advertise for him or even to support him, made him the great Master, the embodiment of Courage and the Lion of Vedanta that he was.



Says it all .....

Source: He Did It, Celebration Series, Mananam Publication

It is such vivid memories and stories we read or hear of Gurudev that give us our ideal and the courage to strive on spiritually and in the field of prachar-work, amidst inner and outer obstacles, successes and failures. He showed us that the outer result is not the goal, but that true success is the ability to maintain courage, enthusiasm and equipoise while facing all life's challenges, learning to abide in the fullness and joy of the Self. He's still teaching me. Jaya Gurudev!

OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai

Fear is the worst of all negative emotions. It is total ignorance and insecurity which in turn is the mother of all negative tendencies like jealousy greed anger hatred etc. Fear comes from ignorance and divides. Love comes from knowledge and unites. Therefore,we can say fear is opposed to love which is the source of happiness.

No one can do anything worthwhile both materially or spiritually with fear in one's bosom. Gurudev as a general formula says, "you are not lost in a dream,you are dreaming you are lost."

The very first statement the guru makes in Vivekachudamani(verse 43) to the student who has approached the teacher in distress is, "mā bhaiṣṭa vidvaṃstava nāstyapāyaḥ".

Fear not, O learned one! There is no danger for you.

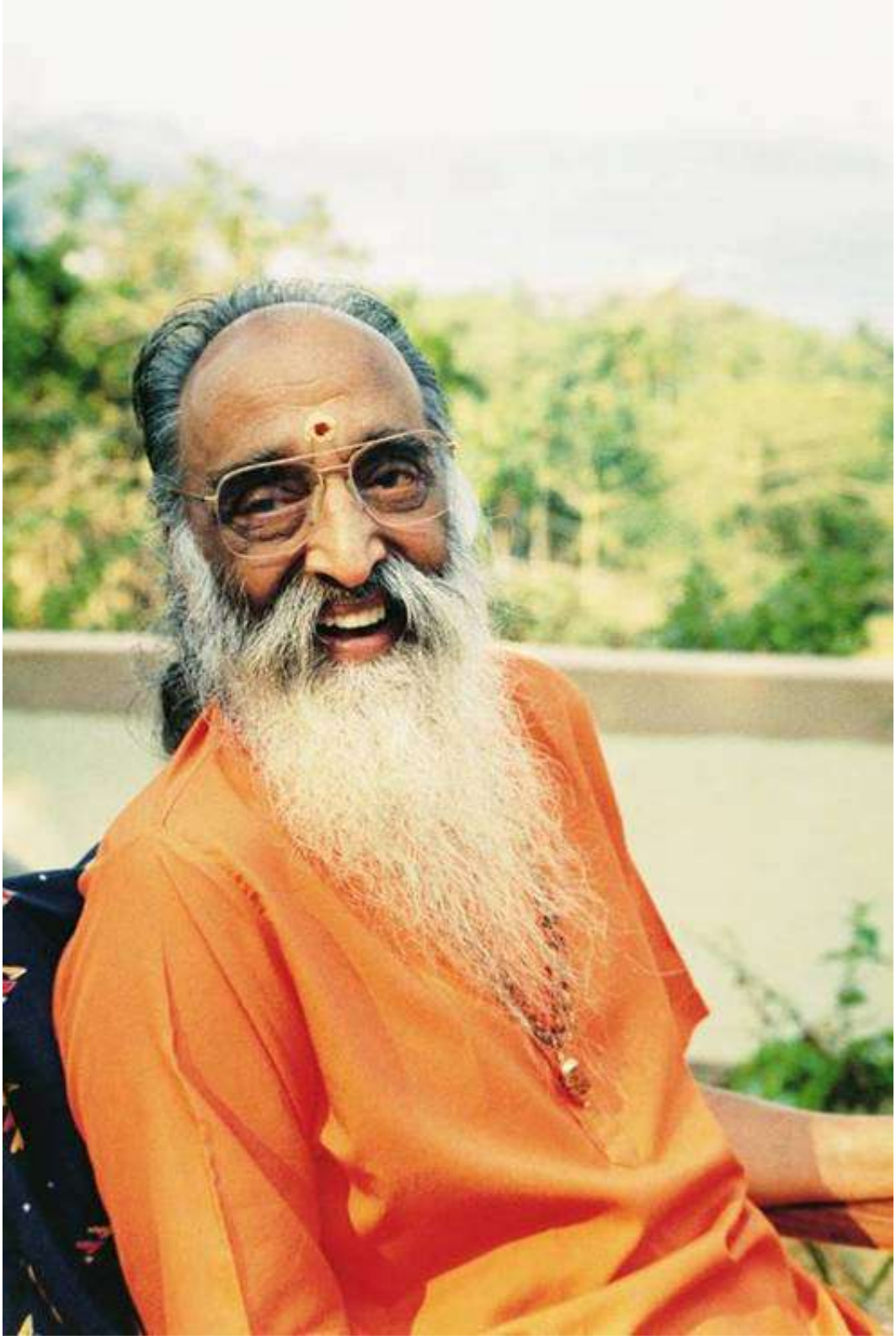
Gurudev's explanation to why it is necessary for the guru to remove fear and infuse confidence, is found in His commentary to this verse as below:
"Psychologically,when a questioner is extremely upset because of some fear or agitation in his mind,he is not in a mood to receive any philosophical idea, even when elaborately explained. Therefore a sympathetic Teacher,if he knows what he is about,will first of all,pacify the student and give him hope and spiritual solace. This however is not a false assurance,an idle hope given to the student just to save him from imaginary fears. Danger or death are not the phenomena of the Spirit but only the hallucinations of the mind. Therefore,with all confidence, the Teacher assures the student, 'There is no death for you.' "

Every Breath a Teaching pg 9

Life Laughter solution

S.Subramanian Mumbai India

Many years ago,S.Subramanian of Mumbai was experiencing a difficult family problem and wanted to run away from it all.
Swamiji said to him, "Face the problem! You will get all the answers you need from Chapter 3 of Bhagavad Gita. "
And Swamiji added "Whatever comes,take it with laughter. Never be grim".



Never grim ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

That is one teaching that Subramanian could never forget, and has applied it successfully in his own life. People who work with him often remarked that he was able to laugh,no matter what happened.

"That is what my teacher has taught me!"he said.
Subramanian recalls 'How Gurudev used to laugh! No one could laugh like Him ' Once when he started laughing in Gurudev's presence,Gurudev said,"Now,you are coming very close to me!"

To such a beautiful inspirer of courage, our prostrations!

OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

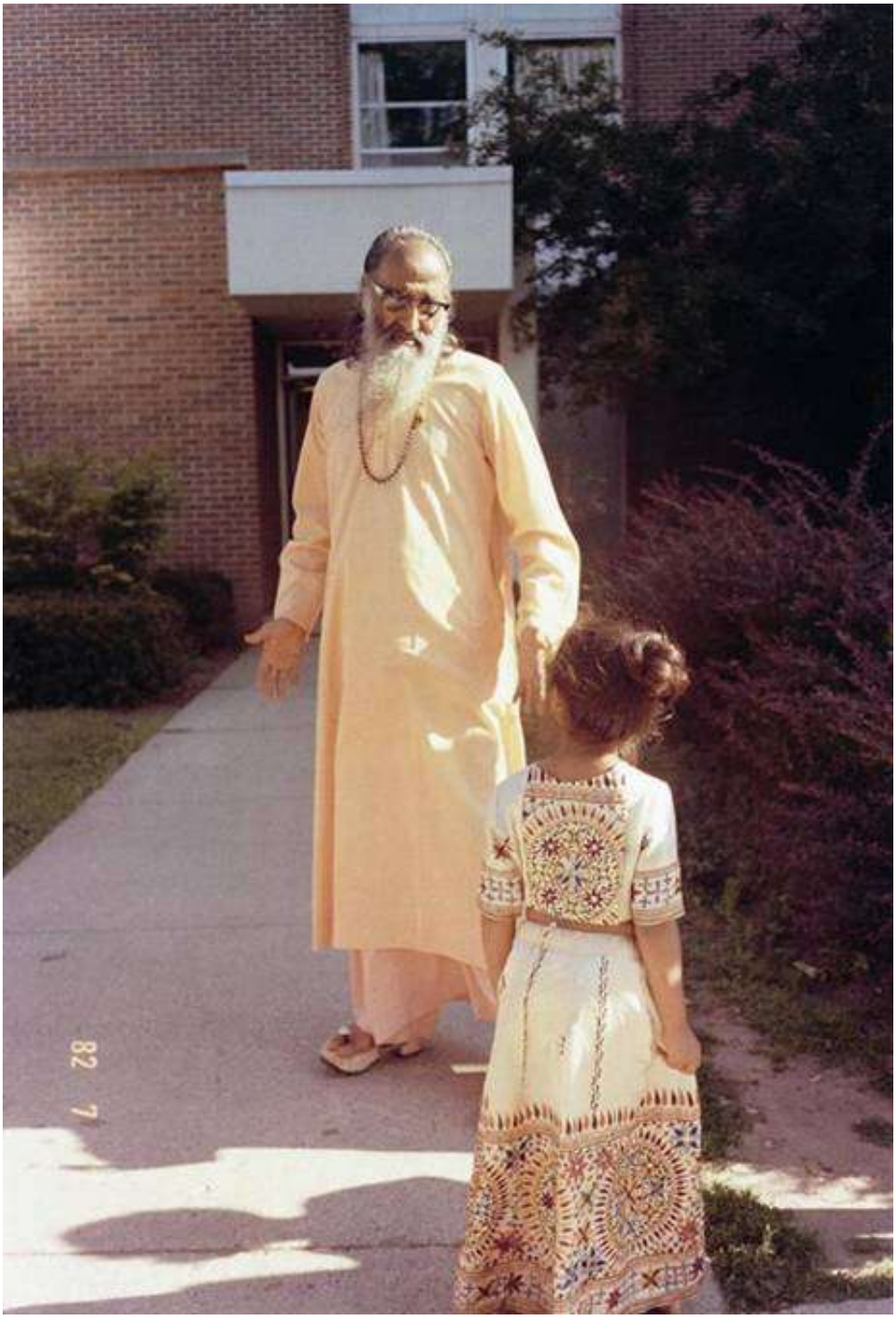
OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Bestower of Courage

Dhairya is strength of mind, staying power and courage . Pradaya is one who gives. So Dhairyapradaya is one who has the ability to infuse strength in others. Gurudev was not only strong and courageous himself but also had the ability to bestow this quality on others. We can give confidence to others only if we have it ourselves. Only if we are convinced about certain things, can we impart that conviction to others. If we are frightened ourselves, how can we tell others, not to be afraid? More often than not, people are prone to paint gloomy pictures. They visit someone in hospital and recall all the most depressing stories. They regale the hapless patient with details of someone else's illness and suffering, leaving the person feeling even more depressed.

When Hanuman saw Sita in Lanka, he found her sad and disheartened. She was at her wits end. So much so, she was even ready to take her life. Finding her in such low spirits, he advised her not to lose courage. "Please have patience, Ramachandraji will come with his whole army and destroy Lanka." To escape discovery he had taken on a tiny form and in that form he was bragging about the prowess of the army. Seeing his size Sita was not convinced, and wanted to know if all the monkeys in the army were small like him. Hanuman realized his folly and immediately increased his body. He took on a form as large as a mountain, shining and brilliant. At once Sitaji's confidence was restored and she became fearless.



Just being with Him....

Gurudev had this great ability to impart dhairya. Just by being with him people

would imbibe confidence and strength. Often people would suddenly lose their confidence and come to Gurudev in a panic. He would say, “Don’t worry, chant Hanuman Chalisa and keep moving.” Full of confidence himself, he could impart this feeling of well-being and buoyancy to others. If someone has started a project on his own, he would infuse him with the confidence to continue. This quality of Gurudev was infectious. People would leave his presence with their confidence restored and batteries recharged.

OM DHAIRYAPRADAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

309. OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

11-03-2016

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swamini ji Supreetananda ji

'Om'

Om Sri Sadguravenamah

Om NarayanayaNamah

God is established both in his manifest and un-manifest forms. He is one. He is unseen. He does not have any name or form. He is intangible and attribute-less. It is not that he cannot manifest himself. At his will he can present himself in any manner he likes. He is omnipresent. Vishnu means one who is omnipresent. He is also called Virat. He takes different forms assuming various names in several incarnations. Depending upon the three universal functions of creation, sustenance and destruction of the world he assumes the three different names, Brahma Vishnu and Maheshwara. He is called Jagannatha, the protector of the world. He is Narayana, residing in Sri Vaikuntha. He is our protector in the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. Accordingly he is also called Virat , Taijasa and Prajna. He is invoked by the ashtaksharimantra 'om namonarayanaya'. Lord Narayana is omnipresent and he alone is everything, whatever that exists, according to Narayanopanishad. He indwells everything and everybody. Let us ponder and find out the importance of the meaning of Narayana. Name needs to be thoroughly understood. The name Narayana is an all-encompassing label for the Lord that stands for everything and more. The omnipresent Lord Narayana is everythingand is everywhere. What is a name? It is essentially something that is used by somebody to call somebody else. Here, the caller happens to be Narayana and the called one is also Narayana. Actually every term of reference and every word in speech is Narayana. All connoting terms and all connoted objects or meanings are Narayana. All Scriptures, Veda, Shastra, Purana and other forms of literature characterize Narayana. The Guru, Pujya Swami Chinmayananda is also Sriman Narayana only. Gurudev himself was perpetually meditating on Narayana, constantly recounting the sacred mantra 'OM NAMO NARAYANAYA'.

The source, substratum and the governing force of the entire existence is Narayana. According to Prashnopanishad sixteen parts called the kala-s constitute the fullness of God the Paramatman. All existent things space, time, souls, plots, countries, kings, citizens, kingdoms, kings, officials, villages, communities, families, professions, etc., every name and every form is Narayana. Arjuna and Sri Krishna being Nara and Narayana respectively are both different forms of one and the same Narayana. It is difficult to understand the full significance of the word Narayana. Let us attempt to

have some sort of a bird's eye-view of the meaning of the word Narayana.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna un the Bhagavad Gita :

"natveva'hamjatunasamnatvamne'mejanadhipah
nachaivanabhavishyamahsarvevayamatahparam"
"Never was there a time (jatu) when I did not exist (naasam) ,
nor you, nor all these kings. It is not that in the future (atahparam)
all of us (sarvevayam) shall cease to exist."

Existence is real and eternal. One who has realized this, verily is Narayana. One who is constantly aware of this truth is Narayana while he who forgets this truth remains a Nara.

According to the Puranas Narayana is the Lord reclining on the serpent. He is the Lord dwelling in the milky ocean, consort of Sri Lakshmi, Sri Vishnu, who has Garuda as his mount. He is called Padmanabha because Brahma the creator of this world is born on the lotus that raises from the navel of this Lord. He is the protector of this world. He has taken several incarnations in the form of fish, tortoise, boar, man-lion, man etc. Though he descends into His created world in various forms to protect the good and punish the wicked, ten such descents or avataras are famous and are described in our shastras and puranas. Presently Sri Vedavyasa's Mahabharata highlights in the Bhagavad Gita the greatness of the avatara of Sri Krishna. Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda propagated and popularized the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita. He is spreading the light of the Gita all over the world. He has realized the truth of Omkara. He has realized Narayana. He knows Omkara. He is revered as Narayana himself. He is sincerely praised and earnestly worshipped by means of the mantra 'omkaravidenamah'. Let us worship Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda through this mantra. This mantra is as great as the manta Om NamoNarayanaya. Let me chant 'Om ChinmayayaNamah' and let me find repose in His sacred lotus-feet.

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

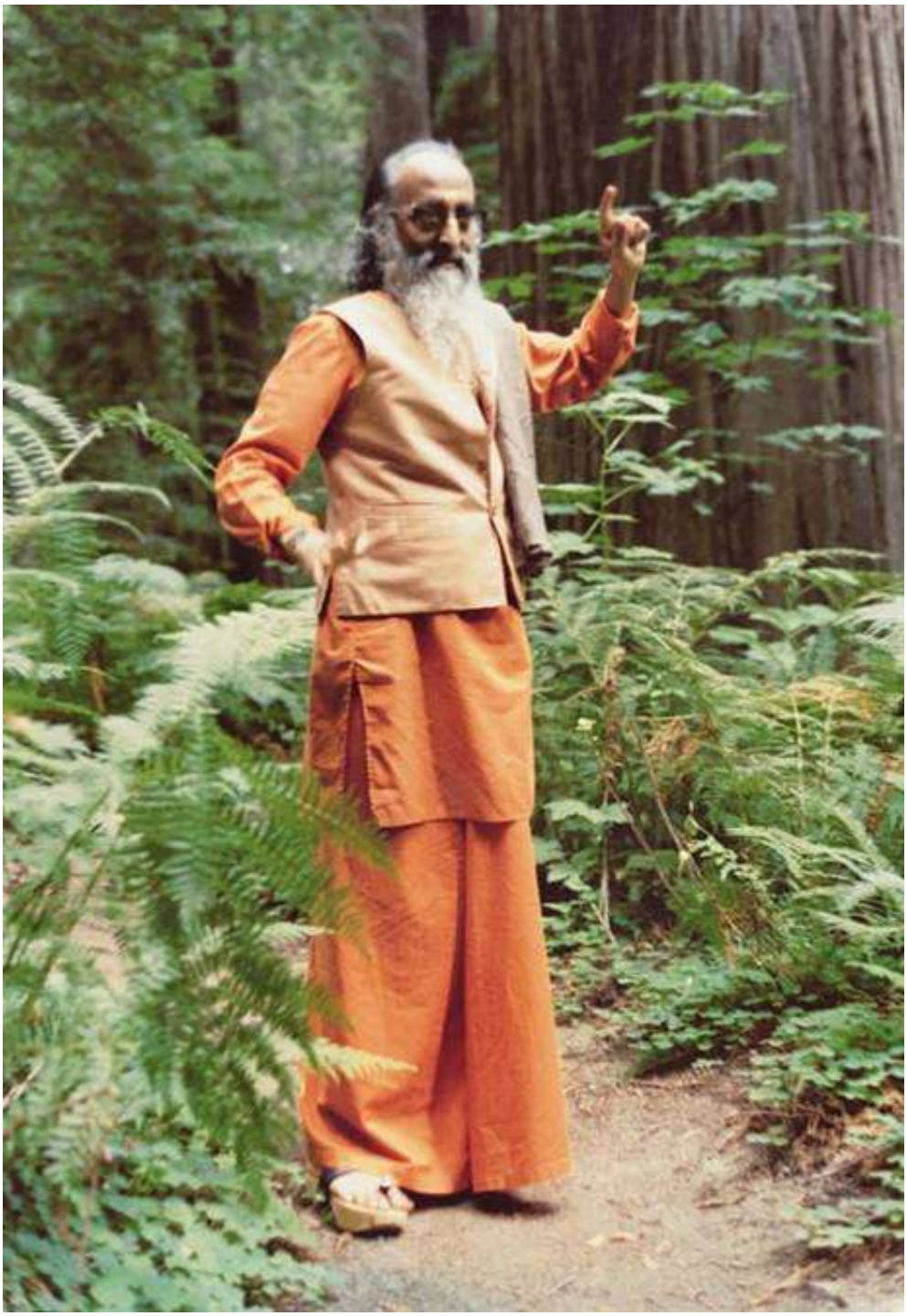
Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to him who is Vishnu himself. Om NarayanayaNamah.

*Narayana is purity of purpose, nobility of intention. Where these two are, there is Narayana. Where Narayana is, there is Lakshmi. She will reside nowhere else.

*He saw and experienced both India without independence, and he saw free India. He was once a non-believer, and then he explored and rose to be a believer who

helped other non-believers. He had known poverty and scarcity and lack -- as a freedom fighter and later again as a seeker student in the Himalayas. He had known safety and security when he lived at home and then a hostel, and he knew insecurity and unsafe-ness when he was a freedom fighter.



Undeterred....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

What we also see is that the extremes did not deter him. If anything the low led to the high; the negative to the positive. But at no stage did he give up.

From a Balan Menon who lived in abundance at home and then college, Gurudev lived like Lord Shiva, the tapasvin during his days in Uttarakashi with Swami TapovanMaharaj. Mostly in meditation, with minimum of anything, be it clothes, food, comfort or anything, subsisting on whatever food was available, even if it was the benevolence of the KaliKamliwala-s. Whatever food was given, was eaten morning, noon and evening; you collect it, store it and eat it. And even when he came down from the hills to teach the city fellows, with his mission to reach out to everyone, he had just Re 1 with him. Little bitten up coins. Yet, see the courage of this man – he determined to teach and reach out to everyone…. With one rupee in his pocket.

*And truly, Gurudev was like Vishnu, lord of everything, he was as a master, lord himself. But the finest things start coming where he is, for, where Narayana is, Lakshmi follows. Lakshmi is prosperity. When Lakshmi follows, this is how it will be – abundant, auspicious, cheerful, plentitude, successful, happiness. If we reflect, we will see that no Chinmaya Mission project has stopped for want of funds. Gurudev was here amongst us between 1951and1993;after that he has continued to be here through the purity and nibility of th work that has been going on. Through the purity of intent he has established in his devotees who continue to serve his cause. Where Gurudevis, Lakshmi follows. The means will come when the intentions are noble.

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

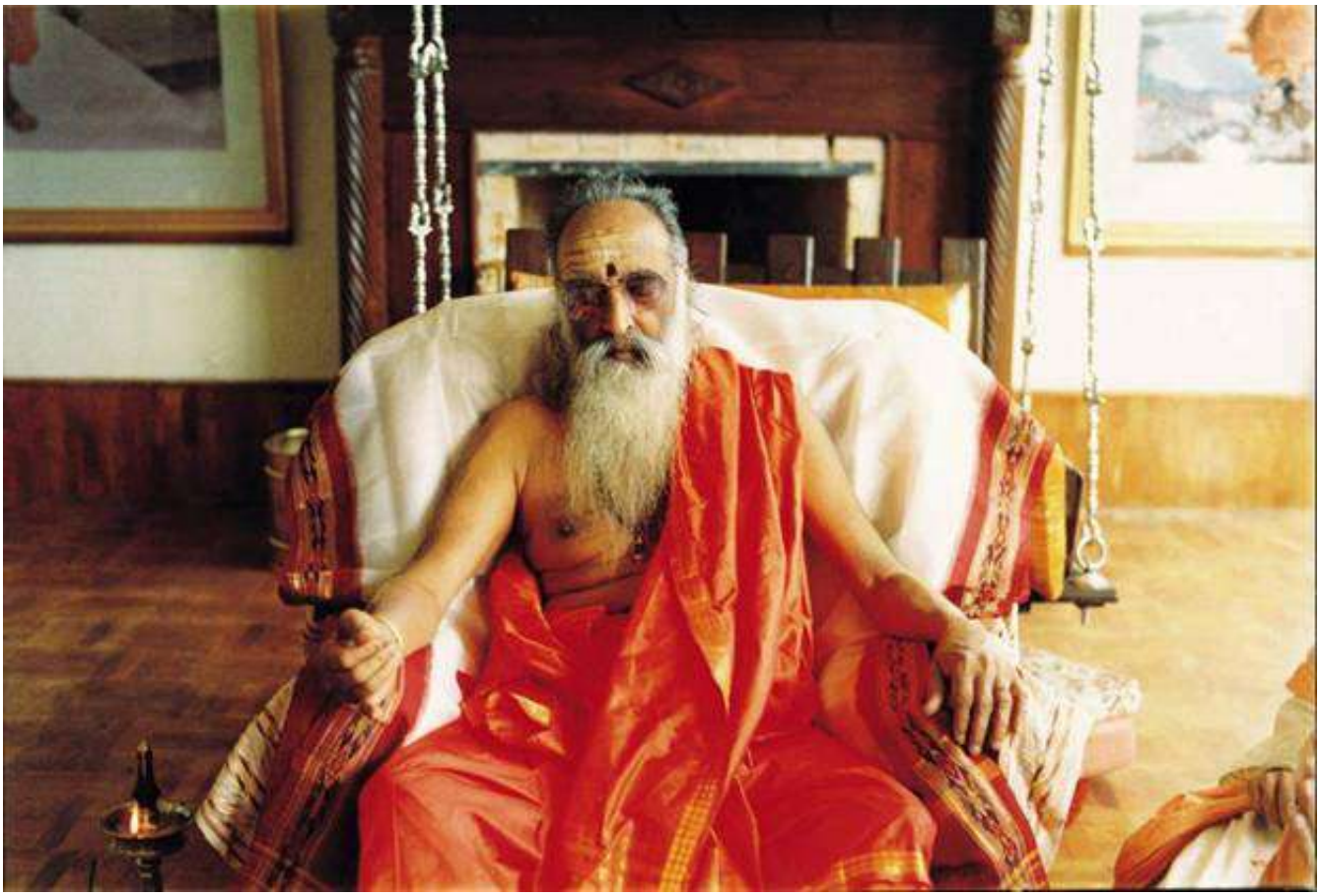
OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L.Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

I have known many saints starting their letters with"Narayana smriti"
Gurudev uses ‘Narayana’ quite often to indicate surrender, to indicate an invocation for help, for rescue ... and so much more.

His famous usage is when Gurudev says, ‘Hold on to Narayana,Laksmi is not for off,She will follow. If you go after Lakshmi Narayana 's gada (mace) will hit you’. Meaning of this is - once we serve the Lord money will come on its own. If we on

the contrary think of money we will have to face obstacles.
Narayana is used by Gurudev as the One Non dual Brahman. As such Gurudev being a Brahma Gnani, is Narayana. Devotees who surrendered to Him, experienced all their needs met, and all obstacles removed.



The One nondual Brahman .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

I have several experiences. I do not feel comfortable to quote here. But there is something interesting. Identifying with Gurudev I have developed the habit of muttering"Narayana Narayana" quite often, which after decades of effort, I have reduced the frequency, to be modest.

Once I was made president of a Rotary club. The senior who was in charge told me, now that you are a president of Rotary (probably he meant it is an international organisation) you should not say "Narayana!"

I told him,‘Impossible! I am willing to surrender my president-ship. Of course they

did not insist. This habit I got it unconsciously through Gurudev.

To most of the devotees Gurudev is Narayana, meaning the Lord.
Here is an elaborate commentary of Gurudev on Narayana in Vishnusahasranama name 245:
“This simple sacred word has an endless number of direct and indirect meanings, imports and suggestions,and Vyasa seems to have explored almost all possibilities.
1. The Shelter (Ayanam) for man (Nara) is Narayana.
2. The term Nara implies the ego centric individuality and a large collection of them is called Naara and the One who is the sole refuge for the entire living creatures is called Naarayanah.
3.Nara also means Easwara and the elements (Tatwas) born out of Him are called Naara; and One who is the controller, the regulator, the very source of all Existence in these very Tatwas is called Naarayanah.
4.Naarah means "waters." According to the picture painted in the Puranas of the Deluge,wherein the names, and Forms devolve themselves into their elemental waters, the Lord is objectively described as lying alone upon the waters, the Eternal Baby,floating upon a banyan leaf.

Swami Chinmayananda as I Know Him–

Perform your duty to Narayana page 21

PARTHASARATHY Hyderabad.

Swamiji made everybody feel that on their own,they have tremendous potential, and they should exploit it to the fullest by following the spiritual path. Swamiji's message was "Perform your duty to Narayana. Do your work with utmost sincerity and you have performed whatever your duty is.

Kindly read a hand written letter by Gurudev inHe Did It page 239. It shows the miracles of His uttering Narayana mantra. Since it is long I have not presented here.

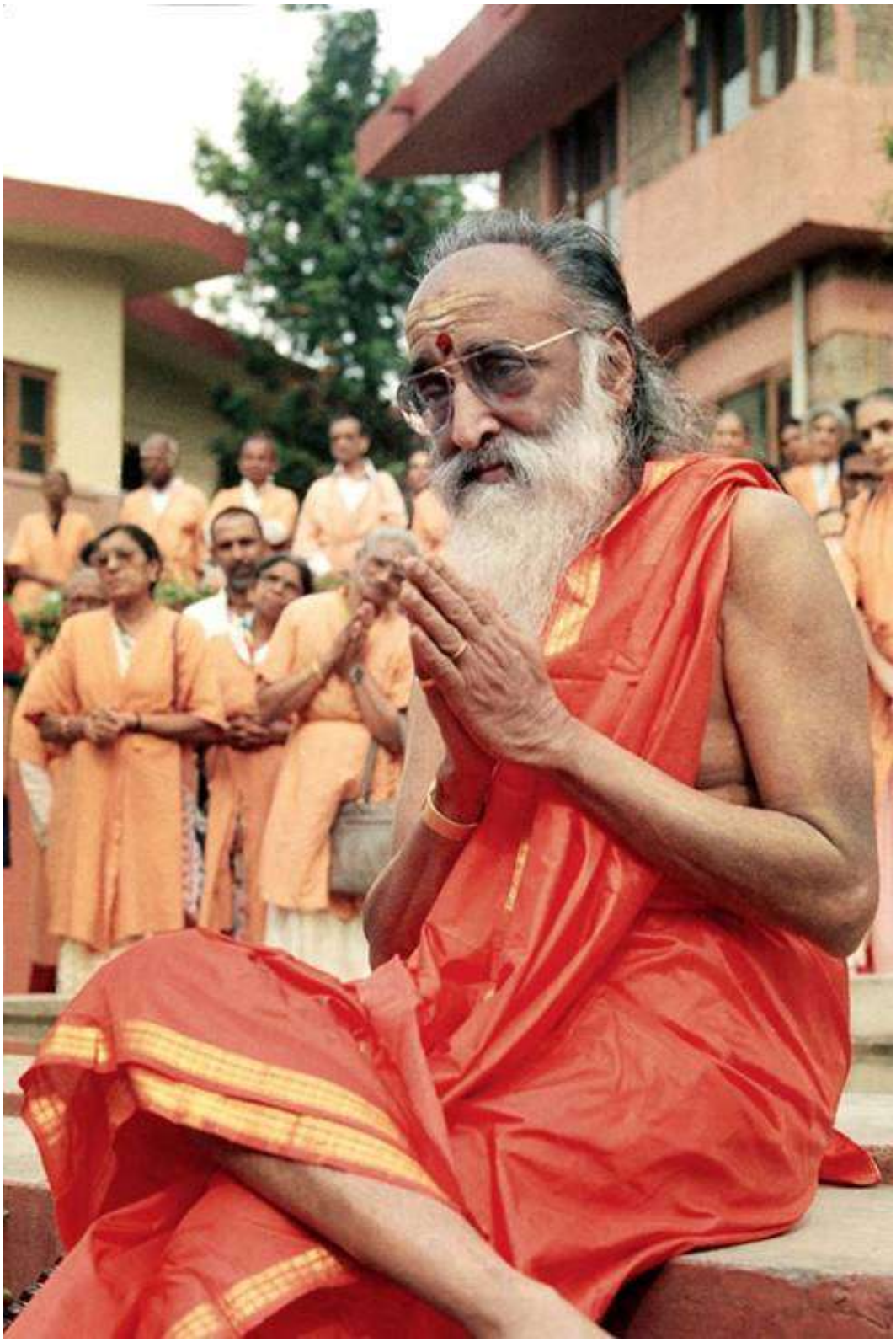
OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri N. Kalidas ji,CM,Mumbai

1. OmkaramaayaPorulmoonnaipirinjudane, AankaramayathinuThaanthanneSakshiAthuBhodhamvaruthuvathinaalaayininnaParamaachaaryaRoopa Hari NaraayanaayaNamaha!

Brahman, The Absolute, pointed as AUM, seems to have forked into Three (triputi or trinity)! A (Jaagrat-Waker) U (Swapna-Dreamer) M (Sushupthi-Deep Sleeper). I perceive these three-forked activities everywhere! And I play as Perceiver, Feeler, and Thinker! When I say I perceive, I am the witness! My Salutations to That Naraayana, who is also Hari, who took the form of a Paramaachaarya, who helped apprehend the Truth, by nudging beyond misapprehensions and non-apprehensions, and instil the firm conviction that I am the Sole Witness of this three forked activity! When there is nothing to witness, I remain as One, I am! My Humble prostrations to that one, who is Peerless! Om AdviteeyaayaNamaha!



OmkaaraPorule! Oh Lord of Compassion ....loot my I thought totally!

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

2.OnnayaNinneyihaRandennuKandalavilUndaayorindalBathaMindavatalla Mama, PandeKanakkeVaruvaan Nin KripavalikalUndakayenkalihaNarayanaayaNamaha!

Thou, who art One, is seen distorted here as two and this has caused a lot of miseries-misapprehensions, which, is beyond my words! Oh! Lord of Compassion, Naraayana! Kindly bestow Thy Grace on me and restore me back to the right apprehension that existed before -THOU ART ONE! My Humble Prostrations to Thee Oh! Naraayana! May this Shadow 'I' merge with Thee! SaashtaangaNamaskaaram to Thee who is One without a second! Om AdviteeyaayaNamaha!

3.Aananda Chinmaya Hare GopikaRamana, NjanennaBhavamathuTonnaikavenamiha, TonnunnathakilAkhilamNjanIthennavazhi, TonnenameVaradaNaraayanaayaNamaha!

Oh! Chinmaya! The ocean of Bliss, who revels in looting Gopikas of their possessions! Hare! Hare! Loot my 'I' thought totally! May I never have this 'I' thought! Help me minus the my-ness from me! Erase the notion 'I 'entirely from me! Even if I get that notion by default, oh! Bestower of Boons! Kindly bestow me the path of the Whole ***I*** *(AkhilamNjan) Thought! So that I remain* ***I am****! To that Matchless Naraayana whose nature is Chinmaya, my Humble Prostrations! Om AdviteeyaayaNamaha*!

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Sw. Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head,CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Abode of all Beings.

Nara comes from nara which means human being. Nara means related to human beings and ayana means abode. Nara also means Self knowledge. Ayana is abode. Narayaëa is the abode of self-knowledge. Narada gets his name from nara. One who gives self-knowledge is called Narada (naramdadatiitinarada).

Narayaëa besides referring to Lord Narayaëa, means the abode of all beings, which includes Lakshmi. He is the Lord of Lakshmi, which means the Lord of wealth. Our scriptures do not condemn wealth. They consider it to be good. They however advice that wealth should keep moving because if it remains stagnant at one place, it becomes a problem. Lakshmi stoyatarang bhang chapala. Lakshms is called chapala because she keeps moving. Wealth should keep moving because only then

does everyone benefits.

Suppose we spend the 100 rupees we have to buy something. Then we enjoy that thing and the 100 rupees also go to another person. If he also spends it and enjoys it, the money passes to a third person. So as the 100 rupees moves it brings joy to people. But if it were stationary, fixed in one place it would give no joy. Money itself gives no joy. Spending money gives joy when it is spent for good deeds.

Lakshmi is depicted at the feet of Lord Narayaëa. Narayaëa is Lakshmipati, Sripati, and the abode of all beings. The most beautiful form ofNarayaëaBhagawan is that of Him lying on Sheshanaga. He is the Lord and sustainer of the whole world, the Supreme Reality. The visual shows that He has delegated His work as sustainer of this world and just lies comfortably, sitting back and enjoying the play. We also must learn to delegate work and live comfortably watching everything happen as it should.

Chinmaya Mission always has some projects in hand, for which money is required. Someone advised Gurudev to ask the devotees for money. He said, 'I don't have to do that, because I have a direct connection with NarayaëaBhagavan who is Lakshmapati. If you want money, you can ask me. I will give it to you, because I have direct connection with Him." Narayaëais the abode of all beings, bestower of all boons and one who protects everyone. Näräyaëa is an appropriate name for Pujya Gurudev and living under his protection we are always secure.



Under His protection.... always

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM NAARAAYANAAYA NAMAH

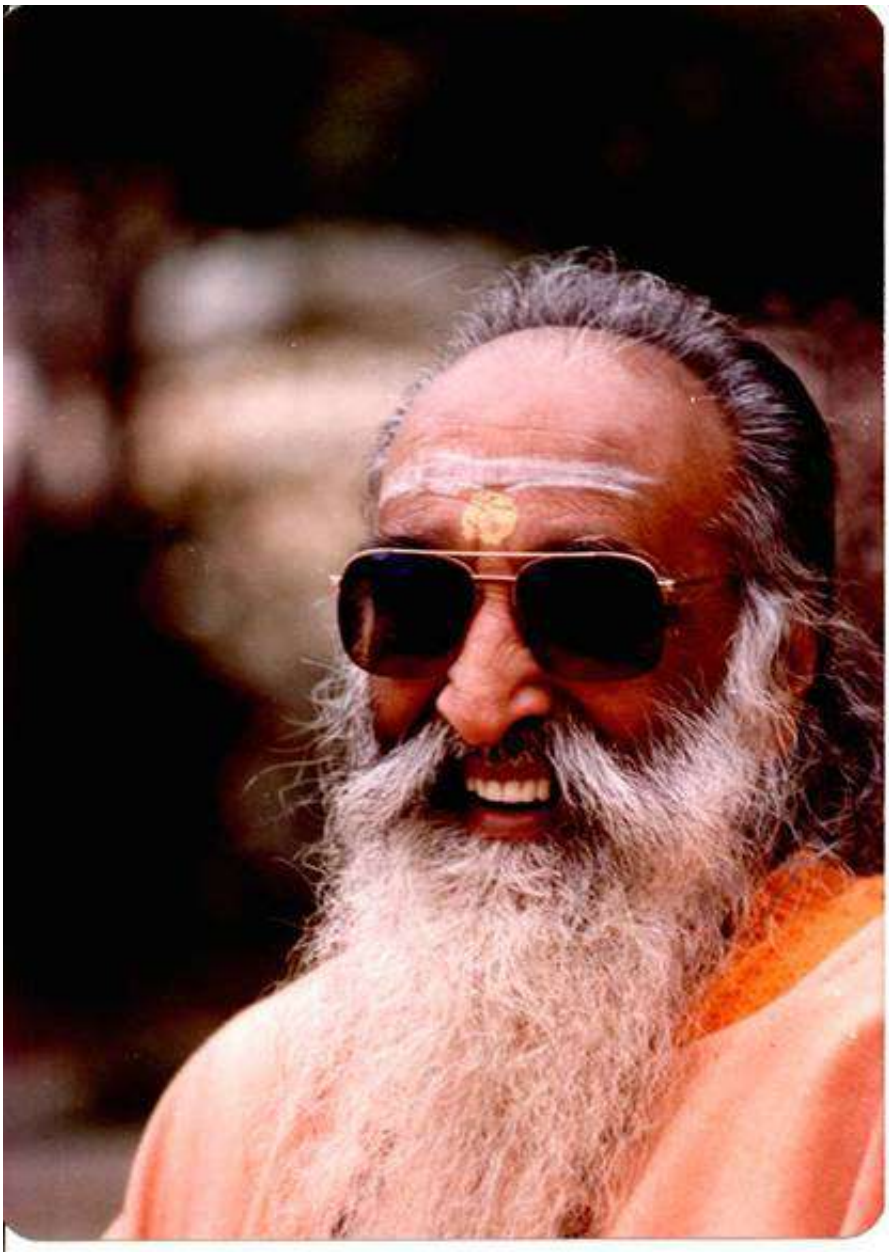
310. OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

12-03-2016

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

* Salutations to him who is of innate Bliss, whose nature is absolute Bliss
* GURUDEV worked out of fulfillment, not for fulfillment. He was full and out of that fullness, he served. He was absolutely happy, He remained ever happy.



Ever happy...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*Undoubtedly, one of the greatest sages the country has seen. One of the all time, great sages, who walked around us, among us, who showed to us an embodied example, of a perfect man, as described in the Upanishads-- 'Experience of Completeness within, absence of any personal desire, effortless mastery over senses and mind ...'we could see in this person.
* The Gita as if describes Gurudev, when it describes a sage: "He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, and who in prosperity does not hanker after pleasures, who is

free from attachment, fear and anger,is called a ('muni') sage-of-steady-Wisdom." ||12.1||
All the characteristics of the Gita's sthitaprajnalakshana, one could see in Gurudev. He visibly demonstrated what the books spoke about – satisfied in the Self by the Self. Moved ever free. Always happy. From happiness he reached out to people. In his presence people became happy. Contagious that was! Wherever, whomsoever came across Gurudev, he could slowly start feeling better and become happy.

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai

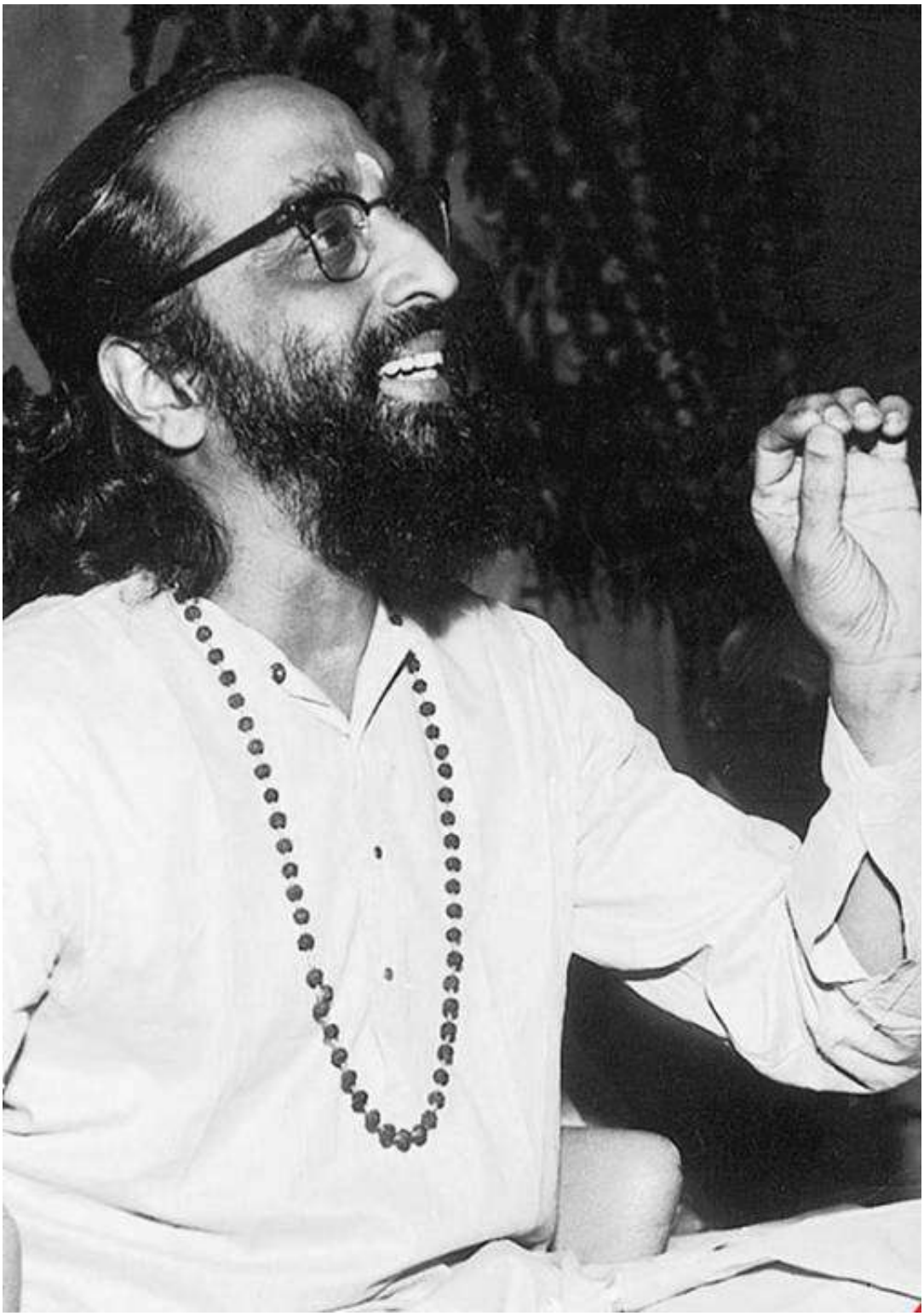
salutations to the one who is innate bliss

The Lord alone in terms of what we are seeking is total happiness. Brahmananda.

This is our own Being. Our nature. Hence the ananda of our Being. Nijanandaya. Nijananda or Nija Ananda, means True happiness or one's own happiness.
We normally know happiness through objective experiences. Since objects are finite, they keep changing also depending upon our changing tastes which is also finite. Not merely that, it also always creates agitation within us, wanting to continue an experience, wanting to repeat an experience, fear of losing and so on. Infact even this vishayananda (joy from objects) is nothing but Brahmananda.

When we are agitated due to a desire and when the desire is fulfilled the mind becomes calm and we at that moment are with our own Blissful Being and we think that, that happiness came from the object, like the dog licking a dry bone tastes its own oozing blood and thinks the taste comes from the dry bone.

In the case of a Gnani He is ever resting in His own Being and all the time Blissful. This is Nijananda. This state, others can only infer as being subjective. In the case of Gurudev He ever lived in this Divine State of Ecstatic Joy which is inferred from the happiness he spread around to everyone, even in the final few months when his body was ailing. This is evidenced in the Geeta recorded talks which are full of his humour and laughter.



All the time Blissful ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

We chase objects and experiences for happiness. In the case of a Gnani objects and experiences parade before this Infinite state and borrow a shadow of happiness. This is also called Kaivalya.

This is sung in Bhajagovindam:

YogaratovaBhogaratova Sanga ratova Sanga
VihinahyasyaBrahmaniramatechittamNandathiNandathyeva.
The important phrase is yasyaBrahmani (nijaswarupe) ramate
Gurudev talks about this Ramanam – reveling, nijananda in Every Breath a Teaching pg 12

Life Be Ram inside

K Raja Ram

The year was 1958. When I was given Brahmopadesam (initiation into Gayatri mantra) our Pujya Gurudev blessed me and gave me golden advice.
"Rajaram! Be Rama inside and a raja (King) outside. (Rama is one who revels in Himself.)

In his article in theTapovan Prasad Gurudev writes,

"The technique of Self-perfection "

Pg 10 March 2016

When the pain created by desires is removed, what remains is your essential nature--bliss. This bliss in you, ever sanctifying and illuminating the outer world and the inner processes.

Page 14

Live the Divine life and enter the life divine, where you will have perfect joy and eternal satisfaction.

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda ji, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One who Revels in Self-Bliss

Nijameans Self. Änandais joy. Nijänanda are those who remain happy and content by and within themselves. Having renounced their dependence on the world, they have connected with the eternal fountain of joy within their own hearts. We experience two main types of änanda. Onecomes from the Self and the otherresides in outer objects. There is a very interesting saying in Sanskrit – sarvaà paravaçaà duùkhaà, sarvam ätmavaçam sukhaà. What depends on others gives sorrow in the long run and whatever depends on ourselves gives joy.

When we analyze our own happiness, we find that it is conditional. Our happiness depends on many factors – people, place, food, weather, neighbours, films, electricity, politicians, water, etc. Often we have certain pre conditions to happiness. We are convinced that we will be happy only if certain conditions are fulfilled. With this picture we manipulate the world and make these conditions happen. When things do not happen according to our mental picture we feel unhappy. This is because the änanda or joy we seek is in someone else's hands.

In today's age we store our knowledge in computers. When the electricity fails we are helpless, because then the computer stops functioning. No computer means no knowledge.

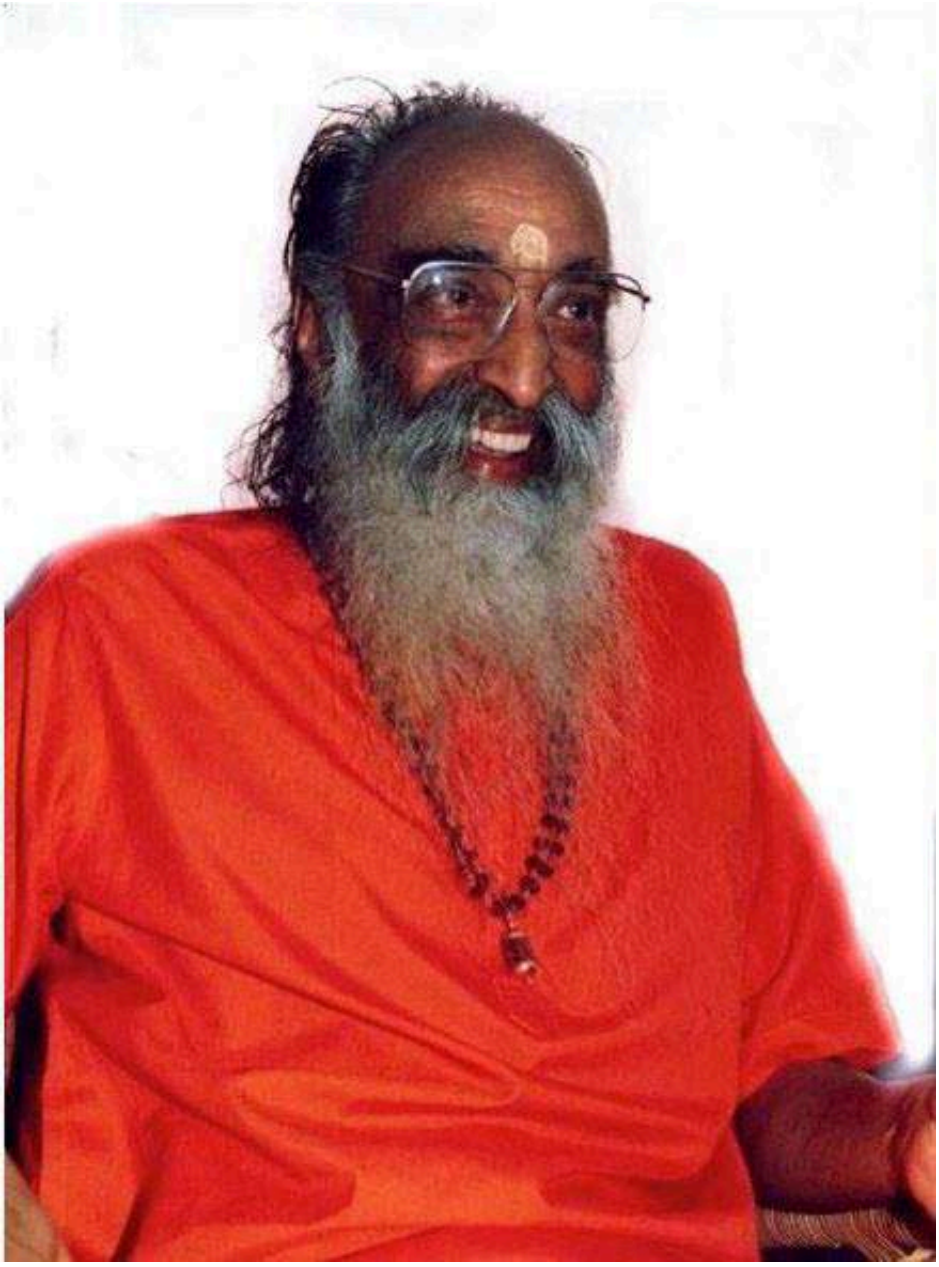
Para hasta gatamdhanampustakasthayavidhya…….

The knowledge in the books and the wealth in someone else's hands is of no use because, at the appropriate time they may not be available. No electricity so I cannot use my computer!

Once, a priest wanted to build a new church for his parish. In his sermon he said, "The church requires money. The money is there but the only problem is that it is not in my hands, it is in your pockets!" Similarly, if our happiness is in someone else's hands and depends on other factors, then we will always remain unhappy.

One should be totally independent as far as happiness is concerned. In life there are sorrows and sufferings. Sorrows may come from outside but suffering is self-imposed. We have to face good and bad situations but through them, whether we are happy or not depends on us. So nijänanda is happiness not because of, but in spite of all outer conditions.

Gurudev said, 'Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket'. He followed his advice to the fullest. Whatever the outer situation, he was always in control of his happiness.



Always in control of his happiness...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

To that One who is innate bliss, our prostrations

OM NIJAANANDAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

311. Naam 52. OM NIRAPEKSHAAYA NAMAH

13-03-2016

52. OM NIRAPEKSHAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda, with his permission

* Salutations to the one who does not depend on anything for happiness.

* On January 14, 1993 Gurudev was in Chennai. We went to our ashram at Tamaraipakkam, 40 kms from the city. I was in yellow clothes, then. Tamaraipakkam is a Shiva temple and the temple itself, is in the shape of a Shivalinga. The way this temple is laid out, the temple is on the first floor, while the satsang hall is on the ground floor.

So Gurudev also took the stairs and went up to the temple. Later he came down, again taking the stairs, naturally. Now, the last step down, is higher than usual. A young person may jump down easily. I was standing there. I felt that for a person with an aged body that one step can be uncomfortable. When Gurudev reached that step, he lingered a bit, calculating his move, probably. So I just stretched out my hand, spontaneously to offer support.

Gurudev put his hand into mine. Then he took it back, looked at me, and stepped down by himself. And … this is a teacher! Normally, that is, had he not been interrupted, he would have got down in a particular way. But that day, the way he got down, he demonstrated that it was an effort getting down. That it was a bit of a struggle, and to drive home a point, he sighed deeply as he stepped down. He then looked at me and said, ‘Never depend, walk alone.’ He just wanted to tell me that. Taking support of my hand, holding my hand and getting down was nothing, if you think about it. He did place his hand on mine, but he also withdrew it, as if to say, ‘why should I?’ And then he descended the last high step by himself.



By Himself .... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

You understand? Every breath a teaching! What a message for us. Never depend. Walk alone. It's the teacher in him. He could not let go half an opportunity to teach, to send a message. He could have just taken our support, or he could have stepped down as he would normally. But no! He staged a little skit for our benefit. He placed his stick first, then leaned on it carefully, then heaved his left leg carefully and heavily, then placed that on the ground then sighed so deeply as he jumped on the other leg, down.

So many suggestions and thoughts and counsel flew around watching Gurudev, we must put some bricks there, the distance is too much... But those eyes looking at

you at that time were simply teaching – Never depend, walk alone. You have chosen to walk this path, please remember you are alone. Never forget that you are alone. Who is with you? He is with you. Walk simply alone. If we must depend, let us depend on Him.

OM NIRAPEKSHAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRAPEKSHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om Nirapekshaya Namah

Salutations to One who is Free from Expectations

Apeksha means expectation and nirapeksha means no expectation. We have many expectations. We expect some things to happen, some responses from the world, expectations from the future, from people or places. There are expectations from within a relationship – between husband and wife, between parents and children, from the government or even the neighbours. When our expectations are fulfilled we are happy. If things do not happen according to our wishes, we are sad, unhappy or angry. It is logical that we expect some things to happen and move in that direction. But there are times, when our expectations are neither logical, rational nor in keeping with the laws of nature. We expect something which is not there nor possible and this leads to sorrow.



The scriptures advice is not to have irrational expectations from the world, because they certainly lead to sorrow. It is like wanting to eat a green chilly, expecting to get sweetness from it. This happens when we do not know the nature of the chilly. We eat it and then suffer as a consequence. Similarly, we expect money to give security or we expect to attain God, without putting forth any effort in that direction. We expect our mind to become pure without doing anything special. We have the erroneous expectation that people will be good to us even if we choose to be nasty. Our expectations are present in various permutations and combinations and they all lead to sorrow.

Expectation is from the future, so our attention is always fixed on the future. We wait for things to happen or not happen - the more the expectation the greater the frustration. Expectation and frustration are directly proportional. Also, the more the expectation, the greater is the level of anger. The seeker is advised to have minimum expectation from the world. In this way, we are able to limit the extent of sorrow or anger.

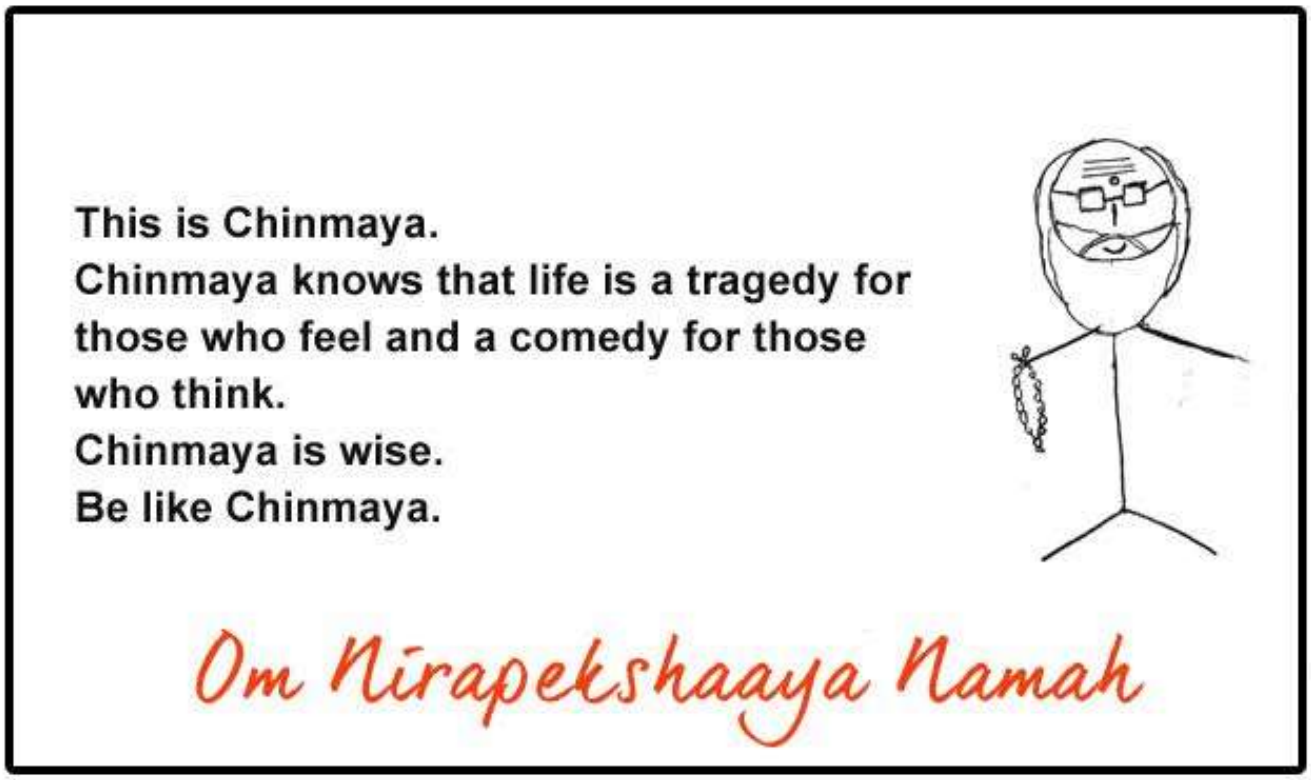
Once one of the brahmacharis after completing the Brahmacäré training course asked Gurudev, “What do you expect from us?” Gurudev said, “If I come to your city and we meet, smile at me and say Hari Om! Even that I do not expect, but it would be good if you could this.” He did not even expect the brahmacharis to serve the Mission, after completing their studies. His expectation from the world was minimal.

When we give something, there is an expectation of some return. We should not treat gifts as investments. In this way, we will be peaceful. Another off shoot of expectation is dependency. The more we expect, the more dependent we become on people and situations. The more we remain free from expectation, the more independent we become. The sincere seeker should treat whatever comes as bonus. This is a subtle thought and most people are unable to accept this. They feel that it would be difficult to live without expectations.

Even with respect to oneself, there should be no illogical expectations, otherwise one feels guilty. People set themselves goals like, ‘I should do this within this time or that I should attain this or that.’ Sometimes these goals are too far fetched and one feels guilty. We needlessly blame or criticise ourselves. We become a nuisance to ourselves. If we irritate or bother someone else, the person can escape. But if we choose to nag ourselves all the time, one can create a veritable hell. People have all kinds of illogical and irrational expectations from themselves. It is good to plan for the future but our thinking should be based on an understanding of the nature of people. Take the example of domestic help. They have their own capacity of understanding. If we expect them to behave in a way which they are unable to understand, everyone we will end up feeling frustrated.

We all have certain goals and expectations, which are necessary. To fulfill them in a proper manner, we need to understand them and work for them. Don’t get frustrated unnecessarily. Work towards the goal. If things do not go according to plan, don’t get agitated, just adjust the response and go forward. At the higher level the Atman is totally independent and self reliant. It does not expect anything from

anyone. At a relative level also, one should be independent and free from expectations. If one is nirapeksha, the next quality is also possible.



OM NIRAPEKSHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the one who does not depend on anything or anyone

Nirapeksha is to not have expectations or depend on anything of the world of names and forms.
In Srimad Bhagavatam 11-8-44 Pingala says
Asha hi Paramam dukham (expectation is the greatest sorrow or misery)
Nairashyam Paramam sukham (to be free from expectations is Absolute Bliss)



Sri Gurudev always used to say if one holds on to Narayana, Lakshmi is not for away. When we go after Lakshmi by-passing Narayana, he has mace to deal with us. This is the teaching regarding not to depend on the world rather depend upon the Lord.
Gurudev in Ashtavakra Geeta translates verse 84 of XVIII, thus:
Shining (glorious) is the life of the wise man, free from all expectations, without any attachment for children wife and others, free from desire for the sense objects, and without care even for his own body.
Commentary: The desire to seek happiness in sense objects ,attachment to the dear and near ones, great expectations for the larger joys to be fulfilled in the future-- all these three have a direct reference to the body consciousness in the individual.
A Man of Perfection as described here is above these three natural human weaknesses, only because "he is without care, even for His own Body"

Enough have been brought to our notice about Sri Gurudev as Dehateeta and hence Nirapekshaka.
Here are two episodes of the many available in Every Breath a Teaching (pgs 122 and 123)

His attributes
" Ok, We will walk"

Swami Purushotamananda

Someone was to pick up Gurudev from the Asrama and drive him to Pune, but the car did not arrive as scheduled. Gurudev waited for a while and then said:
"So the car has not yet come; Ok we will walk "

He started walking out of the Asrama at a brisk pace. The devotees around Him almost had to run to keep up with Him. "Luckily " recalls Swami Purushothamananda," after a few minutes the car arrived, and Gurudev was politely requested to take His seat in the car "

***

Curb side

Yagna

Rudite

Emir
The caretaker had remembered to open the doors of the building every morning except this, a Saturday. But that didn't stop Gurudev. With a smile on His face, He sat cross legged on the cold curb of the side walk, motioned the rest of us to sit down in front of Him, opened the text, and began to teach. And so He continued for the next one and half hours as the brisk morning grew gradually warmer around us and traffic noises in the distance slowly beckoned the day awake.

312. OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

14-03-2016

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

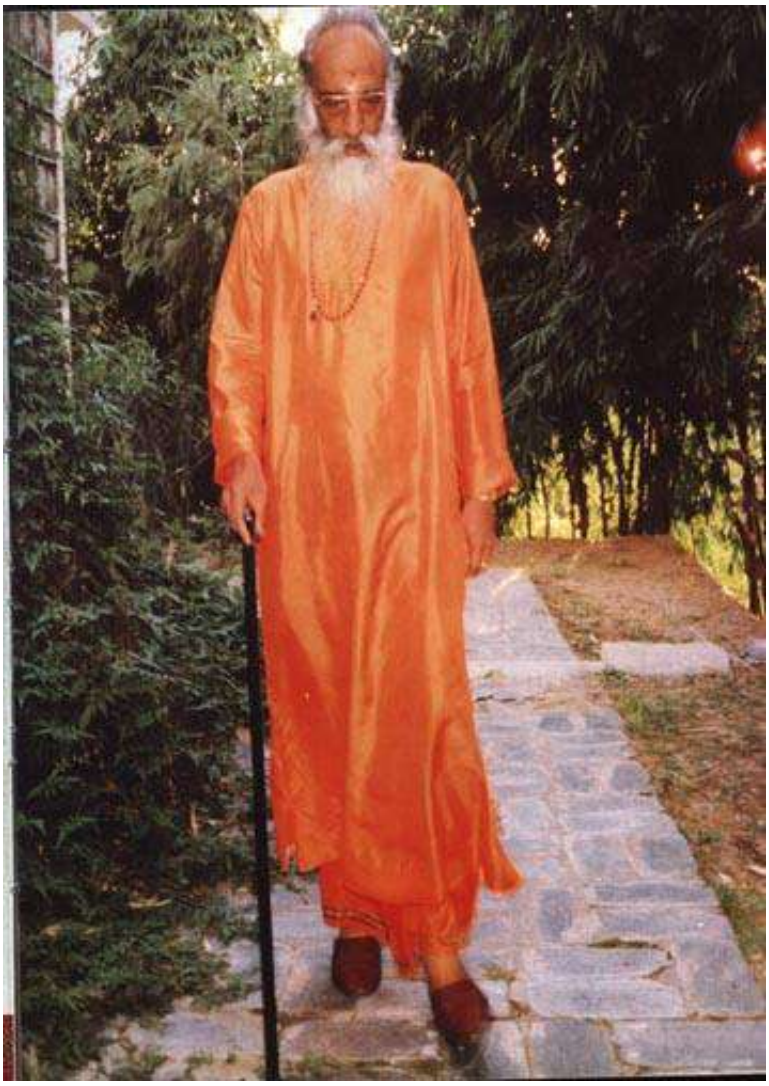
Salutations to the One without desires

*Nisprha - Untouched by desires, attachments etc.

*'NahiJnanenasadrushampavitramihavidyate' (BG 4:38)
Certainly, there is no purifier in this world like 'Knowledge.

To bestow upon those who come seeking this knowledge, Guruji has given up a lot. (How many centres want him, for the reason that there are conflicts where only his presence can solve it. No other -- no matter his position, can solve it sometimes.)

And a knowledge that is pure, complete and one that purifies the student! How many of us have this ability to give the best and expect nothing in return? To pour out your best, not expecting anything in return? Think! Sandeepany is one beautiful example – the vision.



*The direction which a man gets in life,determines his evolution towards the divine. There is nothing higher than that. A human evolves to the divine, in the face of the best of knowledge. And this knowledge Gurudev gave without any demands in return. No bond, no nothing. All that you do is come, be a part of the institution and study. But once you accept to be part of the organization then you have to fit into the discipline of the organization. After that, if you choose to break away on your own, that is fine. No one stops the student. There is no svaartha, no selfishness that comes attached to the offer to teach you. It is absolutely selfless an offer.

*In other words, no expectation of reciprocation - I have done so much, you are under obligation, now you do as I say.And not just now, but since inception in the 1960s, Sandeepanyhas remained establishedon these principles. This was the vision that set it up, this is the vision on which it is run.

*But here is where we must pause to do a very powerful analysis: is any work undertaken by Gurudev born out of selfish desires?

I was in Bal-Vihar as a child. I was made to go and attend Swamiji'syajnas even when I was not interested, nor did I understand anything. As children we have to go and sit – that's it. During his talks you can't look here and there and be distracted. Or run about. There would be serious trouble if one did! So one just sat put in a spot. My mother used to make me sit and hold me. That is my experience of yajnaas a Bal-vihar child. Since you can't do anything, don't understand anything, all you do is keep looking at the Swami.

*But as I grew up, I was watching his actions, not just him. One of the things which I analysed Gurudev, before I committed myself to walk this path, was – is there any action of his where I can find him selfish? I examined it from every angle. There was no selfishness. Sarvabhuutahiteratah. He lived for the well-being of others. He understood, he worked, he stayed here only for that. No desire. No selfishness. And that is why when he built any project, one could see that it was built on the lap of unconditional giving, sharing; absolute freedom to every worker.

*There are some unique gestures of his which teach fabulous lessons in giving and receiving. Say somebody comes and gives Gurudev, a watch. He will take it with joy and hand you the watch he is wearing. Or he will give it to somebody else immediately. The two instant lessons he gives you: One is necessity. Two is greed.

*Once someone asked him – how are you able to give away like this? These are gold. We value it so much.... How do you do it? And Gurudev told them a story, an amazing story. From that story we can understand the clarity in which Swamiji lived and moved. Like a lotus he stood, untouched by anything.

*Gurudevsaid, '[...] I know the theory behind prarabdha. If it is in your prarabdha that you must have one cow, no matter what you do, you will have that cow. You give itaway, the next day you will get one cow. If it is not in your prarabdha, you try holding it back as much as you can, any amount of security, to hold it back, you will not succeed. It will go.

So Gurudev says – I know this law which works. I know about it. So give. If it is not in your prarabdha, it will go. And when you have willingly given it, and that person is so happy, he is inspired that you gave it to him,he treasures it much more. More than the gold, because you gave it! And if it is in your prarabdha to have its possession, even if you give it away, somebody will give you another!

Think. If we have understood this, we need not be attached to anything. Let go. Why hold on? Simply let go.

*Now, you understand how he was moving around. Went about everywhere, held on to nothing, always happily letting go. This is not just a story. That was his life. Untouched by anything, move. No desire. And they wouldcoming after him, again and again. And he kept on giving away. Above all, he used this knowledge intelligently.

*Now, if we can also move in the world in this way, nisprha–untouched, unattached

to anything, not holding on.... we deactivate our propensity for desire. Only when there is desire we are trapped. No desire, no stuck. We should learn to be like that.

*It's a sight to see him in the airport. Imagine, he has just spent a whole week with people who adore him, loved him. They would all be there at the airport, wanting to touch him once more, hg him once more, take his blessings once more..... all of us are there .....and we see him moving out. Alone! He and his little brown briefcase would leave us there while he would walk towards his next destination. There, again, the same adulation, the same attachment, but he? He stood apart, alone, aware.

*No desire, unattached to anybody or thing. He had everything, but he possessed nothing. To have and to not possess. That is nisprha.

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Spruha is translated in BG 4:14 as desire. InBG 6:18 it is translated as longing; inAstavakraGeeta 3:12 it is again said as desire.

Having glorified Gurudevupto now as Ajaaya,Avyaya, Avinashietc then as Eswara,kritakrutyayaJeevanmukta,dehateeta,nijanandaetc to say Gurudev had no desires or longing for desires is at best reiteration.



I therefore would like taking the meaning for 'spruha' as ‘longing for desire’ and 'Nispruha' as His "detachment" in spite of such deep love for all. He loved all. He was not attached to any. He never allowed Himself to come down from His abiding in Brahman in and through so much of activity. He was aware of all projects, He guided every one he followed all details yet was totally detached. He had no desire for name or fame no desire for bodily comfort. Padmapatramivaambhasa is apt for Gurudev.

He got several expensive gifts. He will without a thought give them away to others. Many a time the receiver could not believe it was for them.

Gurudev once got some expensive gold articles as gift. It so happened that He was at a dance performance and after the programme, He gave away those articles to the dancer. The dancer at that time did not see the contents. Later when she realised they are pure gold, she rang Gurudev thinking there is some error and said "Swamiji they are gold ". Gurudev quietly said that is why I gave you. I myself have seen Gurudev on one occasion when Gurudev was moved by some Bhajans of some body and Gurudev instantly removed His gold watch and Himself put it on the hand of that person.

When people talked about the challenge of the very existence and continuation of the

Mission, Gurudev was totally detached, unperturbed. Sometimes He would say He never started any Mission; at other times He would say ‘if that happens it must be Narayana deciding that the Mission has served its purpose.’

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him pg 39

Smt LataTandon

Swamiji's sense of humour,quick wit and complete DETACHMENT appeals to me the most. One minute He is completely with you and the next, He walks away as if He is no part of your life.

******

This has always been a wonder to me. In those early years too, after staying for ten or more days at a camp or at a host’s home, when the time to leave comes, nobody would feel He is leaving right then.

At the right time He would just get up saying "let us go" and walk to the car. No emotion shown to any having been close to them for those days!

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Free from Attachment

Spriha is attachment. Nihspriha is free from all attachment. Attachment is connected with expectation. Love plus selfish expectation becomes attachment. Selfish love becomes attachment. We love the flowers so we pluck them and use them. We love the birds, so we catch them and keep them in a cage. We love another person, so we do not allow that person to do anything which we don’t like. Such love becomes attachment. It is binding to the person whom we are attached to. It stunts the growth of both concerned and leads to sorrow.

Everyone likes their own independence and too much attachment creates bondage. Gurudev used to say that attachment should be thrown away in much the same way that we throw away a blade of grass. If we allow people to get attached to us then we are attached to someone. Be free from all attachments and love without

selfishness. Nowhere is it said that one should not love. One can love one's children, one's family and the world, but there need not be any selfishness. Our love should be giving not asking. Love for the sake of loving. Gurudev used to say, "Flood the world with the hosepipe of love. Be a giver of love rather than a beggar of love."

Selfish love is binding. We are selfishly attached to our body, our personality, our scriptures, our house and so many other things. There are different types of attachments and they develop quickly. When we come to listen to a lecture, we develop an attachment for a particular place. Our mind wants some fixed thing. We then hold onto it and become possessive. We hold onto not only objects but people as well. We become possessive and do not allow the other person to grow independently. Khalil Gibran says that the husband and wife should be like two trees, growing side by side each having their independent growth, without being dependent on each other. They should be complete by themselves and with that completeness interact with the world.

When incomplete people interact with others, the attempt is to complete or fill themselves. They take away something from those they interact with. After meeting some people one feels depleted. That is because they have taken away some energy. The receiver may be feeling light and enthusiastic but the giver is exhausted by the experience. Small children have so much to give. They are vibrant and when we play with them we also feel vibrant. We should be complete and fulfilled. Interaction from such a state, leaves the other person feeling fulfilled and complete as well. In the case of attachment, there is always the feeling of incompleteness without this person or that object.

In today's age we have attachments to the computer, the camera and the e-mail. Suppose we remove the printer from the computer, the computer becomes lighter. If the mail comes without an attachment, it is lighter and easy to download. In life, we become complete with our attachments. The attachments themselves have their own independent existence. They are not there to fill your life and so become a source of misery. Therefore, the Gétä advises us to give up our attachments because they are the root of our sorrows. When we dip one finger into a bottle of ghee, the finger comes out coated. But suppose, a needle is stuck into a sack of grain, it comes out without any attachment. We are advised to be like the needle, free of attachment.

When we are in the world, we should be a part of the world. But whenever we want, we should be able to withdraw and be alone with oneself. When one sits to meditate, there should not be a crowd in the mind. The more the attachment, the more the people and the more will be the crowd. We will not be able to drop them unless, we are detached from the world. Be like the boat. The boat is in the water, but the water does not enter the boat. The lotus leaf grows in water but is not soaked by the water.



In the world, but apart ...©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Similarly, one can remain in this world, detached from the world, life and even oneself. Keep living till there is life but when it is time to depart, be ready to drop everything and leave. This is not easy unless we have practised detachment while living. The Teacher is free from attachment. Detachment does not mean lack of love or being indifferent. Love is there but without any attachment. This is pure, selfless love.

OM NIHSPRIHAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

313. NAAM 54. OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

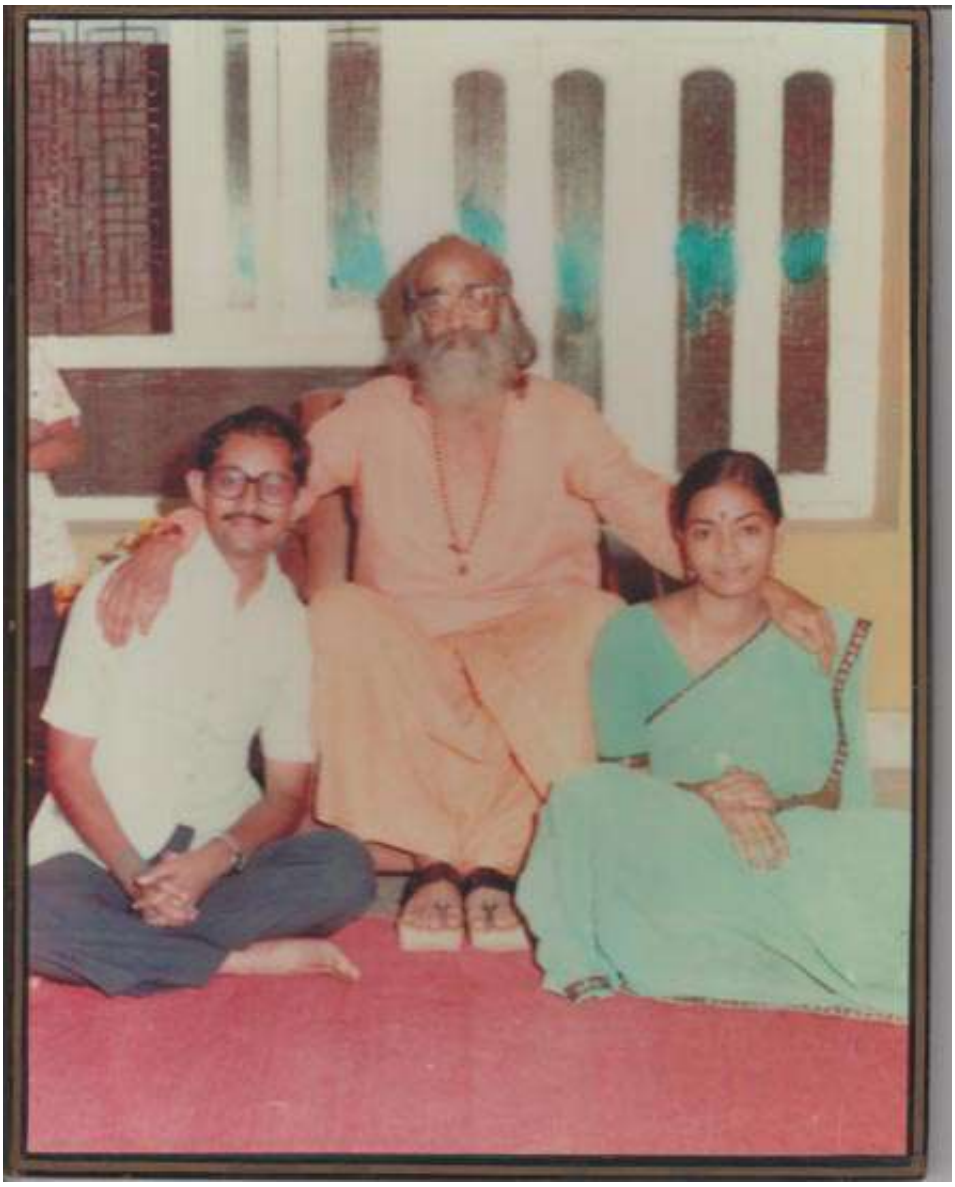
15-03-2016

54. OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Dr. Ramesh, CM Hyderabad

Salutations to one who is incomparable

Born on 8th of May 1916 in a rich and noble family in Kerala, a child named as BALAKRISHNA MENON by a famous sage, Chattambi Swamigal!
Grew up as a mischievous child, as an arrogant teenager, as a young man who questioned the concept of God, as an agnostic, sceptic, a rationalist and a socialist! But during this period he continued his Japa and Meditation on Lord Shiva which he learnt playfully during childhood!
Did masters in English literature, journalism!
Fought against British during Quit India movement; went underground; later jailed by British in 1944; thrown out of jail in 1945, as they thought he would die of Typhoid! But he survived and during recuperation he accidentally read a series of articles on the lives of the saints in the Himalayas! He was especially drawn towards Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh!



with the One Incomparable! Dr. Ramesh and wife Dr. Suhasini with Gurudev

In 1946 and ’47 he continued as a journalist providing articles to National Herald!
In summer of 1947 he went to Rishikesh, to Swami Sivananda’s Ashram, as a journalist, to expose the Swamis and/or call their bluff as he had perceived then. After staying there for few days, Balan was astonished and realized that probably his views on Swami Sivananda and other Swamis is not right!
Within a short span of study (less than 2 years), under Swamiji, he was given sanyasa deeksha, and was named as SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA SARASWATHI!
From there, on advice of Sivanandaji, he went to Swami Tapovan Maharaj, for deeper study and understanding of the scriptures and practice! There also his total stay is less than 2 years!
WITHIN A SHORT SPAN OF LESS THAN FOUR YEARS, AN AGNOSTIC

RATIONALIST, BALAKRISHNA MENON BECAME A SPIRITUAL GURU, SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA! THERE IS NO OTHER LOGIC TO EXPLAIN THIS THAN TO SAY THAT HE IS A YUGA PURUSHA, BORN WITH A SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF REVIVAL OF SANATANA DHARMA!
Life of Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda is incomparable and his vision and mission is unique:
*Gurudev built or rebuilt the path to scripture for modern man!
*Gurudev pioneered renaissance within Hinduism and took the knowledge of scripture to common man/to the masses of India and World!
*Gurudev set a vision for generations to come – repackaging the existing religion to make it viable for modern man!
*Veda Vyasa documented Hinduism from the spoken to the written word! *Adi Sankara systematized it by making it a compact ideology and giving it rationale!
*Vivekananda took it beyond the shores of India!
*Chinmayananda brought the Truth hitherto kept only with select few scholars and made it available to all mankind, in a simple language that common man can understand!
*An erudite scholar, practitioner and one of the most powerful orator of Truth who ever lived, who would live long after his time! The vision of his work would inspire generations after him, not on a new route to the ancient Truth, but the rediscovery of the one long forgotten!
HIS LIFE, VISION and MISSION INCOMPARABLE!

(REFERENCE: “HE DID IT – SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA A LEGACY” – BOOK NUMBER ONE OF THE MANANAM CBCC SEREIS)

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Chinmaya International Foundation, Veliyanad, Cochin, Kerala

Salutations to the One most Incomparable

To revive Sanskrit is not the kind of dream or vision that can be fulfilled because it is a good dream to dream. It requires an ownership, a conviction that this is my wealth; this is what the world needs; this I wish to open and share with everyone. And, it requires a clarity in the head about how I will go about it. And a clarity that once I put it on the table and form a team, they will take care of it.

The manner in which Gurudev went about it is stunning. He has this vision and he has three men come and ask him for an organisation in Kerala so that they can celebrate the region's unique greatness. Thus is born an idea called CIF. All along what they are imagining and what He is envisioning are apart.

Then they begin to look for a place. Various places are seen and rejected. One prospective property he was told of, was the ancestral home of Sri Sankara's mother, the holiest Aryamba. He says okay let's see this. He says this when He has actually come to felicitate a school event in Kerala. But He is unable to get up with His fever. When the property is mentioned He gets up and wants to go NOW. Devotees/Sevaks restrain Him. He must have delivered on them His great glare. Reaching the most decrepit, dilapidated site, He walks the huge 8 acre property, under a scorching sun, even as His own fever must have matched the heat one on one. Devotees/Sevaks are gingerly keeping pace at a safe distance muttering, 'But Swamiji we can do this another day, you are not well...'

The unwell Gurudev plodded through the overgrown shrubbery uncaring of what the dense shrubs might conceal in the land of snakes and scorpions. Each step is matched by the heavy 'tonk' of His walking stick hitting the ground... He walks back and forth and then stops. He has decided. "Let my footprints be here .....!" He says. OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH



CIFs logo -- *was drawn by Gurudev!*

An extraordinary moment in history was born, to be etched forever in the annals of time. Om Nirupamaaya Namah

A new confluence had unwittingly occurred: the year was the birth centenary year if Paramguru Swami Tapovanam, the city/town was the birth city of Gurudev, and the property was the birth home of the Father of Advaita Philosophy – Sri Adi Sankara.

Money, plans, blueprints, organisation structure, buildings, renovations, budgets, dates... He pulled them out in quick succession. Unrelenting. Unstoppable. The trio – Rajan-Marar-Balakrishnan could only take notes. And then He speaks out the vision statement for CIF effortlessly: Chinmaya International Foundation stands as a bridge between past and present, East and West, science and spirituality, and pundit and public. Om Nirupamaaya Namah.

And thence began an easy definition of what CIF would do, would stand for. Uniquely, He also said for this seed to sprout, it will take 25 years. Uniquely, as far back as 1988-89, He had also wanted a global Sanskrit University.

As it happens this is that 25th year (2016) and the grandest of all, The Chinmaya

Vishwavidyapeeth, the University for Sanskrit and Indic Traditions, is about to take birth. Om Nirupamaaya Namah.

Having delivered the vision for CIF in a mission statement, He set out to raise funds for this project. He auctioned the chair He was sitting on for the duration of the International Camp at Cochin. It was a chair that had been gifted to Him by Ms. Asha Kamdar, one of His ardent devotees. Within moments the chair was sold, and the seed money took roots with His blessings. The same year He asked to visit a dozen foreign universities so He could invite them to share their inputs and seek parallels or uniqueness in Samskrutam. In a whirlwind tour of the United States in Dec 1992, at the height of American winter, He visited some 16 colleges and roared from their podiums to come visit and taste Vedanta. Om Nirupamaaya Namah.



Let my footprints be here... the most holy land, Melpazhur Mana, the birth place of

Sri Adi Sankara, today home to CIF.

Sanskrit was a lost cause to India like the river Saraswati. If Gurudev had not made these moves and put in place CIF, we would be writing about “The Lost Language” or the “The Lost Tradition” as we do today about the lost river Saraswati.

In a series of soft but steady ripples, manuscripts and texts began to be researched. Old manuscripts were unearthed. Announcements went far and wide to search your attics for palm leaves with engravings. Scholars who had been forgotten were brought to CIF with great fanfare and venerated, celebrated. Scholarship and research was revived. Old scripts like Sharada and Grantha were brought out and revived and restored. Workshops and seminars on Vedanta, Nyaya, Mimamsa, and their respective tools and traditions began to grow and soon, also be demanded.

Courses in Sanskrit were a natural fallout….

The government of India recognising the work coming out of CIF awarded it the Kerala region to unearth manuscripts in ayurveda for researching and developing critical editions.

One can go on.

Point is, when Gurudev single-mindedly envisioned a Sanskrit research organisation, He had in mind the continued research and refreshing of the old knowledge traditions of India, with a view to keeping them relevant and alive, to run in tandem with the teaching (and the spread) of Scriptural knowledge (Vedanta, Puranas, Upanishads…) which need to stand along with the language traditions of India, which in turn need to reveal the embedded traditions and culture of India and thus the teachings of the old Rishis of the Sanatana system.

Not too often has anyone sworn his life to the perpetration of the essential Indian philosophy and tradition. Until 60 years or so ago, it had been the lot of the country to be invaded and ruled and its tradition (hence) diluted. The start-up to a revival has been most tedious and most frustrating for many revivalists, because the masses have been swept into the new order of life (read: modernity) faster and more irreversibly in most cases. But Gurudev’s vision had a certain quality of conviction and determination to restore our knowledge tradition. Public opinion was not His agenda. Followership was not His intention. Acceptance and subscription was nowhere on His radar. It was just the here and the now. He had come down to spread the knowledge to the people and encourage them to spread it down to their children. And the teacher in Him, the educator in Him went one step further: He

revived the Sanskrit language (one of the first set of Sanskrit language courses which today is the Advanced Sanskrit Course) so that the teachings would be precisely understood. And with Sanskrit came the revival of the fundamental traditions upon which the Knowledge itself stands nourished!

The whole year 1991-92 was devoted to drawing blueprints and models of where the study halls would be, where the dormitory, where the annakshetra, and even where the restrooms. That same year He reorganised the temples on the land of Melpazhur Mana that came down to us from Sri Adi Sankara, issued orders for their renovation, replaced the broken idol of Lord Krishna in the Krishna temple, did the praanapratishta, gently and lovingly took the damaged idol Krishna to Sidhabaari The following year he planned the University tours and planted the seed of new knowledge in the students, launched fresh fund raising drives and when a harried Balakrishnan ji sat staring at the impossible blueprints and said 'But Swamiji this will cost Rs 10 lakhs (Rs 1 million) or more!' Gurudev replied, 'Hold on to Lord Narayana and Goddess Lakshmi shall certainly bless all efforts.....!'

And uncannily, most uncannily, in walked the late Shri G.V. Eswar from Dubai – he had come looking for Gurudev, not realising his role was being written – looked at the intricate blueprints and he said in a humble whisper, "Swamiji, I will take it!"

Took it, he did and the first round of construction for the new block began. Nirupama! Nirupama!

Incomparable, unthinkable, unimaginable, unfathomable...

One man. One thought. One vision....

A huge Mission.

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Upamais comparison;Nirupama is incomparable. Nirupamaya Namah prostration to the incomparable.

In my very first yagna which I attended in 1962 somebody asked Gurudev are there any others like Him. Gurudev said there are many in the Himalayas but they do not

come down. Since all saints attain perfection they are all same and no comparison. Yet in the transactional world there are plenty of dimensions which are unique.

His ability to inquire, penetrate,quickly commit to what He thought is right saw Him commit to the Indian freedom struggle. Thereafter He was a skeptic yet probed into the truth behind spiritual masters, found value and took to a spiritual life without looking back. Having done that and trained by the greatest of all, Paramaguru Swami Tapovanam, He felt this must be shared with the less fortunate; and the dimension He reached in doing this is beyond any imagination.



For the One Incomparable!

Those of us who had been fortunate to be associated with Gurudev and the Mission also today do not have a complete picture of all that is going on in the Mission. That is how huge it has grown! What is more important He achieved this in His own life time. Never have we heard of Swamis trained in the orthodox system of learning, come down to the plains, and teach texts to thousands in a class room style, ie, explaining word by word and in English and patiently – until Gurudev did that.

Never before did we hear of youngsters flocking to spiritual lectures, until we saw that during Gurudev's time. We have heard of Nalanda and Takshasila, but we did

not hear of institutions like Sandeepany Sadhanalayas. Rare was a master who produced another master. Gurudev did in hundreds. Thousands today have attained spiritual realisation. He was at ease with them all – be it socialites, the corporate giants, the artists, ... cutting jokes, behaving as one with them, but in and through it all, (inwardly) never ever did this Master comedown from His spiritual height.

What a wholistic vision He had of and for schools, colleges, temple projects, rural development, Research centres, International Schools, publications ... the list is endless.

He not only reached the peaks of Karma, Bhakthi and Gnana in His personal living, but He also communicated them in their pristine glory to hundreds of thousands of people.

Not just verbally bit also literally, He put into print such glorious books as, Secret of action, I love you, Hasten Slowly - that are the quintessence on the three yogas.

Any one wants to understand Bhagavadgeetha as Sri Sankara has expounded but in lucid style in English? Swamiji's Holy Gitacaters to them. Likewise the Upanishads,Prakarana Granthas like Vivekachudamani etc are all presented in completely traditional style/manner, yet simple to understand. He excelled in whatever he touched - be it journalism, be it Tennis, be it organisation, be it oratory, be it anything.

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Him, pg 105,

Shri K.R.Baliga, Chennai

Although there have been several learned persons, only Gurudev had perfect mastery over both the Sanskrit and the English language,wide knowledge of scriptures, precise thought flow and a spell-binding oratory.

It was His exemplary punctuality and efficiency besides His indefatigable energy that makes Him the great Mahatma that He is. Can you think of another person of His age group with His medical history,globe-trotting like this? It would knock down a person half His age.

Pg 3Mr. Narendra Singh, Jhabua

Calling Him a modern Swami can be very misleading in the sense that He never won His devotees by means of His powers or miracles,so I would not call Him a modern Swami. He can be called " MAN OF THE ERA" because He spoke in English. He explained the great Gita and made it very easy for the common man.

Pg 121 Swami Haridas Giri (renowned direct disciple of H.H Gnanananda Giri Swamigal of Tapovanam)

According to me, the Bhagavad Gita needs only a Chinmayananda,nobody else can take His place. Today, when one speaks of Bhagavad Gita, only Swami Chinmayananda comes to our mind and not Lord Krishna. He has spread the

message worldwide. He has done mankind the greatest service.

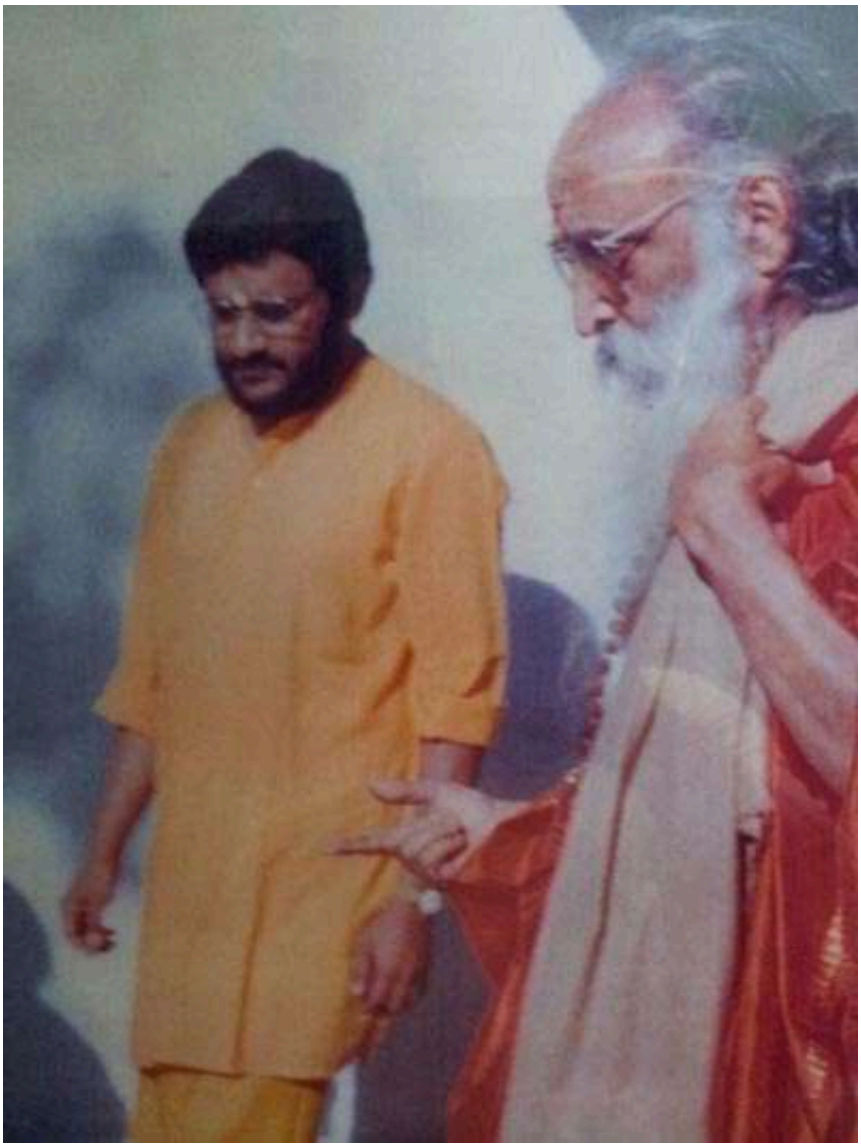
OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Incomparable

Upama means comparison. Nirupama is incomparable or beyond comparison. When we try to compare the Atman to anything of the world, we fail. There is no simile, no comparison. All similes fall short. Comparison is not possible. We do try to equate the Atman to akasha, which is all pervading. But even this is inert. If we say the Atman is like the sun, we cannot do it justice because the sun is limited. Every comparison falls short.



In the Bhagavad-gita (ch VII.7) Bhagavan says, ‘mattah parataram nanyatkinchidasti dhananjaya – there is no one higher than Me, no one other than Me.’ In the Ramayana, we have the touching story of Manu and Shatarupa, who did great penance. The Lord was very pleased with their devotion and told them to ask for a boon. Their desire was for a son like the Lord. Bhagavan said, “Where can I find someone like myself? There is no one like me. I, myself will come to you as your son.”

The Guru tattva is the Supreme Reality and hence incomparable. Even at the worldly

level, we find there can be no comparison. The Teacher cannot be compared with any object or people of the world. Atman is like Atman only. Similarly, Bhagavan is like Bhagavan only. There is no comparison.

OM NIRUPAMAAYA NAMAH

314. OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

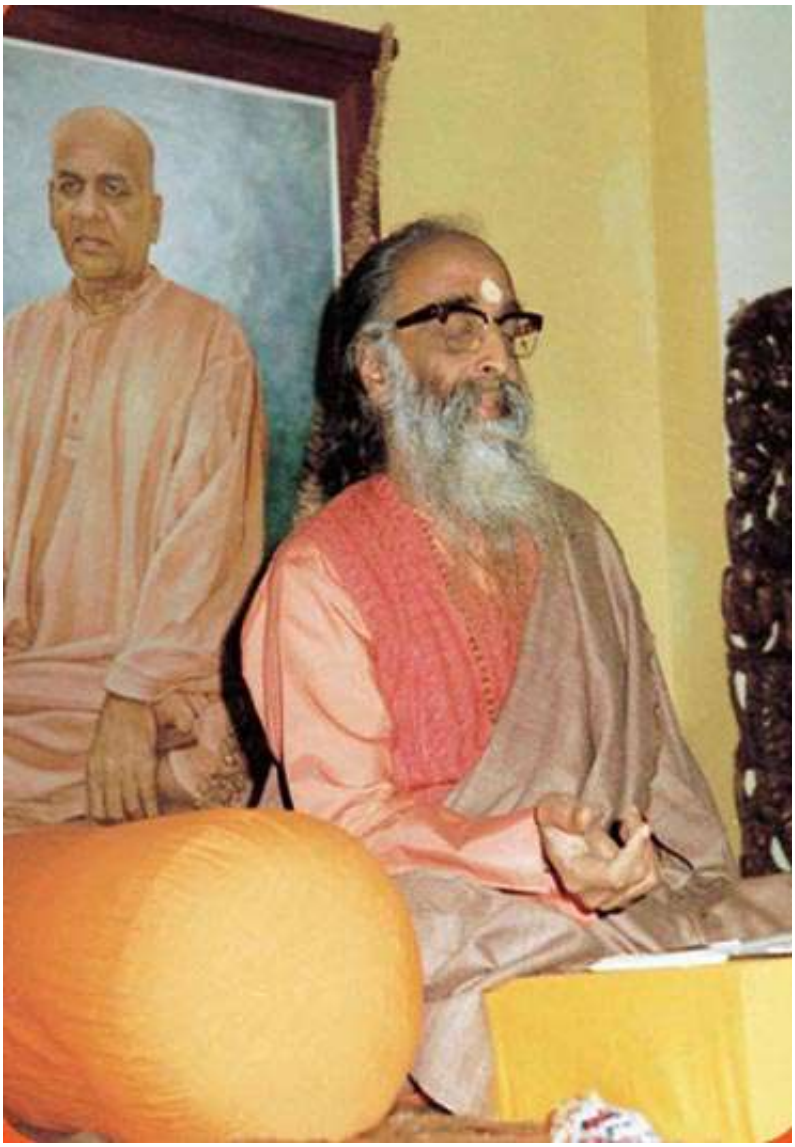
16-03-2016

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vilasini ji, Director CMWRC. She teaches Vedanta in the Washington, D.C., area

salutations to the one who is ever undisturbed (without agitations or modifications)

Once in the United States in the 1970s, in the middle of a talk in a college building where Swamiji was speaking on the third floor, a fire alarm went off. In his weak state of health, he could not walk down the stairs, and of course the elevator was shut off. Several of his young able-bodied devotees figured out a way to carry him in a chair down the stairs. Gurudev was joking the whole time!



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Gurudev's lightheartedness made a great impression on us. He showed that nothing is worth losing one's peace of mind over---even health and what could be life and death matters! He often said in his discourses that we squander away our peace of mind so lightly.... yet peace of mind is the most precious attribute we should cultivate and preserve! As sadhakas, we wanted to follow every word and every teaching, and emulate Gurudev as much as possible. So his example of lightheartedness and utter fearlessness made a great impact. And it came through

his discourses as well. All his stories and examples showed us this enlightened frame of mind. How can we live without getting upset and worried so much? How can we rest our minds with faith in the divine universe and acceptance of all that life brings? Even more, how can we experience the truth of our being that is Peace, no matter what is going on in the outer world or body?

Being in Gurudev's presence answered all these questions. He viscerally sucked us into this state of bliss. He could make us understand and feel the all-pervading Consciousness. Of course, he would then remind us that he can grant us a temporary Tourist Visa to Brahma Loka, but we will have to earn our Citizenship ourselves!

Salutations to Him who was always unperturbed, ever in a state of peaceful bliss!

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Vikalpa stands for thoughts, doubts, divisions, agitations.

All of them are modifications of an extrovert mind. In the mind that is tuned to the Self, all the above are not present. This state of no doubts, no agitations is called Nirvikapa. When in Samadhi this is called Nirvikapasamadhi.

NirvikalpayaNamah -- prostration to the one in whom there is no plurality, no agitations, no doubts.

This state is Atmanishtha, Brahma Nishtha; abidance in the Self. This does not mean He does not see the multiplicity of the world. But, He sees in all of them the one Non dual Truth as the very essence.

Astavakra Gita XVII -18

SamadhanaAsamadhanahitaahitavikalpanah

Sunyachittahnajanatikaivalyamivasamsthitah.

The wise- man of empty mind does not know the mental alternatives of contemplation and non- contemplation, and of good and evil. He abides as it were, in the state of loneliness.

The wise -man, left to himself, has no thoughts in him, and as such the various mental alternatives,right and wrong, good and evil,beautiful and ugly,heat and cold,joy and sorrow ad infinitum, do not at all affect Him.

He has transcended the mind and intellect. He is beyond the beyond (paratha-parah). He abides in the aloneness of the Absolute One Reality.

.....

In the transactional world such a Mahatma not having the flow of thoughts ever lives in the present which is the very Presence of The Supreme.

Some disciples asked Gurudev, we do all you do -- get up early, meditate, listen to Sastras, reflect etc. We are not as peaceful as You are. Why? Gurudev said when I speak, I speak; when I eat, I eat; when I read, I read; whereas your minds are split in many directions.

Every Breath a Teaching pgXiv Introduction



Paraat parah....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

VilasiniBalakrishnan,who served Gurudev as His assistant for many years,says:

During Swami Chinmayananda's years of service,hundreds of thousands of people delighted in hearing His talks on Vedanta. What people saw and heard when they sat for His discourses was amazing presence, a force of inspiring dynamism,an energy that swept into one's heart and opened it to greater wisdom. But there is one strong quality of Swamiji not so apparent on stage--and that was His deep,penetrating,soul

stirring silence.

Swamiji taught us this silence of stage. It is this teaching that made Him a living Upanishad. It is in this Silence that the mind gets hushed,and the joy lying within one's being comes forth. Swamiji was always in this silence.

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

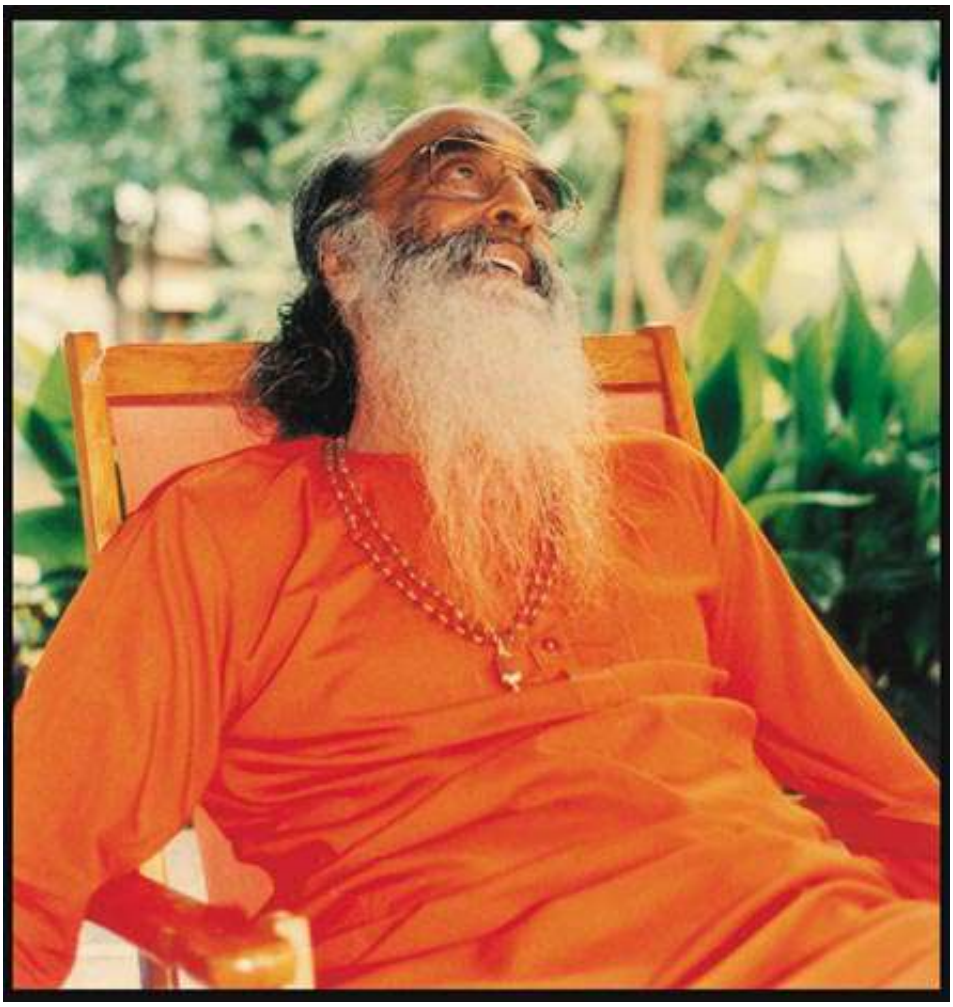
Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Free from Agitations

Vikalpa means thoughts or agitation. Nir is free from. Nirvikalpa refers to that Supreme Reality, which is free from all thoughts and agitations, free from all disturbances, absolutely still. Thoughts are like waves on the ocean of Consciousness. The ocean has many waves on the surface but if we go deeper, we will find there are no waves. The water is very, very still. Our thoughts are present at the superficial level. When we delve deeper into ourselves, we find there are no waves, no disturbances of any kind.

Vikalpa also refers to some different thought, idea or view point. About the Supreme Reality there can be no different view points. The nature of the

Supreme is one. It is established in itself. All these pointers point to that Highest Reality, beyond all manifestations. Like fire exists in its manifest and unmanifest form.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Fire exists in the wood in its unmanifest state. We can touch the wood when it is dry and cold. When we rub two pieces together, they get warm and suddenly they catch fire. In the forest the trees rub against each other and we have a forest fire. Where does the fire come from? It is hidden in the wood but cannot be seen. Similarly, this Reality, this world we experience has come from somewhere. It has come from the Unmanifest Reality. In that there is neither name, colour, form, difference, thought nor agitation. The peacock feathers display such beautiful colours, but in the peacock egg, we see none of these. Take the example of a mango seed. If we try eating it, we find it is bitter. But when it grows into a mango tree it gives the sweetest mangoes.

In the same way, in the transcendental state, the Supreme Reality is nirvikalpa, without any agitation. The Guru tattva is without any agitation.

OM NIRVIKAPLAAYA NAMAH

315. OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

17-03-2016

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to the one who is eternal.

*As atma is eternal, Gurudev too is eternal. Right now we may not experience the sense of the magnitude of all that he did for the world. We are just in awe of all that the Mission is known for. But much later, we will and others too will appreciate Gurudev's work and the impact it has had on the society.

In his own words Gurudev has said, 'when the sun is too bright you can't see it or what it is. Later you will know what work the Chinmaya Mission has done.'

*And all that what he did was build brilliant infra-structures. Systematically... He could gauge the possibilities and the potential. He saw and he could tell. Create create create.... He went around creating and today it is snowballing, snowballing. When people ask how is the Mission doing after his departure? We say we are expanding as he wanted. As he had planned. As he had vsualised. Today we have much more reach.

*When Gurudev was there, we merely watched him. We may have worked, but it was not a patch on what all he did. Everybody sat back, 'Swamiji is there! He will tell us what to do and we will do it.' Sigmund Freud said 'the day the father dies, the son becomes a man.' Not before. That is a powerful quotation. Until then the son thinks, 'Daddy is there! We are fine. He will take care.'Until then he does not even initiate thinking....

We too were like that. When Gurudev left, every worker in the Mission started thinking, Oh! now we are all by ourself. This has to be done, that has to be done.... And as we grappled and dealt with everything, we understood the word 'Vision'. That word entered our vocabulary only after he left.... Everything began to unfold one by one.

Look at the responsibility we take up now! Then, we had no idea what is to be done. Now every worker feels responsible, driven, committed. Every worker has matured. When suddenly you find, 200 or 300 people growing in responsibility thework also

expands and grows to become three-times more. Because these were the people who were expected to work, who were groomed to work, but at that time we were not working. We were simply following what he said. Go and do jnana yajna. Conduct Bal-vihar. Beyond that what were we thinking? We only knew to follow instructions.

So every worker became responsible, and every aspect of the Mission to expanded. Programme-wise, activity-wise, membership-wise. Do you see what is going on? He left but work is growing! We have not closed any centre or abandoned any project; if at all, we have taken on more. Has Gurudev gone? No! It is because he continues eternally, that work is also growing. This is all his work and the work continues to have his fragrance! Nityayanamah. This will go on.Why? Because it has been born from pure sankalpa!

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Prostrations to the eternal.

Whatever exists could have not come from non-existence nor can existence ever become non-existence. Therefore, whatever IS is always IS. Name and form only change. Sat Eva idamagraasit. This existence alone was there in the beginning. Everything has emerged from this. What comes from existence has to be existence. As such there is never non existence. ‘Non existence exists’ is a contradiction. Yet we in association with names and forms seem to be lost when those forms are lost. A Brahma Gnani, Gurudev beingdehateeta, avinashi, avyaya, kalatheetha is Nitya --eternal.

Even otherwise, can these millions who had known Him physically or through books or through His disciples ever be totally free from Him in their personality. He lives not merely as the very essence of all Sat Chit Ananda He also lives as the thoughts teachings the cultural rehabilitation the educational institutions the SishyaParamparaetc etc.

There are quite a few for whom their entire world is Gurudev. They have no interest even in moksha etc. For them their Gurudev is all. Such was the Love He created through His unconditional Love.

His Blessings will always be there upon all for all times to come.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him

pg 116

Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna, Madras.

Still the real force.

I never think that He is "No more ". I think that He is still here and talking to everyone, and that He is still the 'Real Force '. You can't miss God, can you?

Every Breath a Teaching pg 289

The last goodbyes-- an unusual aura --Michael Fantus

A good many years earlier, Anjali Singh experienced a powerful lesson in understanding the true meaning of Guru's presence. He seemed to be saying:" You can experience the vast calm of the Existence that I am--at all times, in all places "

Immortal existence pgs 289 and 290

Anjali Singh

After His first ventricular failure, he made me a Solemn promise, "I promise I will never leave you. Remember that!"

Two years later, after more ventricular failures, I reminded Him of that promise on a small note I sent to Him while He was in an adjoining room, as I did not have the emotional strength to talk face to face. He put His reply down in writing on my own note:

" If I leave you, where is 'you '? I am the very Existence--Sat (the all-pervading existence of Brahman, the Supreme Reality)

Pg 311

Editor

Whenever you need me, Close your eyes and look into your heart-- and l will be there!

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Eternal

Nitya is unchanging or eternal. It remains the same. Everything in this world is changing but the change takes place against a changeless substratum. This is changeless. It is never born nor does it die. This is our own Self. This is God, the Ultimate

Reality, the support of the whole cosmos. I am that changeless Reality. The body, mind, thoughts will all be destroyed but that eternal will remain untouched by time.

The Sikh scriptures refer to it as Sat Sri Akal. It is sat. It remains in all three periods of time without any change or modification. Despite this we are fearful of death, of losing our possessions. There is no need of being afraid because something in us is eternal and does not change. In childhood the body was different, our experiences were different, but still we know that we are the same person. People, seeing us after many years, may not recognize us, but we know we are the same because we remember our experiences. The one who experiences and the one who remembers must be the same. One person cannot remember the experiences of another. The very fact that we remember goes to show that there is something in us which is constant and eternal. There is a witness of all our changing thoughts, emotions and life styles.

That which does not change is not even memory. For memory also we need support. Sometimes we forget certain things, but that does not mean that we were not there. If we go back in time, we will find that we do not remember every single day of our lives. Forget days, even years are wiped out from memory. We do not remember what we did in one particular year or where we were. Even though we may not remember what happened, but we are sure that we were there.

There is something in us which does not change, which remains changeless. That changeless substratum, eternal factor or which body, thoughts and memory depend is my own nature. That is the Atman, that is Brahman and that is the Guru in me

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

His work goes on, He pervades all our institutions and projects even to this day....



Chinmaya Vidyalaya (CV)-Bokaro-Bio-Lab



CV Kannur - work, play, prayer



CV Kannur - winning too



CV Kollam (erstwhile Quilon) Kerala



CV - Koramangala, Bangalore



Harihar Vidyalaya - Tamaraipakkam. National Pride and Community Pride!



CV - Kunnumpuram, Kerala



Sparks from That Eternal Fire .... acharyas, CM Worldwide!



Chinmaya Institute of Technology ...



Chinmaya International Foundation - Keeping the fires of research burning bright.



CIRS - Chinmaya International Residential School, Coimbatore



CM Delhi at Lodhi Road.



The Grand Chinmaya Vibhooti at Kolwan in Maharashtra - seeking to contain the Eternal glory of Chinmaya



Yuvakendra - the young soldiers and sevaks, committed to Gurudev. His pride. His love.

OM NITYAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

316. OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

18-03-2016

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission.

*Salutations to the one who is taintless, blemishless. Niranjanayanamah.

Nir+ anjana = Without blemish.

*Guruji used to say, to field workers, who are effective in the field, whose work is effective, not being jealous of others is important. Even more important is to not create jealousy in others.

The first one is easier – one can work towards this and grow out of it. But to not create jealousy in others – that needs much deeper sadhana;far deeper levels of meditation where you create that mental visualization where you are loved and your presence creates love.

To be loved by everyone is also to be accepted by everyone, to be understood by everyone. In the early days when he set out to teach the people Vedanta, there were many who were annoyed with Gurudev, even unhappy. They questioned what he did, how he did it and why he did what he did – what they considered ‘breaking rules’, breaking tradition. His vision was so different, to begin with and this was disturbing to those who could not accept his way.

*But the same people after a while, began to see they needed him.



The Original Field Worker,No Controversy shadowing Him ever!

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*It takes time to be seen for what one is. Gurudev led a life where he never gave room for controversy. None whatever. To be so popular, to take up this kind of work and succeed in it, to be able to garner the funds needed to grow this work – all these can be fraught with controversy, given the dynamics involved. Not only him, the organization – Chinmaya Mission too developed in people deep respect, awe and reverence. The Mission gave no room for any controversy – that too one owes to Gurudev who scaffolded it with perfect systems, procedures, people and processes. Thus both, the person and the organization remained spotless.

*When we turn back, we see that since the day the Mission began to write its history, it has always been clear of any kind of controversy. Field workers should note this. Gurudev was the original field worker – when he went out there, he was Swami Chinmayananda, sure; but he was also all that Chinmaya Mission stood for. So when you workers go out onto the field, that image has to be protected,maintained. That's the credibility of our organization: No controversies

shadowing it.

*The Ramakrishna Mission is one organization that has stayed non-controversial. Imagine, a 100-year old organization, 2000, 3000 monks and great bonding between them. Non-controversial. This has to be emulated. Brilliant service, isn't it? For over 100 years, an organization keeps its image squeaky clean – how?It is the discipline. The monks who join the Ramakrishna Order, adhere to a kind of discipline. It is the training they go through - 8-10 years' training. The kind of comradeship they have developed among themselves, among the fellow-monks.

The first line in our pledge, reads: We stand as One Family, bound to each other with love and respect....if we follow this much, then the comradeship that we see among monks at the Ramakrishna Mission, will take place. Ramakrishna Mission stood that way and remains so, even after a 100 years. That's their strength. That is why people have faith in that organization.

*So whatever there was to him, was there in the open. Nothing secretive. A character without any blemish. Taintless. Pure. Secrets reside where there is 'my life' different from 'world'. A personal image and a worldly image. Gurudev's life was only for the world. For greater good. There was no other; absolutely no selfishness. Whatever he did it was done for the good of everyone -good for the seeker, good for the team, good for the Mission, good for the Vision. One of these was bound to dominate every action of his. Personal life – blemishless. Work, what he organized. Blemishless. Funds which was received, regulated;blemishless.

*Do you understand? We have to develop that kind of vision. . So we are not just talking about comradeship among us in the Chinmaya Mission, among our monks; but also intra organsiations, between organizations sharing commonality of purpose. Ideological comradeship.

*Gurudev had this. All the sadhus of that era, highly evolved people, enlightened people, how much they loved Gurudev. AnandamayiMaa. Gangeshwaranandaji. Abhedanandaji. Gnyanananda Swami.... Famous, widely followed, people. The kind of love they had for Gurudev. Because they found here is a person who is doing our work and he is doing so brilliantly. They saw Gurudev as someone who was committed to the same cause as them – worldly good. Gurudev's work spoke fir his character too and naturally. As the leader, so the followers. That is when every other person in the team develops that way. The people who had resisted Gurudev once, turned torch-bearers for his work, they took the movement forward, following him. They saw he is blemishless. He is right. They came to see their own prejudices.

*We have a goal to reach; after reaching the goal, we have a new job: taking people forward. We are committed to work. We are committed to revival. That means till the body dies one must be alert. No alertness – implies, we do not even reach the goal. Till the body drops, one must be alert, aware, awake. Gurudev was like that. The discipline the organization has installed and maintained has stood head and shoulders above every other consideration.

This is what it means to be Niranjanah, taintless, blemishless. This is why we want to be Niranjanah. This is how we will remain taintless.

*To a brahmachari Gurudev once asked about hisjapa practice. On knowing that he chanted Gurudev's name, He didn't like it. He said, 'Never meditate upon a living Guru.'

Never meditate upon a living Guru! What made him say that? He can go down but he knows how to come up. But you? Your faith would be shattered. Think. From his position, it may not even be going down; but he knows how to get out as well. He can choose to be amid riches, comforts and abundance … play around. But like a lotus leaf, untouched, he can come out, untouched. But another in his place can become an addict to all that. To that comfort, to everything which is being offered, one can become an addict to that way of life. So when we try to dowhat he is doing, it may not work.

*See what Gurudev did. He anchored us in the Book. 'I am only a pointer, not the pointed' – his words! Anchor. Blemishless. Niranjanayanamah. He never sought to be glorified, but he glorified the Book, the scriptures.

*As workers who are taking this torch forward, we need to understand how to remain alert, awake and aware. That is how no word or action of ours will lead to controversy. A small weakness for something here, there should not leave a dent on the big picture, on the vision of the master. That very thought -- if you understand the work and the vision -- will keep you disciplined and take you forward. For it is our pledge to keep Gurudev's Mission and Vision blemish-free, pure and shining bright.

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Krishnatmananda, Acharya-in-charge CM Salem &Hosur

Hari : Om !

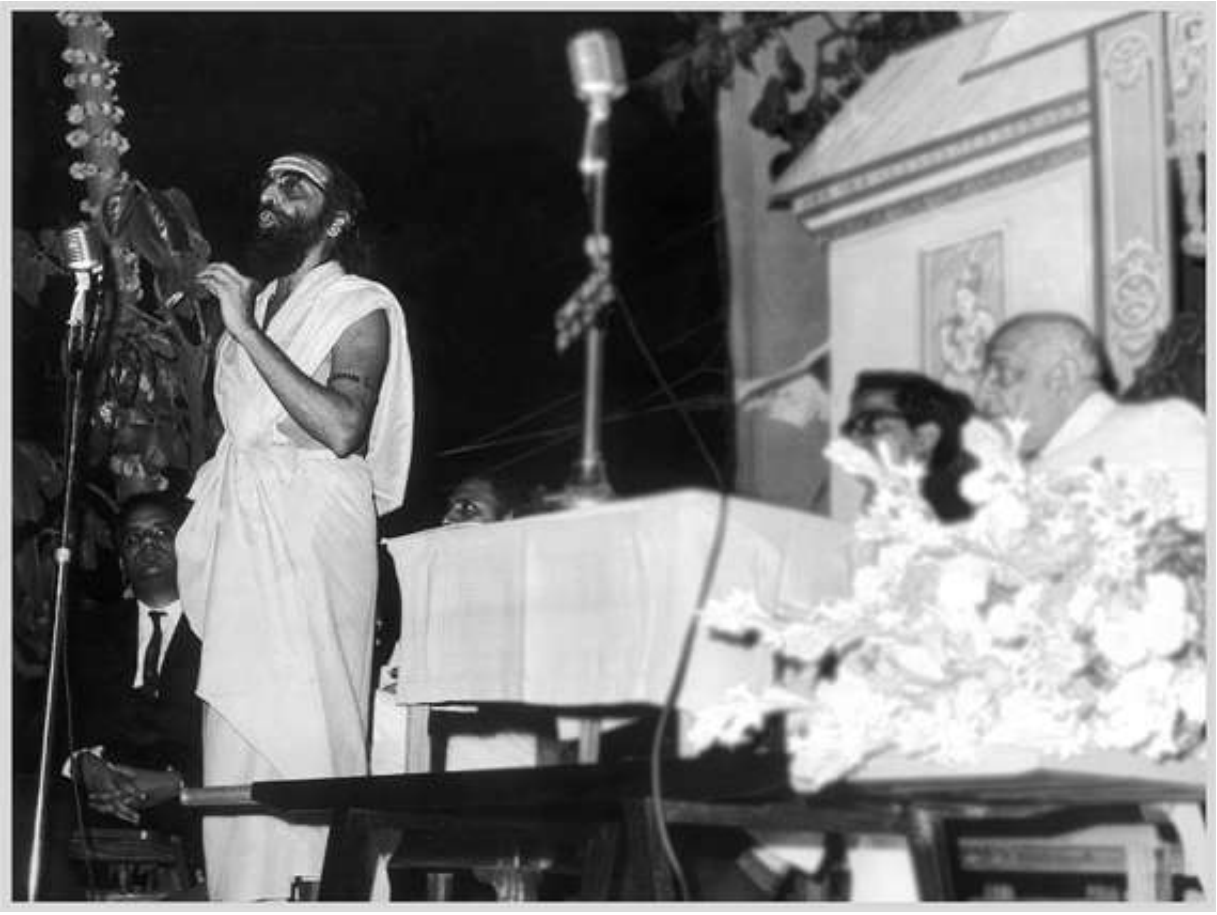
Om Sri Chinmaya SadguraveNamah!

Om NamoNarayanaya!

Salutations to the taintless one!

Indeed blessed and blessed by our beloved Gurudev in the year 1992. Today, I was reflecting on OM NIRANJANAYA NAMAH -whichbrings to my mind the glory of our

Gurudev.
A thing which is sweet in nature can alone give sweetness to that which it connects with. For example: Sugar or Honey when mixed with other ingredients has got the ability to make the other ingredients sweet like them.
The word Niranjana here means that which is not affected by ignorance, and that ignorance is dispelled in its presence or, that(one)which does not even have darkness in itself. The word ignorance doesn't mean knowledge-less, actually it means ignorance. Which means ignorance has the bhava-abhaavaswaroopa -- the ability to delude; but it can never ever touch that Consciousness. That's the reason Consciousness has been indicated as Niranjana.
Our belovedGurudev has been worshipped as NIRANJANAYA NAMAH, because we all know Gurudevis like Krishna – for whom delusion is totally under HIS control. Also Delusion (ignorance) has never ever reached Him. In His mere presence, Ignorance dispels.
That Gurudev, in His Ever Conscious Bliss, has the ability to bless others, like sugar or honey, which we saw earlier as being capable of lending its sweetness to other things, making other things sweet. It is the Truth.



Untouched by Maya.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

I am indeed blessed. I met Gurudev twice after joining Vedanta Course atSiruvani, Coimbatore. First, I met Gurudev on 1-1-1991 in Chinmaya Gardens, Siruvani. (Before that I had not seen Him or met Him.)The second time was in 1992 when I was studying in the Vedanta Course. We met Pujya Gurudev at Calicut along with our Acharya Br.DharmeshChaitanyaji. I happened to be very close to Gurudev's left hand and on the right side was our Acharya standing and responding to Gurudev's questions.

For a long time, Gurudev was churning my head and asking questions from Ramayana. One particular incomplete question was thrown to all of us by Gurudev. He said, "AnnalumNokkinaan....."(Rama saw...) and the whole audience and Brahmancharis were silent. [The reference is to a scene in the garden when Sri Rama comes face to face with Sita for the first time. In fact this quote that Gurudev threw at us is a very poignant aphorism almost that enters into many debates.] With total ignorance, I completed the sentence "AvalumNokkinaal" - which translates as, "She too saw."

When I completed the sentence, Gurudev burst out with laughter and said "LET HER SEE, YOU DON'T SEE (HER)!"

This incident happened in 1992 as I told earlier.

I realized the meaning after few years,when I felt the absence of Gurudev and cried. That time, He appeared in my mind and reminded me, whatever you need, I had given you already. Think!

This helped me to remember the above incident that happened at Calicut. After reflecting on this I found, I got the answer, 'Let Maya see you,but you don't see the Maya.' This was the message revealed to me.

This is the "Mahavakya"given to me by Gurudev. Also as I said, Gurudev gave both Sparsha (touch) and Upadesa (counsel/teaching) deeksha to me. As He promised to all of us, "I am waiting at the door step to receive my devotees...".

I am blessed and happy to be at HIS feet forever. "

MAYA HAS NO ABILITY TO REACH GURUDEV &GURUDEV NEVER HAS MAYA".

In ManeeshaPanchakam, it is said, the sun illumines both Ganges water as well as dirty water, but the light of Consciousness never gets contaminated by purity or impurity. Similarly Gurudev, the Light of Consciousness never gets contaminated by anything that happens in the world.

कगिंगाम्बुनीबम्बितश्चोम्ब्र्मनौचंदाल्वातपियः
पूरेचंत्रमस्तीकच्च्न्घतम्रित्कुम्भ्योवोर्म्ब्रे।
प्रत्यागवस्तुनीनस्तारान्ग्सह्जान्न्दाव्बोधाम्बुधौ
वप्रिोश्चयम्श्व्प्चोश्चय्मत्यिपमिहन्कोश्चयम्वभिद्भ्रमः॥

Is there any difference in the 'jewel of the sky' when it is reflected in the waters of the Ganga or in a ditch in the way-side of a slum? Is there any difference in the space as such, be it in a golden pot or in a mud-pot? In the ocean of the self-existing Blissful Consciousness, in the inner Self, devoid of thought ripples, how can there be this delusory distinction: 'this is a brahmana and this is a dog-eater?'

Thus the Light of Consciousness too does not get contaminated no matter what it contacts. On the other hand, Consciousness has got the ability to dispel the ignorance. Likewise in the mere presence of our Gurudev our ignorance dispels, Himself remaining untouched.

So,Niranjanaya Namah - Salutations to Gurudev as absolute Consciousness.

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

Gurudev's explanation of vasanas, also called Mala, dirt, is very effective.

Gurudev says any foreign element on something makes it impure. For example, Earth – soil, on ground is worshipped as Mother Earth whereas the same on our dress becomes dirt. Accepting this view, what is foreign in us are our vasanas. These hide the divinity in us, project the ego, and becomes the source of our suffering. One who has attained Godhood, naturally is beyond vasanas. That is our beloved Gurudev.

Also where there is otherness, there is insecurity and consequent negative emotions. Where there is no otherness, there is the oneness and unconditional love for all for which Gurudev is well known.

Hymn to Badrinath 4-8 Gurudev's commentary

We are told that a man rises above the body,mind and intellect,only when the vasanas in him are completely annihilated. When the vasanas have thus ended, he achieves perfect at-one-ment with the Infinite Self and experiences the Divine Perfection that is Brahman.



Life is a procession of encounters ..

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

TapovanPrasadMarch 2016 page 16

Gurudev

Life is a procession of encounters with the outer world of names and forms. Be aware that they are all happening in Him and He is ever immaculate as the screen in cinema theatre.

Every Breath a Teachingpage 285

Beyond the body - What body?

Dr.KshamaMetre

During His hospital stay in Sidhabari,two nurses came into His room with bathing equipment and said "Sir, it is time for sponging"

"I am immaculate!" He said.

Nurses,thinking that He had not understood,explained "Sir,we need to wash you up now ".

"I am pure", Swamiji replied. I am immaculate.!"

They still thought that He had not understood them and explained again that they need to wash Him.

Finally Gurudev relented, "Never mind. You can wash the body now."

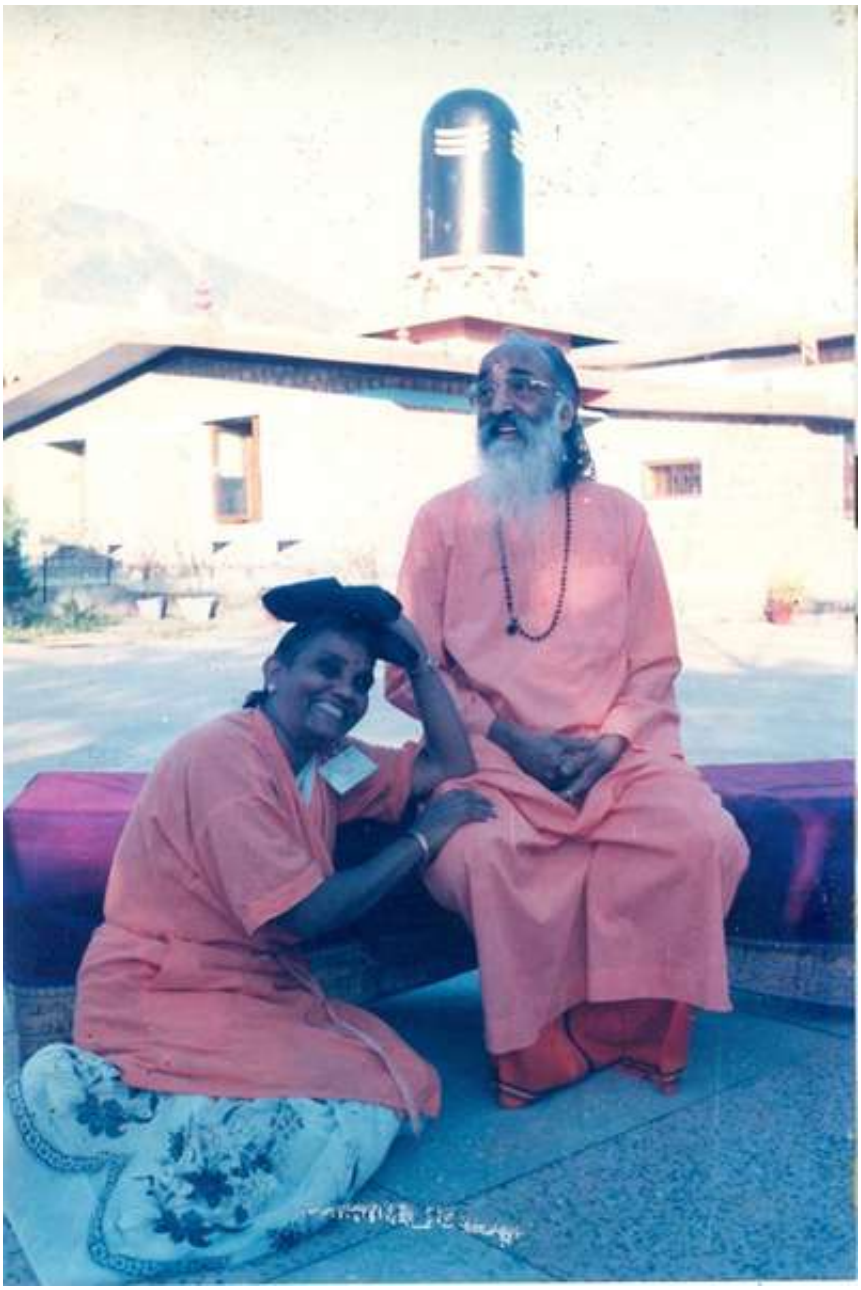
OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Free from Impurities

Anjana is some impurity; anjana is also the kohl that is applied in the eyes. Niranjana is that which is free from all impurities. Anjana or kohl was used to make the vision clear. Gurukåpa or the grace of the Guru clears our vision. Tulsidasji says that by applying the anjana or gurukåpa, he could see the glory of Rama on earth, in the heavens, everywhere. Gurukåpa is not seen. It has no form, no shape but because of it we can see clearly.



By the touch of the Teacher, everything becomes pure!

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT),reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Anjana is what we apply and this clears our vision. Anjani is gurukåpa. When this gurukåpa takes a form, it is called Hanumanji. Hanumanji is Anjaniputra, the son of Anjani or the son of gurukåpa. He, Himself is Shiva svarupa and Lord Shiv is the Guru.

But that Supreme Reality is free from all this anjana, which is also an impurity. The

Supreme is pure and free from all impurity. Nothing can make it impure. Neither thoughts nor sin can touch it. Though our thoughts may try to touch that Reality, they cannot touch it. In the same way, the nature of the Teacher is free from all impurities. In fact, by the touch of the Teacher, everything becomes pure. Like the water of the Ganga is pure. Even if we put ordinary water in it, that water also becomes pure. Also the crooked moon becomes worthy of worship, when it sits on the crown of Lord Shiva. The ashes of the deceased are not considered pure. They are never brought into the house. But when applied on the form of Lord Shiva, even that is worshiped. The ashes are purified by the touch of the Lord. The Teacher is like Lord Shiva, pure and free from all impurities – Niranjana.

OM NIRANJANAAYA NAMAH

317. OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

19-03-2016

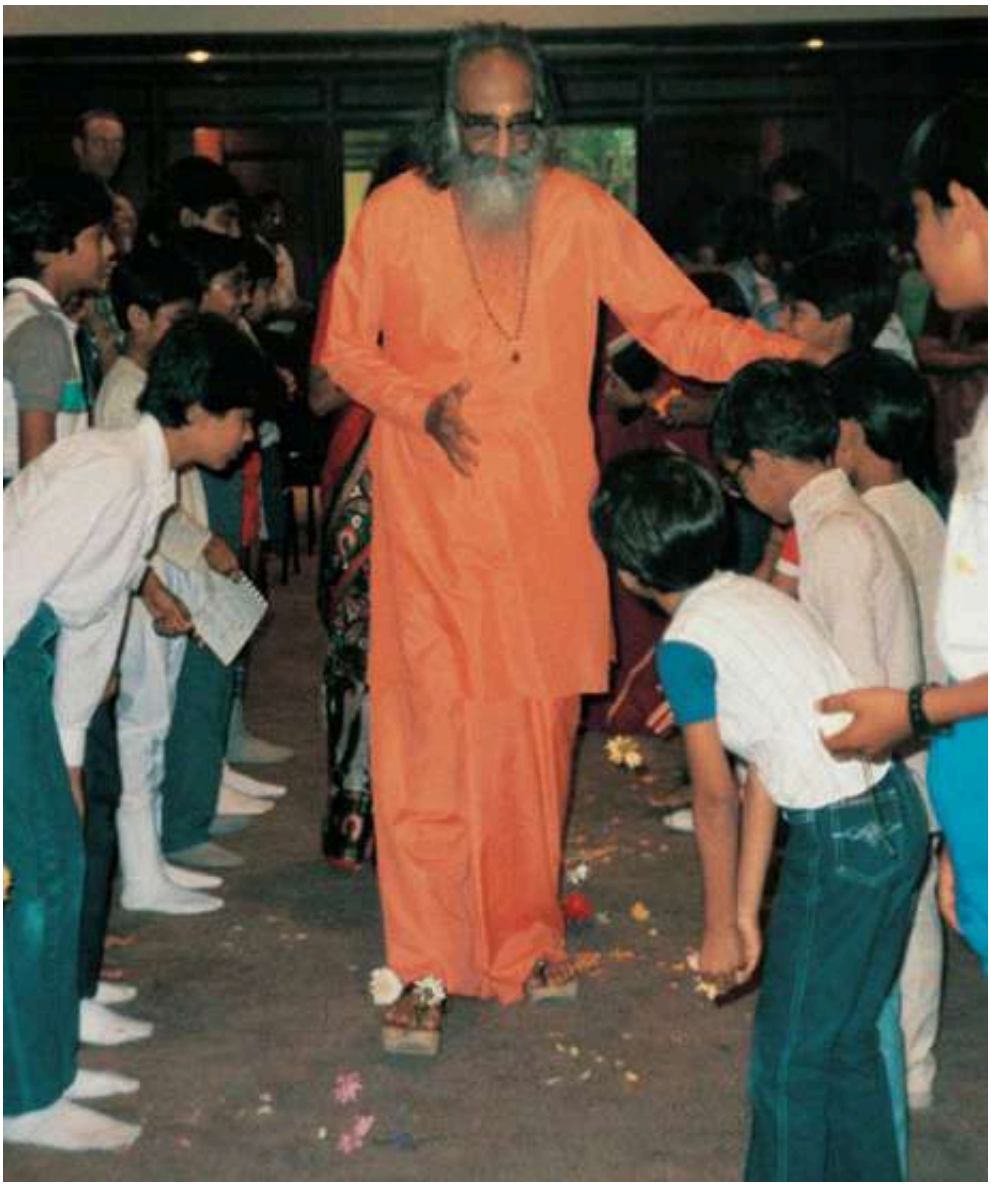
OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to Him who is the Absolute, Highest, Supreme.

*At vyavaharik level good is the highest. Good – not in the passive sense, good in the dynamic sense.The highest level, is that which seeks the greater good of the collective. That is parama.

*So at various levels we see that the kind of decisions Gurudev made were always good; the best possible. When everything is going well he knows what to decide. Butwhen things crumble, then too, he made the right decisions! That ability is parama. So while we gaped at his decisions,we could see that for him overall goodness was paramount. That is how a missionary should be;a worker who is serving should also have that vision of overall goodness. If we can work towards developing this attitude, imagine our ability to take decisions!



To preferring greater good.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

We must develop this ability, this attitude, to be effectiveworkers. This ability to see overall goodness, prefer greater good. Every action of ours must be evaluated for long term benefit to the collective. That is parama, superior, greatest height from where to think. That needs to be developed.

OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu –CM Chennai

Param means Supreme. We have our goal as a student to gain qualification. During our studentship, this is our goal. But this is only a means for profession. This professional goal, becomes a means to earn money. This money becomes a means to maintain the family. Thus at every stage our goal is becoming a means. Ultimately they are all means for security and happiness. Aristotle says the ultimate goal is that which never becomes a means. Thus though happiness is the end, yet the happiness itself we know got through experiences and the world, is finite.

In Taittireya Upanishad grades of happiness have been mentioned culminating in Brahmaananda. Infinite happiness should not depend on anything and should not change. This is the happiness of one's own Being,Nijananda. This is Supreme—Param--This is Brahma Gnani--Gurudev.

Vedanta– Mananam Publication, Celebration Series, page 76

Gurudev then continued his lecture:

To students of Vedanta, the Guru is the embodiment of their Goal. The Guru is nothing but pure Consciousness,absolute Bliss,and eternal Wisdom.

Page 77

In Hinduism, the Guru's grace itself is God's grace,since the Guru is none other than the Lord Himself expressing Himself in a manifest condition so as to help the disciple.

Hymn to Badrinath - verse 7

Painting the picture of the transcendental glory of a Man of Perfection, the poet indicates that the ordinary realms of relative experience do not constitute his field of experiences. Beyond them all, a Man of Wisdom occupies a field of glorious satisfaction,far beyond the whistling storms and the threatening clouds of every day tribulations suffered by the ordinary men of the world.

Swami Chinmayananda as I knowpg 79

Shri S.R.Parashtekar Thane

The Lord in disguise

He is my teacher and the Lord of my heart. When the Lord wants to bless us,He comes in the form of a teacher. He teaches us the Knowledge of the Self. Gurudev is indeed the Lord in the form of a teacher.



He is my Teacher, the Lord of my Heart ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Kindly note the echoing of Gurudev's words quoted earlier from Vedanta in the same article.

Acceptance of Guru as God

Shri. Bijoy Chandra Deo, Bhanj, Bhubaneswar

He is my "Guru ". I pray to Him every morning. He is a living God to me.

He is the person who has been the greatest influence in my life and changed my way of thinking.

OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is Supreme

Parama means Supreme. The Teacher is Supreme. The Kathopanishad lists out the different levels of superiority from gross to subtle. At the most gross level are the sense organs. Superior to those are the five sense objects – sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Superior to them is the mind, then the intellect, followed by the Total Intellect or the Hiranyagarbha. Superior to this is the Para Brahman or the Supreme Reality. There is nothing superior to that.

This is like the Russian Matrushka dolls, which go one into the other. The biggest doll contains every other doll, but itself is not contained by any one. Similarly the Supreme Reality or Teacher is one in whom everyone resides but it is above everything. It is Parama or Supreme in all respects.



In whom everyone resides ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM PARAMAAYA NAMAH

318. OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

20-03-2016

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

Om Parabrahmane Namah

Saluatations to Him who is Absolute Truth. Parabrahma.

* Parabrahma... just is.. . Around him things go on. That way Gurudev himself has said so many times – 'I never do anything. It is His will that happens all around us.'

*How does one express what the Guru has done for you? How do you put across what the teacher has done to you? Very difficult. Gurudev himself expressed what his own guru did to him with -- 'in whom I became silent.' So clear the words are!



* Look deep into Gurudev's photograph... Keep looking at him... and then you say – it is people like you, (who) make people like me, (into) people like you! Not only was he parabrahman, but he was making us That, shaping us by chiselling off all that was un-Brahman-like.

* Like him you also evolve. Like him you also experience the Absolute freedom. Like him, get out of the bondage. Liking him, you can become like him. You begin to like him so much, and soon, that 'like' turns into love and then you will see - you are also like him! Undoubtedly, he is parabrahma!

* And for students of Vedanta -- this is definitely very important because a time comes when you start understanding Ishvara in the real sense, not theoretically, when the theory has taught all it can, has become crystal clear to you, when the forms – saguna moorti-s will not be enough, and you don't know where to drop that ego … then, only the Guru's feet will beckon. For a student of Vedanta, this stage would be inevitable.

* That's why we say – guru saakshaat parabrahma. And there's no doubt in that, it is the truth. The Knower of Brahman and Brahman are one and the same. They are not different. So this ego of ours can dissolve, evaporate, only when we start seeing the teacher as parabrahman - Guru saakshaat parabrahma. When that happens we will find ourselves being awakened to the Higher Reality.

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu –CM Chennai

Brahman is The One Non dual Reality Who is Absolute Existence (Sat), Absolute Knowledge (Cit) Absolute Bliss (Ananda) whose expressions are Moolaprakriti Iswara Hiranyagarbha Panchabhootas Jiva etc.



This is brought out very well in Kathopanishad 2-5-9 &10

Agniryathaiko bhuvanam pratisto

rupam rupam prathiroopo babhuva

Ekasthatha sarvabhutantaratma rupam rupam prathiroopo bahischa

Just as fire, after it has entered the world, though one, assumes different forms according to the shape it enters, so does the eternal Atman, of all living beings, though One, takes a form according to each shape it enters and also (in itself it exists) beyond them.

Gurudev's commentary:

Bahischa (beyond also) Pure Consciousness, the all-pervading Truth, certainly presides over every form,Vitalising every cell in them,"but" adds the Sruthi "Truth is not limited to cover only the area or extent occupied by the manifested life!

Life in the millions of Universes put together is but, according to the Lord’s own words in the Gita, only a fraction of the Divine Total! This is indicated by the Sruti here by emphasising that Absolute Truth not only pervades every visible form and invisible world, but also transcends them all. In short, the Supreme Reality is at once immanent and transcendent.

The same idea is repeated in mantra 10 replacing air for fire.

This is Brahman. Brahman is defined as Bruhatvat (bigness) and brumhanatvat that which expands.

The importance of these stanzas in the context of Gurudev is that He has not only transcended but is ever available in and with us.

Here are a few instances where He Himself reveals this.

Every breath a teaching (pg 228)

Teachers and teaching

The burned shirt by Robyn Thompson

Before Gurudev went to rest, Robyn summoned her courage and said quietly to Him,

"Swamiji, I burned your shirt: I am sorry ".

He roared a laugh: "The shirt may have gotten burned, but the swami did not! Never mind. What does it matter?"

Immortal Existence by Anjali Singh pg 290

The last good byes

"If I leave you, where is "you"? I am the very Existence--Sat (the all pervading existence of Brahman)

Page 311

Editor

When a Mahatma leaves the body, he never truly leaves those devoted to Him. As Gurudev Himself had written to a young boy who wondered when he would see Him next:

Whenever you need me Close your eyes and look into your heart-- and I will be there!

To that One we continue to seek and find in our hearts, who never left us, to that Parabrahma, our salutations!

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om ParabrahmaNe Namah

Salutations to the Embodiment of Supreme Reality

Parabrahman is similar in meaning to the preceding name. Parama is also indicated

as Brahman. Brahman means that which is big, that which is large and that which is infinite. That which is not limited by time, space and object is called Brahman. The world is limited by time, space and objects.



Every object is limited in time. It is born in time and dies in time. It is bound by time. It cannot go before or after time. Objects are limited by space. Objects cannot be everywhere at the same time. The flower that is here cannot be there at the same time. Space is vast compared to object. The object is limited by other objects. The flower is not a book and the book is not the watch. Each object is limited as a particular object.

But Brahman is unlimited. It has no limitations of any kind. The Teacher is that Supreme Brahman.

OM PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

319. OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

21-03-2016

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Shruti Chaitanya, CM Puducherry

Salutations to one who is Purity / Purifier.

Paavanaaya reminds us of Pavana – wind, one among the three greatest purifiers in the world. We look at wind and we say that wind brings life and freshness by moving; Also it serves ever, remaining invisible; Wind is impartial; Wind spreads around and moves around unattached..etc. But what does wind have to say? It just says 'I am – A Presence.'

Pujya Gurudev is a presence bringing life and freshness. Himself relentlessly worked on spreading the knowledge of Vedanta. We can see what His holiday is from His letter written from Uttarkasi..'It looks a holiday here when I have only :

1. A morning class of Mandukya

2. An evening class of Geeta

3. 7 students and 12 guests

4. Dictating on to tape recorder VivekaChudamani book

5. Finishing a commentary upon Sri Gurudev's 'Sri Ganga Stotram'

6. Finishing the fortnightly letters to the study group members

7. My own studies

8. A little sadhana

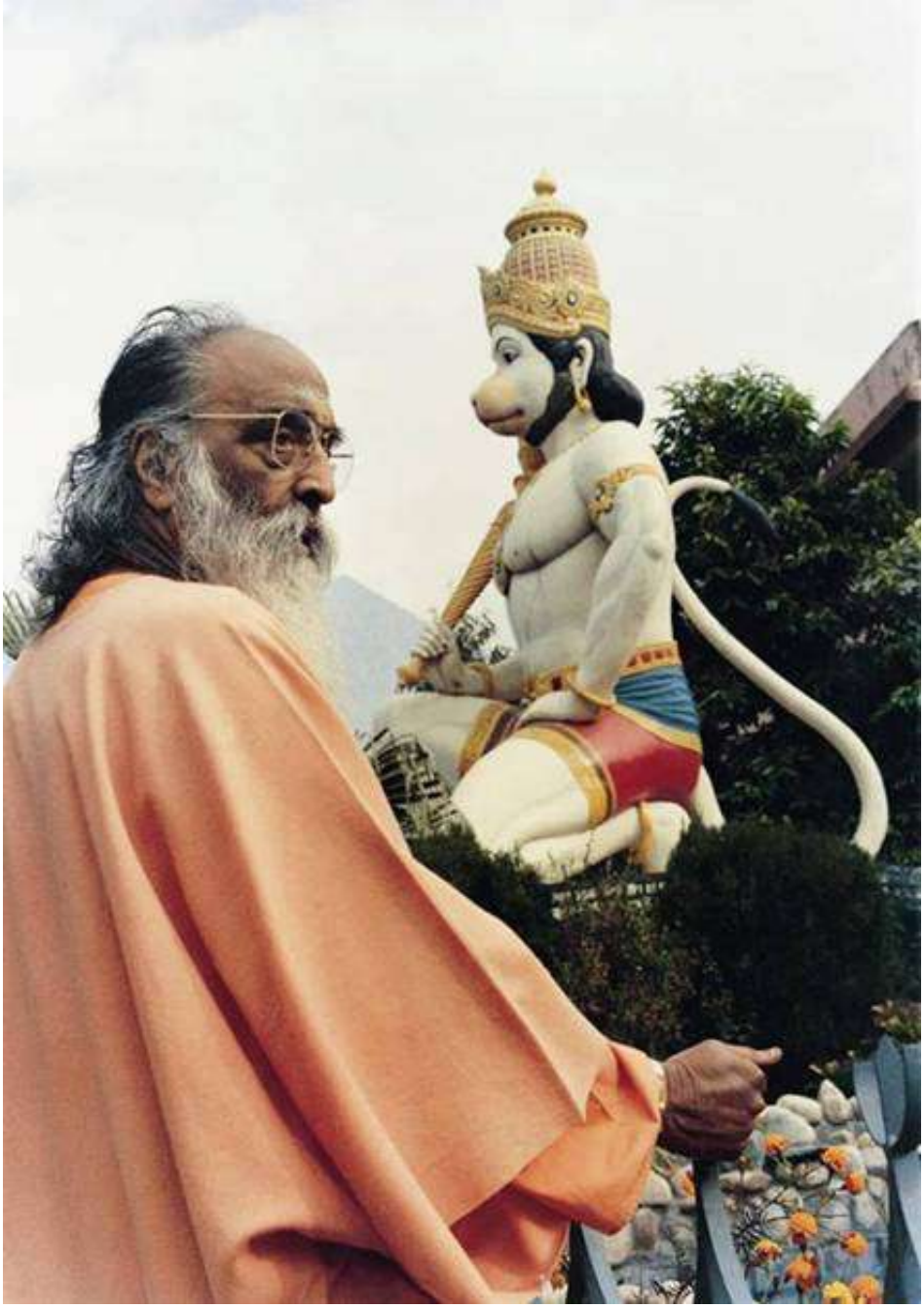
9. A lot of correspondence with the Mission Branches!!'

Whenever Gurudev entered a room, even our tiredness or dullness vanished. There is energy around with work rendered as service. He wanted us to press into effective service every spare moment. This was natural for Pujya Gurudev and He instilled this

spirit in us too for us to be purer. His words through letters and satsangs have the power to raise one from the slumber of tamas. Om Paavanayanamaha.

Himself pure, He got us cleaned up too. In His own words, 'Sweepers go out and clean the street gutters, and in the process they themselves get dirty. Then they need to go home to wash themselves and their clothes. So it is with my brahmacharis and brahmacharinis. I send them out into the world and they get dirty. They come back to me all dirtied up and with a lot of patience, a touch of the whip, and a lot of love, I clean them up and send them out into the world again.' Om Pavanayanamaha.

He showered His grace on all. When we open our doors even a wee-bit, wind enters and purifies even a place which is damp and stale. A little bit of place for our Guru in our mind clogged with thoughts of objects and emotions of the world, is enough. We give Him a chance to enter when we soak ourselves with reading His words and listening to His voice; then we can feel Him guiding us from within. I may be the greatest sinner; But Gurudev would be interested in me. In His own words 'I am more interested in the dis-interested'. In At Every Breath a Teaching there is an instance of an unkempt man with an open beer can in hand, coming into the area of satsang and Pujya Gurudev welcoming him to come close to him and sit so that he could hear everything that was being said. Such was Swamiji's love -- instantaneous, impartial and infinite. Om Pavanayanamaha.



Give Him a chance to enter .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Pujya Gurudev's work was dynamic, yet detached. 'Asakta: VaayuvatCharet'. Someone asked Gurudev, how he could be so detached. He replied, 'I have chewed the world and seen that it has no essence. Spat it out automatically.' The comparison is with reference to a youngster chewing on a chewing gum. He would chew as long as he enjoys some juice from it. Then he automatically spits it out. Gurudev would

dynamise devotees into detached action. Detached work brings clarity into our thinking and purity into our hearts. Om paavanaayanamaha.

Wind spreads everywhere. So too Gurudev's glory is spread out everywhere. Gurudev's devotees are also spread out everywhere. A constant association with them is an easy way to ensure noble thoughts, noble words and noble actions. Om Paavanaayanamaha.

Gurudev says 'reach There / Me through love, service and purity'.

Let us reach Him then, Om PaavanaayaNamah!

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu,CM Chennai

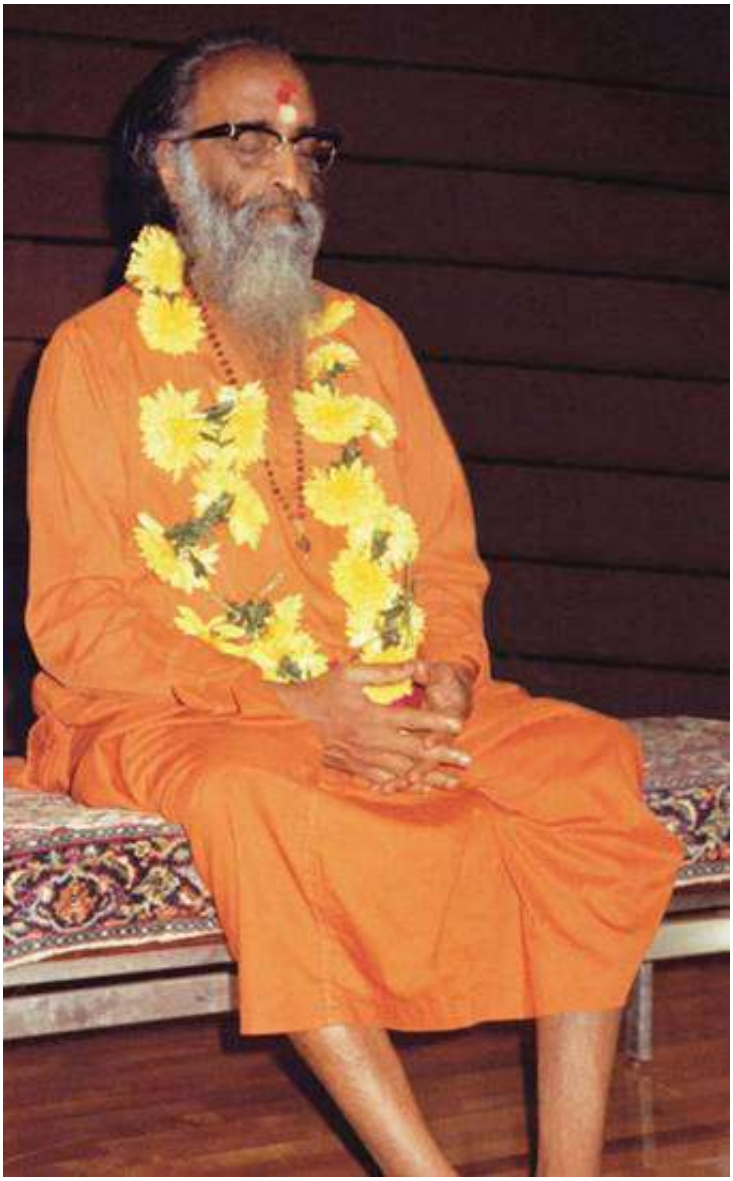
PavanayaNamah andPavakayaNamah both mean purifier. But probably to differentiate them Pavanaya is taken by some as one who is purified. If we read Gurudev's commentary on Vishnusahasranama it is clearly explained – Naam 292 - Pavanah - the one who purifies.

Pavan is wind – and the wind also purifies as seen in Gurudev's commentary on Atma Bodh 52 which will be quoted at the end of this note along with Vishnusahasranama.

Pavaka is fire. In Bhagavadgeetha 4-37 it says as fuel is reduced to ashes so also Gnana burns down all karmas(vasanas or sins).

Thus both air and fire purify; so too, Brahma Gnani our dear Gurudev, by merely remembering Him SmaranaMatrena – we are purified. Is there someone who can think of this Lord our Swamiji and yet at that moment be sensuous or sad.

I shall first refer Gurudev on Atma Bodh 52 since this is helpful to know that air is both pure and purifier, thus satisfying both meanings.
The sky appears to be blue and a little grey,but the sky itself is not really so. Similarly the Jivanmuktha may seem to be associated with the Upadhis and may wander about as an ordinary man,in the work-a-day world,but he gets into that role and comes out of it unattached and untainted like the wind.



Unattached, untainted ...

.©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Vishnusahasranamanaam811
Pavanaha- "One who ever purifies." The impurities of a personality are gathered when the mind and intellect, in a natural impulse of animal voluptuousness,rush towards the sense objects with ego centric passion. To retrieve the mind from sense objects and to peacefully let it settle in Contemplation of the divine nature and the eternal glory of Sri Narayana, the Self,is to exhaust all the existing Vaasanas, which are the personality impurities within.

Every breath a teaching pg 193 and 194

Sadhana drinking vasana

SwaminiShivapriyananda
"Before the vasana pulls you to enter the drinking booth (pub), say to yourself,' I have a drinking vasana, and I am ashamed of it. I want to get rid of it " But if the vasana is still strong,you cross the street,open the door,sit down on the bar stool, and meet your drinking companions. With every step,whatever you do -- opening the door,walking up the counter,sitting down on the stool,greeting your friends-- you do in full awareness. As you order the first drink,say to yourself,' This is the drinking vasana doing this'. Then you swallow the burning liquid consciously,with the full awareness that this is the drinking vasana at work. And you suffer the hangover in full consciousness that the drinking vasana caused it.
" You go through this exercise again and again,because if the vasana is strong,it will not leave you easily. If you go through these experiences with full awareness,one day you will be free."

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami. NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Embodiment of Purity

Pavana means one who is pure and one who can make others pure. Purity is very important, because it is the one requirement for God realization. We require purity of body, mind and intellect. Purity is the visa necessary to take us there. But how do we get this purity? We become pure...by doing japa, undertaking pilgrimages...bathing in holy rivers...by performing puja...by changing our convictions...by gaining Knowledge...by serving the Guru.

Sré guru charanasaroja raja nija mana mukurasudhari

This famous doha by Tulsidasji says that when we apply the dust from the lotus feet of our Guru to our impure mind, we make our minds pure. In olden times, mirrors were made from metal. These were called ‘mukura’ and were cleaned

with vibhuti and water. ‘Mukura’ is also the mirror of the mind. It can be cleaned with the dust of the feet of the Guru.

In the mirror of the mind we see our own face reflected. The face here symbolizes the Atman. It is there, but cannot be seen. We want to see our face and to see it we need a mirror. The mind is the mirror of the face. Unfortunately the mirror has become rough and lost its shine. So the face cannot be seen. The roughness and dullness can only be removed through contact with the Teacher.

When we rub the mirror of the mind with service and love for the Teacher, it becomes pure and clean. We are then able to see ourselves. When we bathe in the holy rivers, they become impure. The rivers in turn pray for Mahatmas to come and bathe in them, so that they may regain their purity. Spiritual Masters make ordinary spaces, places of pilgrimage by their very presence.



The rivers pray for mahatmas to come and bathe in them to regain their purity...

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

What is the difference between pure water and clean water? Water offered to the Lord is blessed and becomes pure water. Similar is the difference between a laddu and prasad. When the laddu is offered to the Lord it becomes prasad. Pavitrata or purity comes to anything that is connected to the Lord. Conversely anything that is not connected with the Lord is impure. Take for example the difference between the live and dead body. The living body is connected and is pure. The dead body is considered impure because of the disconnection from the life

power.

The Guru is connected to the Lord and so is pure. He is like the river Ganga, purified by her connection to Lord Shiva. The Guru is of the nature of Shiva only. When we get connected to the Teacher, we are also purified. The food we eat, the wealth we enjoy, the clothes we wear are all purified by the act of offering them to the Lord. Our thoughts, words and actions, when offered to the feet of the Lord are all divinized. Before beginning a puja, we take water and pray for purity within and outside as well. When we remember the Lord, our mind becomes pure. When it is connected with God, it becomes and when the connection snaps, it is considered impure. It is ‘Shiva’, if it is associated and ‘shava’ if it is not associated.

The Teacher is Supremely Pure and with the dust of their feet, our body, mind and intellect become pure. By mere remembrance of the Guru, we are purified because he is of the nature of Purity.

OM PAAVANAAYA NAMAH

320. OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

22-03-2016

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Sw. Abhedananda. Swamiji has been the Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Centers in India and Singapore. Presently he is the Acharya of Chinmaya Mission, South Africa.

In a child's life so many different people, objects and relationships with these, come and go and a child, as if, lives in a supermarket of emotions, taking possession for a rare few. But when a mahatma sets His eyes on a child, He can in an instant set that little life onto the Path, purifying it continuously and forever.



Can set a little one on the path, purified continuously and forever

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Hari Om! Shri GaneshayaNamah

It was in the early 1980's when I was 10 years old. Pujya Gurudev had come to Allahabad for a Gyan Yagna and the whole city flocked to have a glimpse of the great Master. My Grandfather was an ardent devotee of Pujya Gurudev, and very actively involved in the activities of Chinmaya Mission Allahabad. As a run up to Gurudev's visit, the Mission had organized several programs and competitions for children. Out of sheer love for me, my grandfather suggested that I should enrol myself for a competition in which several children were participating, wherein we had to write the names of the Lord starting with the first letter of our own name. My sole incentive to participate was the hope of getting some prize, and driven by this I went to a book stall somewhere in the city and bought all the availableSahasranaambooks.Since the first letter of my name was "S" so I managed to write down around 500 to 600 names of the Lord with the initial letter "S".

When the submissions of all the children were received, it so happened that none of the children from the entire city could pen down anything more than 150 names. So naturally I got the first prize. Although as a small child I was not much associated with Balvihar, but when Gurudev had come to Allahabad I was there amidst all other children. On one such day, all children were asked to go and seek his blessings.

It was in the house of Shri NarottamDas Agarwal who was the host of Pujya Gurudev in Allahabad for all those years. I can clearly remember we were almost 200 children sitting in the large drawing room, instructed to sit in a row, and maintain total silence. Everybody was very quiet and alert as we were told that when Gurudev comes nobody should make any noise or say anything, nobody should even utter a word. So we were all sitting straight and quiet in a very formal manner.

Just few minutes later, Pujya Gurudev came out through one of the rooms, and although I had seen Gurudev previously but the sight of Him that I saw today really surprised me and brought a big smile on my face! As Gurudev entered the drawing room he was dancing and swaying from left to right, with a laughter on his face and swinging his arms, approaching the kids with immense love. The first question he asked us as in his roaring voice was “who asked you to sit so quiet and why are you all so serious? Children are not meant to be like that, they are meant to smile and laugh and cheer all the time!” As soon as he said this, all of us jumped with joy as free birds and felt we were among someone of our own kind.

Then he told us all a wonderful story, after which someone from the committee

introduced me as the one who had written maximum number of names of the Lord. As luck would have it, I was standing just close to Gurudev, and so he asked me “Who helped you? Did your mother help you?” So I shook my head saying "No". Then he asked whether my father helped me and I again shook my head saying no, then he asked whether my Grandfather helped me and I replied with a no again. Ultimately he took my hand and said “I know who helped you, it is God who helped you.” and saying these words he took me in his arms and embraced me tightly. I didn’t know the meaning of that embrace then but I was the only fortunate one amongst all the children to experience Gurudev’s loving embrace. It is the same embrace that I can permanently feel myself in, I feel it today and right now too. It is this silent initiation where I felt that he took my heart into his heart and gifted Himself to me forever.

It is this poise of Sri Gurudev, this Love of our great Master, that has kept my smile lasting forever, even in the most tiring and testing situations.

Pujya Gurudev was not a person, he was an institution. What was immensely touching about him was that he never discarded anybody. He never judged anyone by his or her qualification or ability. He accepted all of us and made every person feel that despite his stature, he is never away from anybody. I felt this very closely and intensely in his assuring embrace, and this was the first incident and remembrance of Pujya Gurudev in my life when he blessed me with his divine touch.

Although from my early childhood, my Grandfather was always very particular and persuasive of taking me to Pujya Gurudev's talks, but I don’t remember what he said. I used to just sit quietly during his discourses, gazing at his flowing style, admiring his gestures and his waving wand / pointing stick on the BMI chart. All this would keep me glued to his talks, as I observed his various kinds of articulations that he used to make so vividly in his talks. But at that time I had never imagined that the one who is sitting in front of me, would make me his own forever, such that a day will come when I will be feeling his presence all the time, at all place; behind me, and to my left, to my right or rather within me and he alone will be the one driving me, making me laugh and smile and talking to me constantly in and through!

Hari Om!

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

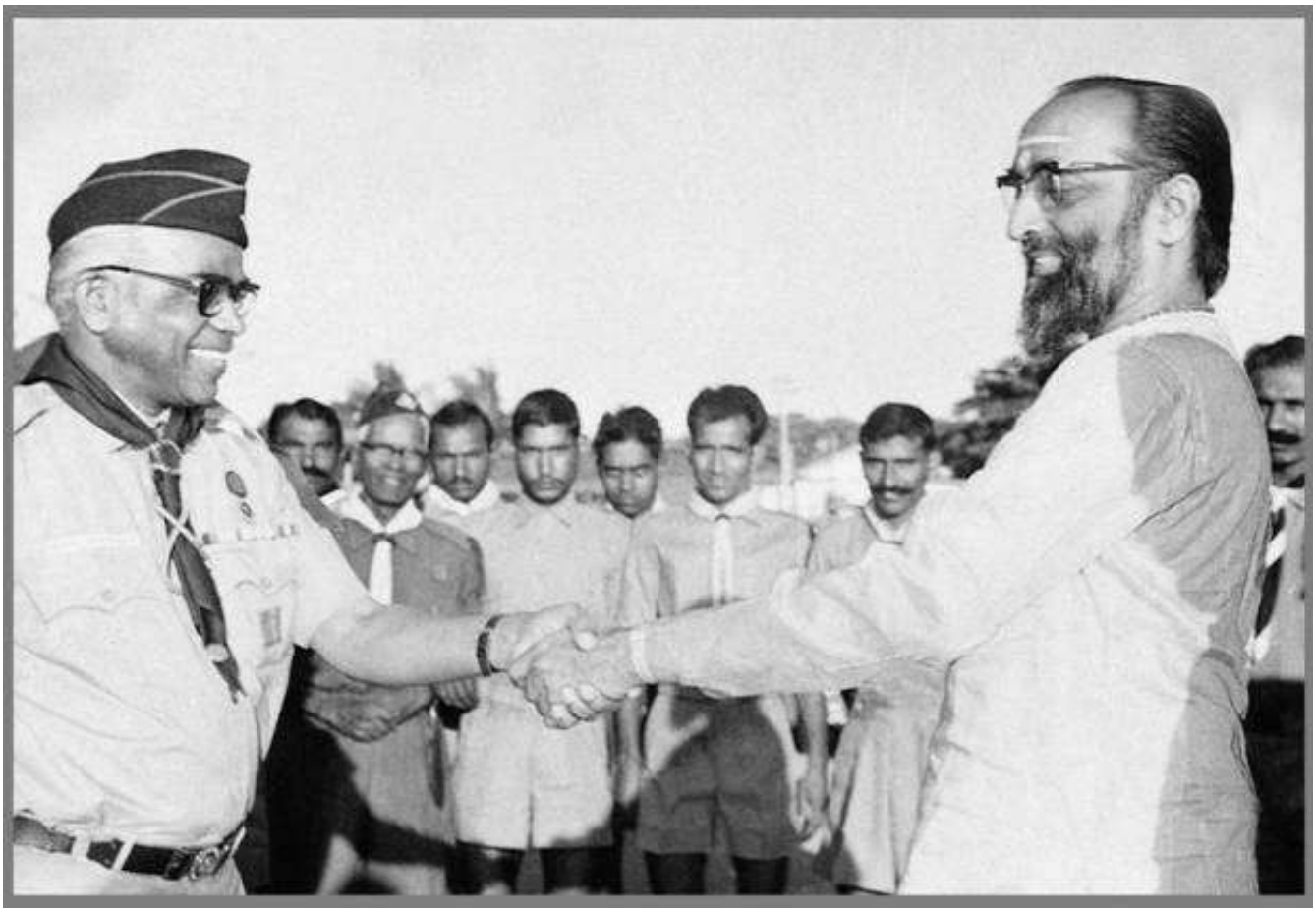
OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

Salutations to Him, the purifier.

We all want to be purified as our impurities obstruct our evolution. Service is one method to purify the individual.

Work purifies us. When work comes to you please understand – it is for purification. So Gurudev is a great purifier because he expects us to work 8 to 20 hours a day. Think... Living a life of greed and selfishness, where my day is all about my own interests and I stay lost in it....is that a life? And from there suddenly we are pulled out. And we are on a track which takes us onward in our evolution. This is the way Gurudev has lived and he expects us to live likewise, working 18-20 hours a day. Work is a great opportunity to purify ourselves. At this young age one can spend all time to study, but that is not enough. Study should be the basis, understanding of Vedanta should be the basis but Gurudev encouraged people to take up more and more work. Any selfless work would help us purify ourselves.



Work purifies.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The knowledge that we gain through study, scriptural knowledge, can purify us and we can get transformed if that knowledge is backed with service. Antahkaranashuddhi. Please think over this, contemplate on this even if it is a little difficult to understand. If you serve selflessly for 15 or 18 hours daily, for 15 20 years day after day, your mind will become nishkama, so sober, so quiet, so cheerful. Now we have developed that kind of a mind where we glide into nityasatvastah – where we are in a greater state of sattva, where the mind has accomplished more sattvic qualities.

This is the point from which deep meditation is possible. Many people don't understand the value and power of service. Service is a great purifier. Gurudev himself went around serving mankind at every level, standing as a role model, exemplifying for us what selfless service is. That was the teacher in him – not just theoretic but also by example he taught.

Swamiji was once doing a yajna in Jamshedpur. In the evening sometime after the yajna got over, the yajnashala caught fire. Something went wrong, though it was not clear what it was. The Chinmaya Mission book-stall there, was burnt down.

In the morning Gurudev came there with Kalidas ji, one of our devotees from Mumbai, to examine what happened, as people reported to him that the yagnashala had a fire. Some books were burnt, but not fully burnt.

Then they came upon a half-burnt Taittiriya Upanishad book. Gurudev picked it up, looked at the book, looked at Kalidas ji and said, very simply, – 'fire purifies'. Like holy ash, that you apply to your forehead. Fire purifies……. Fire has come to the yajnashala, books have been destroyed… but he says 'fire purifies'!

And what would we have said? 'So much loss, this, that, everything, gone, destroyed.. But he picks up that book…. looks at it…Taittiriya Upanishad … a half-burnt copy, and then he says … 'fire purifies'!

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Pavaka is fire, purifier.

PavakayaNamah. Prostrations to the purifier.

The very association with a Mahatma purifies anyone. Thousands and thousands have been not merely purified, but they have found a new meaning and a dimension to their life. We will see a little later how extreme cases of extroverted people have changed in their very life time. Guru bestows knowledge which purifies all.



Purification by mere association too

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Gurudev's commentary on this topic of purification in BG 4:36 and 4:37 is complete.

To rediscover that, in reality, the ego is nothing other than the Self in us, and to live thereafter as the Self of all, is called true wisdom.(Jnana)
Having thus awakened to our Real Nature, the dreamy cravings of the flesh can no more enchant us away from our prestige glory and make us run down the channels of sensuousness, to wreck ourselves on the stony bed of sin and sorrow.
In what manner does this wisdom destroy sin? Here is example.
Yathai-dhamsisamiddho 'agnir

bhasmasatkuruteArjuna

Jnagnisarvakarmani

bhasmasatkuruteTatha
As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the Fire- of- Knowledge reduce all actions to ashes.

Besides,the example is very striking. Whatever be the quality, shape, condition, colouretc, of the fuel pieces, when all of them are taken to the fire place and digested by the fire, they become one homogeneous mass of ash! In the samples of ash left in the hearth, we cannot recognise the ash of a particular twig from that of another. Similarly, all Karmas it is said, good, bad, or indifferent get burnt up in the fire of knowledge and will become something altogether different from what they were in their cause and effect condition.
This is how Gurudev was purifying us through knowledge, example and love. Gurudev was staying in a house during a Yagna in Calcutta where the hosts were drinking, playing cards, etc and then coming and sitting in the front row during the yagna. Gurudev in His abundant love for them bombarded them openly in the yagnasala, which was not initially relished by them yet worked on them and in the years to come they got purified and apologised to Gurudev. What blessed people. How the vast prarbdha was singed and cut short in loving surgery of the ego! Jai Gurudev

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Embodiment of Fire

Pavaka means fire. Fire comes from pavana or air. Air is a purifier and so is fire. When we open the doors and windows, the air comes in and the atmosphere is purified. Similarly, fire makes everything pure. Gold is purified by the smelting in fire. All worship is offered into fire. Our body is also finally offered to fire. It becomes pure and attains the Supreme.

Fire is also the witness of all our activities. Therefore before performing any ritual, we should light the lamp. The lamp is the one who observes everything. The lamp should not be put out because it is a devata. The fire witnesses the ritual and conveys this news to the higher authority. God is first made visible in the form of Fire. God expresses first as akasha, then as vayu, both of which we cannot see. Many religious sects, like the Parsis worship Fire as God. The nature of fire is wonderful. The flame of the fire always goes up. And even when there is no breeze, it remains steady, pointed upward.In the Géta we have the simile of a mind in meditation being as steady as a flame kept in a windless place. Alive, but absolutely still.

The Teacher is like fire. The orange colour of the clothes of a sannyasi is representative of fire. It is the colour of the rising and setting sun. Everything that is put in fire is consumed by it. The fire remains the same. It absorbs all that is offered, whether it is dirty or pure. Gurudev was like fire. There was just no nonsense with him.

Fire accepts everything that is offered to it and yet remains pure. It has the capacity to eat and digest everything. A wise person also has the capacity to eat and digest all experiences. An ordinary person takes time to digest experiences. We go and eat some golgappas (highly popular and preferred Indian street food)--some digest them very fast while others take time. Similar is the case with the good and bad experiences in life. Lord Siva drank poison, but it did not affect him. Lord Ganesha eats a lot but he digests it all. He eats the laddu and then durva grass; he digests everything. Once Lord Ganesha had gone to Kubera’s palace and there he started eating. He went on and on eating. He just would not stop. When the food finished he started eating the valuables. Kubera got frightened because his wealth started diminishing, as Ganesha digested it all.



The Guru is like fire...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Undigested experiences are called fear, anger, jealousy, sadness, depression, guilt. All these feelings are nothing but undigested experiences. Once we digest them they are clear. Otherwise, they remain in our system. When we talk about our experiences, they get cleared. When we eat food which we cannot digest, we take some digestive and it gets digested. Whatever is put in fire is consumed by fire and nothing is left behind except ash. This is the supreme power of pavaka or fire. The Guru is like fire.

OM PAAVAKAAYA NAMAH

321. OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

23-03-2016

OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*Supreme means the highest; purushottama or purushauttama refers to the highest among the humans or the best among humans.

In Chapter 18, verse 69 of the Gita, Krishna says – the dearest among the dear ones is the one who propagates this knowledge (of the Gita). After 18 chapters of pushing Arjuna up, up, up, just as He is winding up, Krishna tells Arjunathis– that the one most dearest to Him is the one who propagates the knowledge of the Gita and this is when He comes to the point of uttamapurusha – or the best, highest devotee.



*Gurudev devoted his life on earth to propagating the Gita; furthermore, he developed teachers, acharyas who carried this tradition further! Not only he was

dearest, he created people also who can become the dearest. Big work that is.

*Just imagine. Life is going on, doing routine mundane stuff.. and suddenly you are lifted and placed on the track of doing that work which gets you to being the dearest among the dear ones,Purushottama!

*We have the potential to be uttamapurusha-s. We are on the move to getting there, transforming... Whom do you consider as the best person, Uttamapurusha? One who has understood the Truth. How do you get there? Krishna says – the one dearest to Me is this one, who does this work, My work. So anybody who is doing this work, not necessarily teachers, or pracharaks. Don't confine Krishna's vision only to pracharaks who go around teaching. Anybody who is part of a programmethat imparts this knowledge. Anybody who is part of this programme where lives get transformed.

In short those who are working for the evolution of or transforming lives are the dearest, the best, the uttama among mankind.

*Purushottama from every standpoint - as an intellectual, as a jnani; as a worker, karma yogi – full unfoldment; as a bhakta, every action and word of his was pure devotion with which he worked.

*There are few videos of Gurudev – soak it in, if you get a chance. There you will see Gurudev prostrating maybe to Tapovan Swami's photograph, or to an idol. ….. he closes his eyes…. Watching him thus, you feel soaked in devotion yourself.

*So whether as devotee, karma yogi or asjnani – his was full unfoldment, the blossoming so complete. Purushottama.

*Hence, whenever you get a chance to do a shravanasadhanayajna, opportunity to conduct all 18 chapters, take it. It may be difficult. But accept itand go with it. When you do the 1st chapter you understand the theme. You have explained, you have reflected upon it. There is lot of growth. Next, come to the 2nd chapter. Much more deeper. Then 3rd, 4th and so on. When you come to the 18th chapter it may have taken 2 years by then, because some chapters are vast – they entail probing, debate, discussion which can spill over into the next month.

In some cases, it has prolonged as much as to 2 years or 30 - 35 months. Sometimes 3 years too.

And when you reach the 18th chapter, better still, the 69th verse, … you will be tongue tied; it will be very difficult to speak. You will sit and only look – and wonder over what this man has done to you. Because you follow the theme so closely and you arrive at this stage and after arriving, from there you see. It is unbelievable.

What a way to evolve! And you are evolving, through you others are evolving. There cannot be anything higher than this. This is verily the highest work. Our way of life has now become committed to the highest work.

Prostrations to the One who undertook such a high work and accomplished it for so

many manymany people!

OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

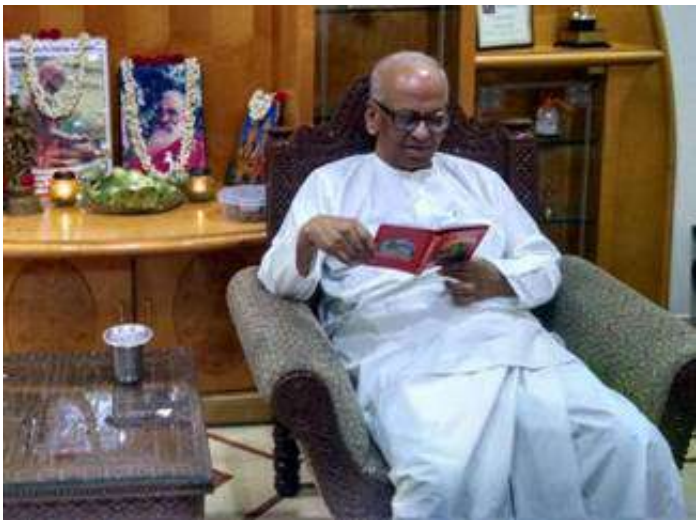
OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

In Bhagavadgeetha 15 chapter we come across 3 PurushasKshara,Akshara, and purushothama.

Ksharapurusha is the perishable matter.

Bhagavan being Advaita, He alone appears as the matter, the jiva, the sakshietc etc. He is called different names according to the Upadhis He associates with. As Gurudev says the loving father in the house when He enters Khaki uniform he becomes frightening police officer and in the club when he puts tennis shorts he becomes the sportsman; in the same way,the same Bhagavan takes different roles according to His associations.
In the state in which He is totally unconditioned He is called Purushottama since He transcends all other Purushas.
Thus Gurudev having transcended the Upadhis, is Purushottama.



His own commentary of BG 15:19 makes this clear.
The Highest Spirit,purushottama,being the Infinite Consciousness, it is the 'All-knower',in as much as wherever anything is known perception,feeling, or thought, it is the principle of Consciousness that illumines it. One who has transcended one's matter equipments and has successfully sought and discovered one's spiritual nature as the Infinite Consciousness,that individual,the Supreme Awareness, is indicated here as the all knower.

Every breath a teaching - pg 313

Who was He?

Swami Chidananda
Gurudev is immeasurable and unknowable. What we saw of Gurudev is only the tip of the iceberg. As Purushasukta says about the Supreme Being: "one fourth is seen world; three fourths are up in the heavens."
Until the last moment of life in His physical body,He was so creative that nobody knew what His next plan or project would be. Again,from the point of view of Vedanta,He is the Self and not the name and form that we knew. With no attachment and identification,He revels in the Truth of His Being. That is unknowable indeed!

Gurudev himself was heard to remark on a number of occasions: "People will know who I was 20,30,50 years after I am gone... "

OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Supreme Person

Purusha is person and uttama is the Supreme. In the Gita Bhagavan says, “I am the Supreme Person.” Generallypurusha is translated as ‘person’ or one who lives in a city (pura). This body is a pura and one who pervades this body is a purusha. The term applies to one who lives in the body. On further analysis we find we have two bodies – one small and the other large. We point to the small body and say, “I am this body.” But, really speaking, the whole world is my body. Like we want to study

and understand a flower. We can either study it on the plant or in the laboratory.



Science studies the flower by plucking it and examining it under the microscope. This study is incomplete because the flower is not on the plant. Likewise, the plant will be incomplete if it is not in a beautiful garden. The garden will be incomplete without the birds and butterflies and without the entire forest. The forest remains incomplete without the land around, the sea and the mountains. The sea and mountains will be incomplete without taking the whole earth into the picture. The Earth will be incomplete without the sun and the moon and stars. The flower is complete only with the entire cosmos. So to study a flower fully, we must study the whole world.

We think of our own bodies as only these limited forms. Yet, we are incomplete without the society around, without the birds and the animals. We are incomplete without the stars and the moon, in fact, the entire world.

The Gita differentiates between the purushas - ksharapurusha, aksharapurusha and uttamapurusha. Ksharapurusha is one who considers this limited body as 'I'. The aksharapuruña considers the entire world as 'I'. And uttamapurushaunderstands that he is even beyond the body. The ksharapurusha identifies with the little jéva that is born and dies.Aksharapurusha identifies with the totality which does not die and is ever present. The uttamapurusha is beyond both these. The body is made up of the five elements and these five elements don't die. Hence, the world does not die. It always exists and so do we. We only change from one body and go into another.

In Sanskrit grammar, purusha refers to the three persons: 1 st, 2nd and 3rd persons. The third person is prathamapurusha, the second is madhyamapurusha and the first is uttamapurusha. The third person in English becomes the first person in Sanskrit. The third person is the totality. When we talk of God we talk of Him in the third person, as Saha or Soham. When we directly communicate with someone we use the second person. When we refer to ourselves, we say, 'I'. This is the first person (uttamapurusha).

Bhagavan says, 'I am the first person, that pure, Supreme 'I'. That pure Self, or the 'I' consciousness is the Supreme Reality or God, within us. When we interact with the world as some third person, the 'I' itself becomes the third person. When we consider it as 'you', then God becomes the second person, madhyamapurusha; and when we meditate and look within, God becomes the uttamapurusha.

For an ignorant person God is the third person. For a more evolved seeker, God becomes the second person. That is why most bhajans address God as 'aap' or you. We make him second person. Bhajans do not refer to God in the third person. Uttamapurusha, is not the small 'i', the ego, but 'I', the Pure Consciousness. The same purushottama in front of us becomes madhyama or 2 nd person; and away from us is the prathamapurusha. So we have to experience God as 'I', in the first person, not as the third or second person. When we look at the world and experience God as the second person, we understand that whatever is away is also God. God is the third person, the second person and the first person as well. Similarly, to begin with the Guru appears distant. He then comes nearer as 'you' and finally merges to become 'I'.

Ishvarogururatmetimurtibhedavibhagine

vyomavadvyaptadehayadakshinamurtayenamah. (Dakshinamurtistotram)

Guru, Isvara and Atman, are all in fact one only. First the Guru is far away, as Ishvara. Then he comes closer, through our interaction with him. Finally we come to him within us, as our own Self. The Guru is understood as uttamapurusha, as 'I', not as madhyama or prathamapurusha.

Once during his travels, someone said to Pujya Gurudev, "You are so far away and we cannot contact you." He said, "Just close your eyes and look within. You will find me there," as that pure I, as uttamapurusha.

To that Purushottama, our prostrations!

OM PURUSHOTTAMAAYA NAMAH

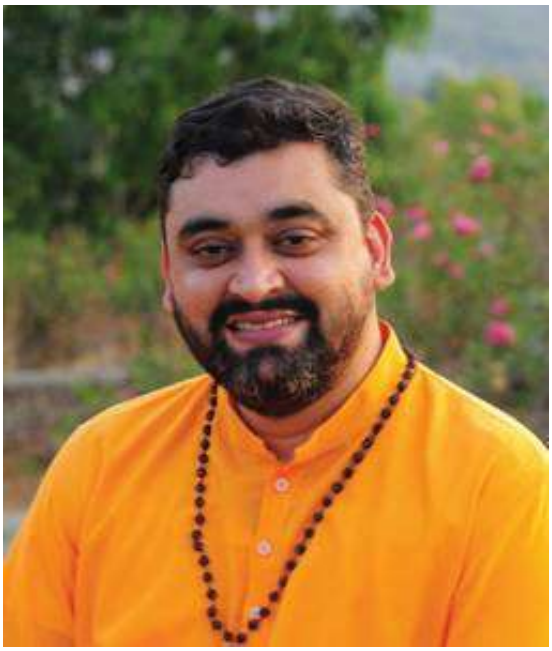
322. OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

24-03-2016

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Br. Yukt Chaitanya, CM Mumbai

This is one of the 108 names of Pujya Gurudev composed by Pujya Guruji and Pujya Swami Shantanandaji. Every name by itself is a great anchor for a sadhak to stay rooted on the path whenever he meets any towering obstacle.



Br. Yukt Chaitanya, CM Mumbai

Prasannatmane means, the cheerful one. Pujya Gurudev was always happy. We seek nothing but only happiness from our every activity. So to become happy we get into action. This happiness we seek outside in the world of objects of different names and

forms, which are nothing but insentient and inert. They have nothing to offer and hence we feel disappointed, sad, hurt and unhappy.

But Pujya Gurudev did not set himself in action for happiness but He simply acted Out-Of-Happiness. So if someone would ask Pujya Gurudev "how are you?" regardless of the situation, one could get only one sincere answer everytime "Happy." Once I heard someone say "we all are sharing this knowledge from the Vyasapeetha for Realisation, but Gurudev shared this knowledge from the Vyasapeetha because He was Realised". The difference between Gurudev and us is the same as the difference between light and darkness.

He came down as a realized master with the firm resolve to impart this divine knowledge to His beloved countrymen. He did not act to gain something for Himself but He acted so that we get something. He set Himself into action with nothing to gain, but He acted only to give, give and give. Bhagawan Shankaracharya says in his preface to the Bhasya of the Geeta "Svaprayojanaabhave Api Bhutanujigrakshaya ..." i.e. with nothing to gain, still He (Sri Krishna) came and gave this knowledge only with the well-being of all beings of this world in mind.

Bhagawan Sri Krishna did not have anything to gain by sharing this Knowledge, but He did so, only and only for the well-being of all of mankind. Similarly Pujya Gurudev had nothing to gain, but He shared this knowledge with all of us for our sake out of pure love and affection.

Seeking the blessings of His Guru, Sri Swami Tapovan Maharaj, coming down from the Himalayas to the plains what did Pujya Gurudev do? He simply got intoaction to give us His best! Yes, and it is only the Best that we got from Him. Now you may want to know how.

There are many types of Yagnas and amongst all Yagnas, Gnana Yagna is considered to be supreme. He gave us the Geeta Gnana Yagna i.e. He gave us the best available.

In the Geeta Sri Krishna says, those who share, protect and preserve this knowledge are very dear to me. Knowledge cannot be preserved or protected by storing it in books and libraries, knowledge is protected by sharing it with people and Pujya Gurudev shared this knowledge in grand style. He conducted more than 500 Yagnas. He not only shared it but also empowered some of us to share it too, thus allowing some of us to be part of the grand Yagna of Bhagawan thereby giving ourselves a chance to qualify to become one of Bhagawan's dearest devotee.

He single handedly spearheaded Chinmaya Mission onto the global map thereby creating 300 centres across the globe. He worked tirelessly for 40 years with complete selfless dedication and love for the knowledge and culture for all of mankind at large.

All this Pujya Gurudev could do only because He did not work for happiness but He worked out of happiness. He wascomplete, Paripurna. He was Happiness Himself. He had nothing more to gain. He had nothing more to attain. From such lofty heights of existence He operated with complete detachment. He saw everything as

Narayana's and whom He shared the Knowledge to also He saw as Narayana Himself.

With such a divine vision He came, spoke, worked, toiled for 40 years without a break and all this for whom? For us, i.e. His children. He single handedly built this massive infrastructure for us. He knew His children would need a field to work for spiritual upliftment. He created it for us.

So let us all, the children of Pujya Gurudev, hold hands, dancing with absolute gay abandon, let us work not for our happiness but work with an attitude of love, care and responsibility. And with every sincere step in Svadhyaya, Sadhana and Seva let us increase our proximity to Him. He is waiting to embrace us. Let us not make Him wait too long. Let us make this life count!!!

He gave us His best. Now it's our turn. Unto Him Our Best!

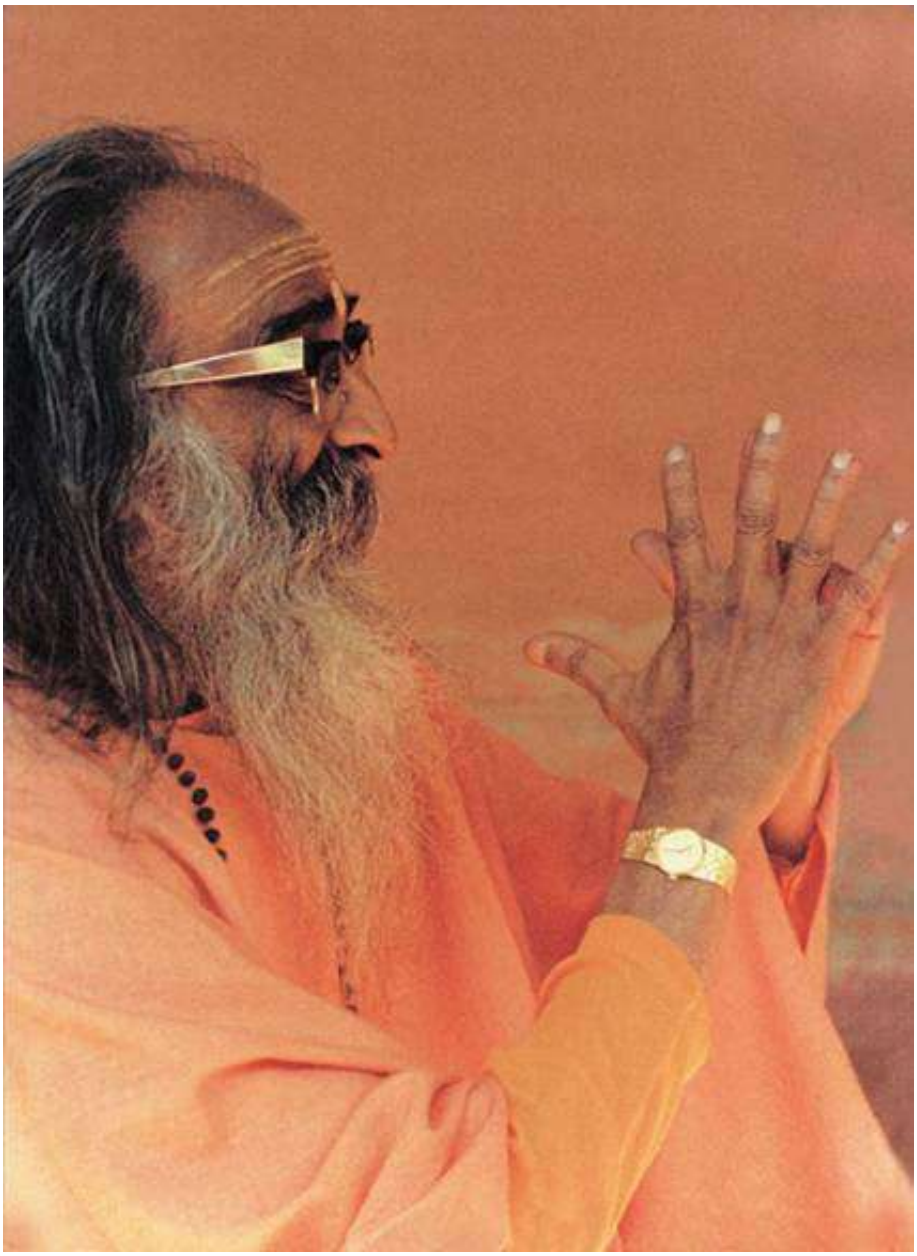
To this Gigantic Advaitin, I offer mySashtang Pranams!!!

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Prasannata is peaceful serene cheerful personality. Though it is basically an attribute of the mind, it is seen in the person's countenance clearly.



Visibly prasanna ...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Sri Gurudev's Prasannata is inescapable, contagious. Love for all, no differentiation. Anybody in His presence, whatever be his or her problem, feels his problem insignificant. I knew people with kith and kin struggling for life in Hospitals spending their time with him. This is not irresponsibility. It is out of their faith that they are being looked after. This is due to clarity in His presence.
Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda's Kritagnyata stotram says:

Yasya Pasaadena manah prasa tam
Babhoova me tam shirasa namaami

I bow down to Him by whose grace my mind became peaceful.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him page 7

Shri.Karthikeyan.N

He is peace and Truth Himself--
He spent most of His time globe-trotting. His nature is that of compassion and love. In His early years He was a great disciplinarian. His teachings bring a sense of meaning and joy to my existence. He spread peace everywhere because He is peace and Truth itself.
(late Mr. Karthikeyan was chief secretary of Tamilnadu and had to face the tough situation when the then Chief Minister, Shri M.G. Ramachandran, passed away. He himself says he went to Gurudev and sought His blessings to face the situation.)

Vedanta page 249

Brahmacharini Arpita Chaitanya (a Christian earlier)
I turned to watch Gurudev enter from the back of Chappel, and my mind stood still in wonder as I saw an almost visible aura of power and light walking slowly and gracefully like a king up the centre aisle. I gazed at His long beard and brilliant, flowing robes--it was as if Jesus had suddenly walked into my life, living and breathing, as I so often wished.

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

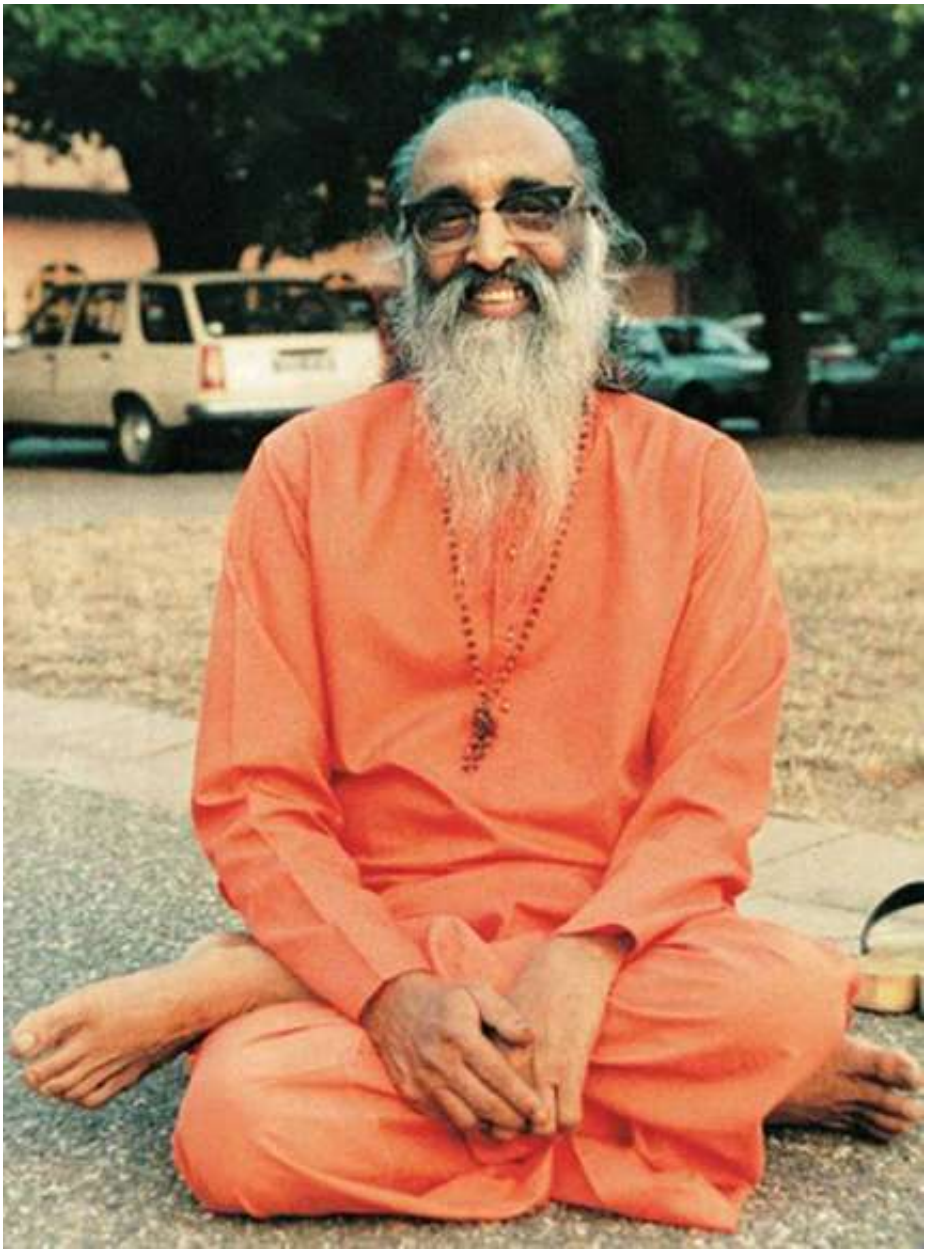
Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Cheerful One

Prasannata is joy, happiness, or someone with a happy disposition. Some people remain sad, but the Guru is ever blissful. In the Gita, Bhagavan says, prasanna cetaso hyashu buddhi paryavatishöhate. (II.65). When we gain this joy, the intellect is automatically established in the supreme state of meditation.

Many people try to meditate but without that happiness, meditation is not possible.

The joy and contentment we seek comes when we perform our duties and do our sadhana properly. This joy is neither tamasic, coming through sleep, laziness or forgetfulness, nor is it rajasic, gained through interaction between the senses and objects. This sattvic joy is experienced when the mind becomes pure. It is Prasannata or prasada, a peace in which all pains are destroyed (prasade sarvaduhkhanam hanirasyopajayate) (II.65). Prasanna also refers to those who are happy and able to retain a cheerful disposition under all circumstances.



Cheerful disposition.... Always....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Good actions like doing puja or giving in charity bring us joy. In doing seva, there is a dual benefit. The people served are happy and those serving feel a great sense of contentment. The happy mind does not travel into the past or future. It remains in the present. Our unhappiness is caused by thinking of the past or worrying about the future. We cannot be sad, unless we think of the past. Fear cannot exist, unless we think of the future. In life, we constantly alternate between sadness and fear. When we are happy we forget the past and future and remain in the present moment. There is an experience of joy in the heart. The mind is totally at rest and in that state of happiness we attain the state of samadhi (prasanna chetaso hyashu buddhi paryavatishthate).

Without the experience of complete joy, the mind cannot be free. In search of joy the mind habitually delves into the past or future. Therefore, it cannot go into a state of samadhi. But in the experience of this supreme happiness, it is totally at ease and does not want to go anywhere. The mind resides in itself.

The Gita says that those established in this state of meditation are not disturbed by even mountain-like sorrows. Having found a source of happiness within, independent of all outside factors, they are ever in a state of joy. Gurudev was connected with his own inner source and was ever happy. He found humour in every situation. To him even his illness was a joke. He once quipped about the stroke he suffered and said, “Yamarajji came to visit me but then postponed the programme.” He normally made his itinerary well in advance. When asked about the following year’s itinerary Gurudev replied, “I have made it and presented it to the Lord. Whenever he signs it I will confirm it.”

The vision of the world is different and prasannata becomes a natural state, for those with no fear of death. Sadness and fear are due to our faulty vision. We don’t have to change the world. If only we alter our vision, everything around us changes instantly. Our sadhana should be to develop the habit of being happy and content, at all times and under all circumstances.

OM PRASANNATMANE NAMAH

323. OM PHALASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH

25-03-2016

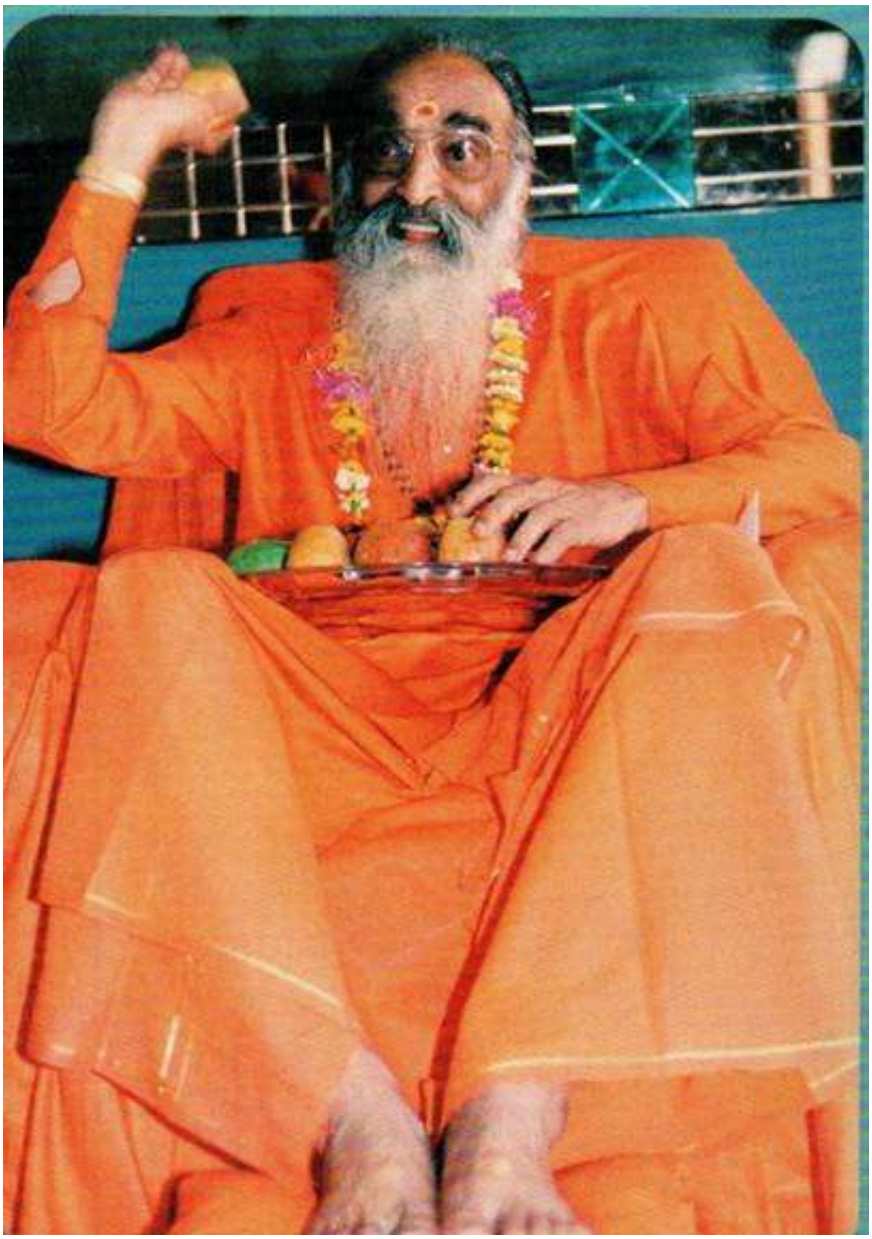
OM PHALAASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to Him who is free from the attachments to the fruits of action. Phalasakti- rahita - namah.

Often, devotees or visitors would bring a basket of fruit for Gurudev. The first thing he would do is, empty that basket by distributing the fruit to everyone. This he would do by chucking a fruit each at the devotees so that they have to catch it. This little game would last till there was fruit in the basket, resulting in much mirth and funny moments.

When the last fruit is chucked, he would say – 'karma-phala over. Fruit phala came. Over. I am free!'



*In Chinmaya Nagar we have a school. It has a large garden. The whole property is huge. Once someone gifted us with a lot of small plants – small saplings from a nursery and we were scheduling how to plant them, where to plant them and so on. Gurudev was present there. Some of the organizers suggested that fruit bearing plants be placed on the inside, plants which give shade on the boundary, near the wall and so on. Gurudev asked, “Why so?” The organizers said, if the fruit trees were on the outside, the fruit will get plucked and taken away by people. Gurudev said, – let them take. It is meant for that. He did not like the ‘My fruit, my garden, only for my members’ attitude. If someone walking on the street took the fruit, so be

it! The fruit should come, that is our duty, to look after and nurture the tree. But who gets the fruit, who does not, that should not be our concern. Let it be for all, he said.

Thus, be it a fruit of a tree or fruits of action – his attitude was the same: completely detached as to what it was or who reaped it.

OM PHALASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH!

OM PHALAASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai



Bhagavad Geeta defines those who work for results only, meaning material gains, are misers-- krupanaphalahetavah. This word is used in the very beginning of the Gita, in the very summarising of Arjuna's problem which he describes as, 'I am overpowered by misery' and declares it as --karpanyadosha.

karpanya-dosopahata-svabhavah
prcchamitvam dharma-sammudha-cetah
yacchreyahsyanniscitambruhi tan me
sisyaste 'ham sadhi mam tvamprapannam BG 2:7

This is because Arjuna was evaluating the war merely from the standpoint of physical consequences though apparently born out of compassion.

Thus people who work for results have a very finite vision prompted by ego centric desires and miss the larger beauty that life has. Since these people are squandering away great advantage for paltry gains as the old proverb "penny wise pound foolish" avers, they are called misers.

Gurudev was born a king in his vision. He never thought of anything small or egoistic. Miserliness can never even approach Him. If only He was interested in His personal achievements He would have practiced and become a successful lawyer or a journalist in which he had acquired credentials even at a young age. He would have followed His love of tennis. He always had universal humanity in His vision. Even before He became a sanyasi He took to freedom struggle. All His articles in newspapers were empathising with the less fortunate like the cobbler, postman, rickshaw-driver, the street dwellers and so on.

Guruji sings in kritagnatastotram "asakthahsarvakaryeshvarthathesarvada." Gurudev opened the doors of Sandeepany to all without any binding on them, even though they were going to be provided everything free for two years. They had the freedom to choose their future. This facility was extended even to students sent from other institutions. After the thulabhara (where devotees would weigh Gurudev and offer the equivalent in money or gold) in a humorous way he showed His empty hands, to show He is not carrying anything. He who has made us all realise that this world is pith-less, what interest has He for any material results? He did not even care for His failing health and continued to serve the world. He is ever a giver.

MrFadhlallaHaeri (a descendant of several generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, educated in Europe and America, who then travelled extensively on a spiritual quest) by providence, met Gurudev on a flight. He was totally surrendered to Gurudev. After ten years of deep association with Him, Mr. Haeri wanted initiation from Gurudev. But Gurudev said to him, his own religion has all these and he can study and preach the same!

Shaikh Haeri wrote an autobiography, Son of Karbala: The Spiritual Journey of an Iraqi Muslim (Amazon)

wherein the Foreword by Ali Allawi, the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Iraq in 2005, notes:

It was while on one of his numerous business trips in the Middle East that he came across the figure who would challenge his way of life directly and rekindle in him the passionate yearning for the truth that would set the pattern for his future. Swami Chinmaya, an Indian spiritual master, confronted Fadhlalla with the great questions of life and the significance of all authentic traditions in mapping the path that can lead to self-realization and true knowledge. After a number of years in the company of Chinmaya, ShaykhFadhlallaHaeri was encouraged by his guru to return to the valid traditions within the Islamic heritage of his own past. There then

followed an enthralling set of encounters with leading masters of the Islamic Sufi tradition, both in the East and the West, as ShaykhFadhlallaHaeri begins his spiritual seeking in earnest.

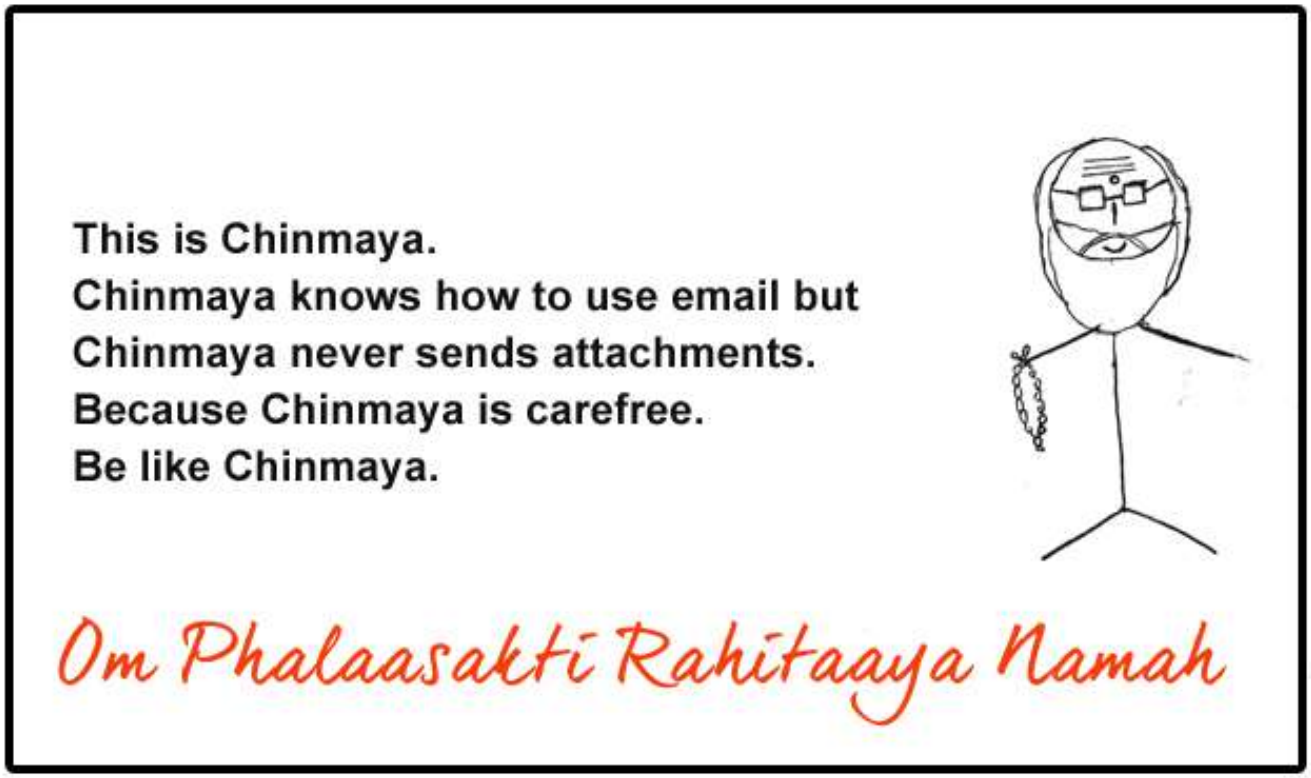
Ali Allawi Baghdad, Iraq October 24, 2005 Ali Allawi is the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Iraq

Who else can have such a heart to lose a highly promising disciple from another religion, after giving him ten years of education and training!

None who had seen Gurudev will ever associate Him with personal ambitions. Born a King became a God. Thoughts of Him purify us.

To that One who cared not for the fruit of His work, my prostrations!

OM PHALASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH!



OM PHALAASAKTIRAHITAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om PhalasaktirahitayaNamah

Salutations to One who is Free from Attachment to the Fruits of Actions



Phala is fruit. Here the reference is to the fruit of action (karma-phala). Asaktirahitaya is one who is devoid of attachment. Phalasaktirahitaya is one who is free from attachment to the fruits of action. We reap results from every action and our present condition is the result of past karmas. Everything around us, the world, our environment, our entire present is the result of past actions. It is not just a particular object. Life is a flow, the past flows into the present and the present passes into the future. Conditions of the body, mind, and our thoughts are results of the past. The river water we see in the plains flows from a point up stream. Presently it is here and in future it will be lower down. Our life is the sum total of the result of past actions. And what we do with our present determines our future. As we sow, so we reap.

It is important to allow life to move on. When we get attached, this flow stops and we get stuck. The scriptures advise us to simply focus on performing our karmas, without thinking of the results. Allow situations to happen and accept them as they are. Give up hanging on to results, thinking about and meditating on them. Just keep moving. If something is going, let it go without being attached to it. Attachment does not mean that we don't accept what comes. a gate svagatamkuryat gacchantam ne nanivaraye. Accept whatever comes in life and try not to stop it, when it goes. Let it go. Be like the droplets of water that touch us when we bathe and instantly leave, making way for more water to take their place.

The teacher is like flowing water, performing the required karmas and moving ahead. Gurudev travelled from place to place, never staying for more than seven to eight days. Leaving people to ruminate on the yajna that had concluded, he would move to another place, another yajna, another set of people. He did not carry the past with him. There was exchanging of phone numbers and autographs. He just moved on. Life is like that. It moves ahead but we hold back and so lose out on the present. Life unfolds at every moment and we must be free to enjoy it. The sight of a flower blooming can bring immense joy, but we lose out. Our time is spent in comparing this flower with the one we saw the last year. This insults the flower and we lose the present.

A great mahatma always lives in the present. Observe birds flying. They leave no trace of their flight path, no finger prints, no wing prints. Similarly, fish swimming in the water leave no trace of their journey. But we walk on sand and leave our footprints. To live in this world, we must master the art of living without attachment, because attachment brings sorrow. This should not be taken to mean that we are being advised to become like stones, free from attachment, without caring for anyone. We only have to be free from attachment to the result of actions.

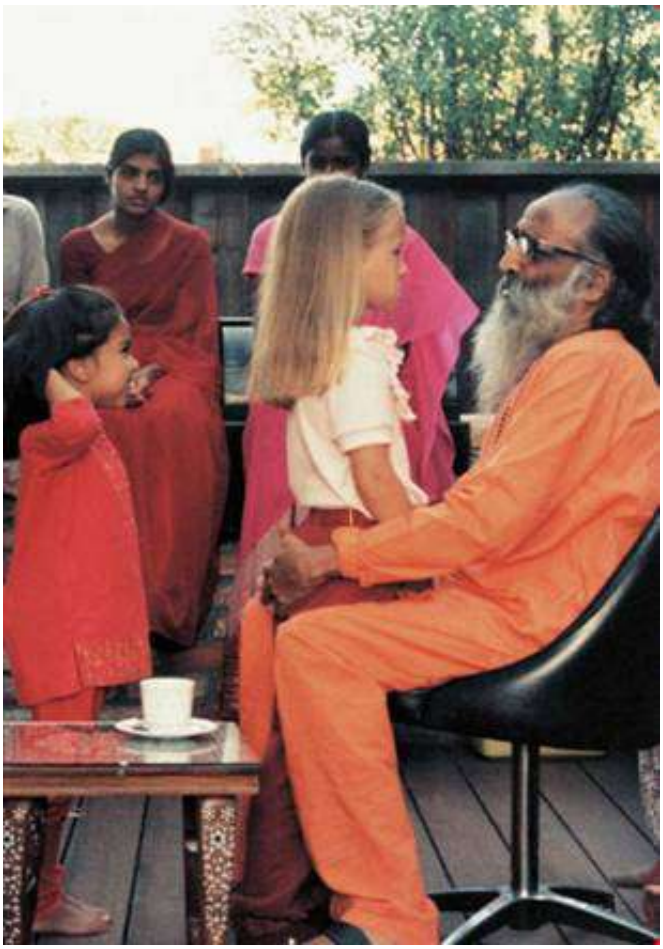
324. OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

26-03-2016

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*If you examine Gurudev's following, you will be stunned to see it has people of all age-groups - children, youth, adults, senior citizens; men and women; and people of different faiths. This is a rare and brilliant quality to be connected to every kind of person.



Stunning following and queuing up

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Again, this quality is precious for a sevak, a worker. An ability to connect to all levels, at all times, with all kinds of people is what makes for true seva. There are some who can connect so brilliantly with adults, but find it very difficult to connect with children and youth. There are some who can connect with the scholars, but someone who is not scholarly may not be in a position to relate to scholars. Think.

*As field workers, we will meet people who have met Gurudev maybe just once or who have heard just one talk – and they will tell you what a connect they feel.

*Sometime ago on one of my visits to the North-east, Gauhati I went to address an Army school. The Principal of the school said to me that when she was a student of Class 12, she had heard Swami Chinmayananda. "My father was in the army and had occasion to hear Swamiji. He was not a follower in your sense, but he used to read a lot of Swamiji's works." And then, she added, "I have heard the best."

If we do some arithmetic, we will find that she was in Class 12 at least 35 years ago, then. And even today, after 35 years her recall and her experiences in the years in between, is "I have heard the best." Here experience has remained unchanged. She corroborated that further, saying, "After that I did hear a few others, but nobody like Swamiji. I have heard the best."

Thirty-five years is a long time in a person's life. For a feeling like this to stay untainted, strong and firm shows the impact that Gurudev has had on this lady when she was a child. Further, it was one encounter only! You will come across incidents like this, in abundance. When you go out to work in the field, you will meet a number of people who will come up to you and say – yes, yes, we have heard him, we know about him.... They may not have associated, met or sat in the same room as him. But how ever brief their encounter was, the impact has endured!

How many people do we remember like that?

*So many people have had a chance encounter with Gurudev, whatever the reason, but they have been deeply impacted. Like the tiny hole-in-the-wall tea stall owner in Madurai (Read naam: 33, JanapriyaayNamah) who had helped Gurudev in the 50s to pour the waters of the Ganga on a yagnashala.... and 40 years hence when I went to the same tea stall, he showed me Gurudev's photos on his wall..., he still worshipped Gurudev! That was enough for him, he needed nothing more.

*'I saw him 35 years ago, I saw him in 50's, I saw him in 60s ... . And sometimes they come forward spontaneously to offer you help. Maybe they occupy an influential position, or have the means to make your work easier. They will be very willing and even enthusiastic sometimes, knowing you are from Chinmaya Mission.

*Gurudev himself said once, there are enough devotees in the field. You have to go

find them. And he was so sure about that. All kinds of people dot the earth who have been connected to Gurudev in some form or other. People who are inspired, they are there in the field, spot them! If we go and reach out, you will find help coming from unknown quarters. And invariably, someone or other would say – 'yes, yes I know about your Mission', 'I have heard about Gurudev', 'My father was his follower', 'My mother used to talk about him…'. 'Somebody in my family was'….

Salutations to him who is worshipped, adored, loved by many many people.

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Many came to Gurudev brought by providence. This is not to say there were not serious students. Some of them came out of curiosity that a modern swami should be speaking in English. Some came seeing the huge crowds. Some came seeing the VIPs. Some like A. Balan of Madras, came to ward off a possible arrest by the police!

[There is an anecdote retold in Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him page 117:

One day in 1968,there was a fire in my factory. Many people were arrested. I being the union leader, was to be arrested also. To avoid arrest, I got into a bus and left the city.

At Purasawalkkam, I saw many people moving with banners for some function. I thought this to be the best place to get off. I joined the crowd and went inside. I saw Swamiji coming. I just sat there. Although I was restless His speech was so enchanting, I sat through the whole session. I was very happy and became the member of study group…… thereafter the contribution of Balan to mission was extraordinary!]

Some came for want of anything better to do when they could not get tickets for a movie. Some came out of pressure from friends and parents. Yet all of them were swallowed by the hungry Swamiji of insatiable love for humanity. They included Presidents of the country, ministers, corporate giants officials, artists sports persons, business men, scholars, Royals, atheists, youth, unemployed, and the illiterate. For most of them it was love at first sight. It was like a dying man finding elixir. Their

devotion surpassed their original purpose of a vague idea of moksha etc and it was only love of Gurudev that mattered. This is the sentiment echoed by all devotees like the gopis of Brindavan, Prahlada in Bhagavatam, and so on.

Each devotee like the gopis, felt Gurudev is theirs. Guruji sings in the kritagyatastotram, “krpayavidhehitvat-pada-bhaktimparamanuraktim”, ie: bless me with devotion to your lotus feet—that devotion of the nature of supreme Love and paramanurakti, devotion to God.



They came, one and all.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

He Did Itpg 112

Up until now, Swamiji had been broadly known as the swami from Uttarkashi. But as word of His spiritual brilliance and marvellous oratory, spread-- intellectuals, professionals, scientists, politicians, the young and old,rich and poor--all gathered at Jnana Yagnas in their cities.
In1956, the 23 rd Jnana Yagna in Delhi was inaugurated by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He spoke in glowing terms of the work Swamiji was doing to restore India's cultural glory.
In a span of five years, Swamiji had provided a happier life for over 50,000 of his countrymen [across] twenty-five Jnana Yagnas in the country.

Gurudev He did it page 113

IT WAS AN AFTERNOON DREAM THAT TOOK ME
TO MORE THAN A HUNDRED CITIES IN INDIA.
TO ADDRESS ABOUT 50,000 DEVOTEES.
IN TWENTY FIVE JNANA YAGNAS.

HE did it page 233

On March 6,1965, B.V.Reddy and Swamiji left the Indian shores from Kolkata, arriving in Bangkok a day later.
This is the beginning of Gurudev's Viswa Vijay. A detailed description of the expansion and activities including the details of prominent devotees are all available in He Did It. Here is Evelyne Mathews from France, an atheist, saying his story.

I was dazzled with Swamiji's commentary on Kenopanishad. He literally stunned me, unseating my atheism, removing all my previous notions. When He revisited Bitche [on the German border, on the river Horn] in 1985, I was determined to learn more of Vedanta, and followed His teachings whenever he came to Europe, whether in London or St.Gallen. I also went to the marathon camp in Sidhabari (in1991) to study the Bhagavad geeta, Chapters 13-18.

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One with Many Devotees

Bahu means many, and bhakta is devotee. Bahubhakta means many devotees having love, devotion and respect for the teacher. It also means one who has many devotees. The affection, regard and love people have for Pujya Gurudev is truly amazing. In strange places, we find people whose lives were transformed by their contact with him. Even today, there are great mahatmas with the power to attract devotees from different countries, religions and backgrounds. Their power to attract is charismatic. This is one of the characteristics of spirituality.

Someone once asked Pujya Gurudev, "What is the sign of spiritual progress? How do I know I am progressing spiritually? He said, "One of the parameters is that people will start liking you. You will also like everyone. You will become like a magnet." If people are turned away, then something is wrong. People are attracted because the person is identifying more with the Self and everyone loves the Self. In fact, when we love a teacher or a realized Master, we only love ourselves. He is a mirror, in which we see our own self. We feel a sense of identification with the realized Master. There is a bond. Actually ahamkara creates the difference. When there is no ahamkara there is great affection.

Look at small children. They have no sense of identity. All small children whoever they are wield this great power of attraction. Even animals are attracted towards them. They will not bite or harm them. This is because small children don't differentiate. They naturally smile at everyone. Without ego, there are no divisions. Mahatmas and children have the same attitude. They accept the world as it reaches them. They have no body identification. There is no sense of 'I', hence their power of attraction. People who meet them develop love, affection, and reverence for mahatmas. The attraction is instant and magical. One moment of satsanga and they are ready to sacrifice everything for them.

The power of self-realization is immense and unparalleled. Gurudev, hailing from a remote area in Kerala became known all over the world. He attracted thousands of people to himself and endeared himself to devotees all over the world.



Thousands of devotees ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

And what do we get from a realized master? We get freedom. He is a giver of freedom. We see this in the next invocation.

OM BAHUBHAKTAAYA NAMAH

325. OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

27-03-2016

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

Om Bandhamochakaaya Namah

Offered by Bill Browning, a pioneer of the Chinmaya Mission in the West from 1971. He was married to Nalini Browning who served Swami Chinmayananda from 1965 as his assistant in the west and executive secretary for CMW from 1975 until 1993.

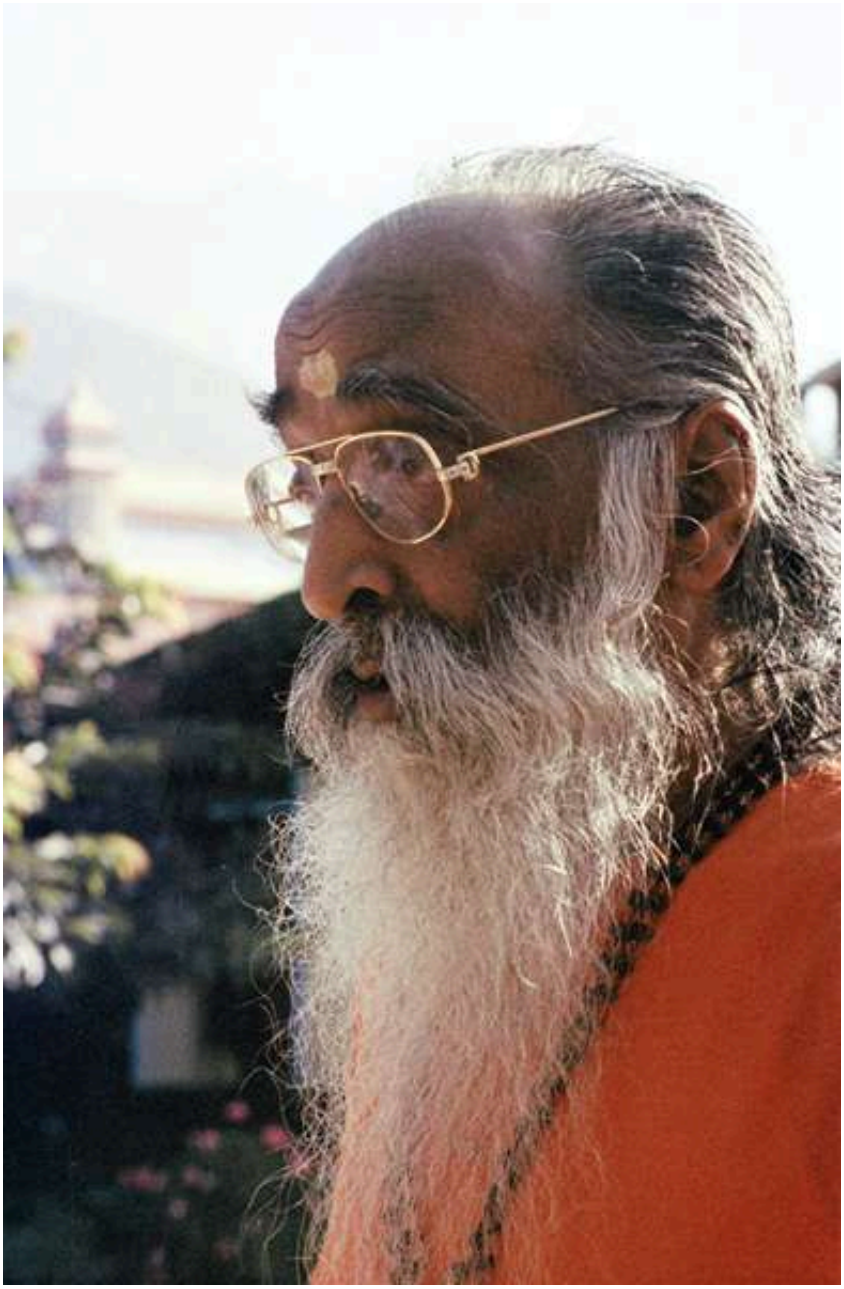


1973: Bill and Nalini Browning with Gurudev. (From the collection of Rudite Emir) Gurudev sometimes traveled in a black coat, sometimes even an entire black suit, so he would not be pestered by questions by curious passengers in the airplane. This photo most likely was taken just before heading to the airport.

"Praise to Him who laid open the universe to witness the grandest folly. Even this glorious Vedanta having served its purpose, must unravel and disperse".

This was my experience during and ever after Swami Chinmayanada's talks on Mandukya Upanishad the summer of 1989 at Humboldt State University.

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri Dr. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Head of Department, Philosophy Arts and Culture, and Spiritual Studies at Amrita Vidyapeetham University. Dr. Iyengar was the first Director of CIF [1998-2003] appointed by Pujya Guruji.

Om bandha-mochakāya namaha

Om Sautations to the remover of the bondage.

Bandha means bondage. Mochaka is one who removes the bondage to ender the bound one free. Gurudev Swamy Chinmayananda is hailed as the Guru who has rendered his devotees free. He is still continuing to do so.

What kind of freedom? Is it political freedom? freedom of speech? liberty to voice ones' opinions ? financial freedom? Freedom can be from something or freedom to do something. They are the two sides of the same coin. Freedom need not an end in itself. What happens after freedom? It is something that we should dwell upon. We should not get trapped. True freedom is perhaps achieved at the thought level. We act on our thoughts. We behave according to our desires.

Treating the symptoms, without dealing with the disease is no good. We all suffer from a disease that has no human cure. The problem of freedom is much deeper. It is the captivity of the soul, slavery to evil that we are talking about. Coming in contact with a Sadguru like Gurudev Swamy Chinmayananda is may start as a casual event. But it is a great opportunity in one's life. Gurudev enlightens even the ignorant ones that are unaware of their real predicament. It is only providence that brings one to the divine presence of a Sadguru.

The story of curd a seller called Dadhibhada, a Krishna devotee, as related in the 'Garga Samhita' is famous in our tradition. The curd seller used to sell curds through the streets of Gokula. He would look out for Sri Krishna to give butter and curds. Krishna would wait for Dadhibhada's arrival. After selling the butter, Dadhibhanda would rest for a while near a pond every day. One day, Krishna came to know that it was time for Dadhibhanda to leave the world. He chose to grant him moksha. That afternoon, Krishna came running to Dadhibhanda saying Yashoda was chasing him. He asks for a place to hide. While Dadhibhanda is looking around for a hiding place, Sri Krishna finds a big empty pot to hide. Krishna gets into it, asking Dadhibhanda to close it with the lid. The Lord starts conversing with Dadhibhanda from within the pot. While conversing the grand old weary Dadhibhanda unburdens his heart and appeals to Sri Krishna for his release from samsara. Krishna asks him to remove the lid. Dadhibhanda does so to visualize the milky ocean inside the pot. He finds Sri Krishna reclined on Adisesha. Lo! Sri Krishna stretches out His hand

and draws Dadhibhanda into him. Dadhibhanda is granted instant liberation.

All devotees and close associates of Gurudev Swamy Chinmayananda usually recount some kind of a miracle or other in their lives that has opened their eyes. Opening is the eye is the function of a Guru.

Salutations to the guru who opens the eye of one blind due to the darkness of ignorance with a needle coated with the ointment of knowledge.

Gurudev Swamy Chinmayananda tames our ego. That helps us to find our freedom. We get freed from various dogmas. We get enabled to find our freedom in our own way. We become positive in our approach. We develop faith in God. We become transformed, by means of a change of heart. We realize what we are created for. This is true freedom.

Akhanda Mandalakaram

Vyaptam Yena Characharam

Tat Padam Darshitam Yena

Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha

I prostrate to the Sadguru by whom the whole world, comprising of unbroken consciousness, is pervaded and filled through and through in every moving and unmoving object. Sublime salutations to the Guru who is established in That and who has awakened me to its realisation.

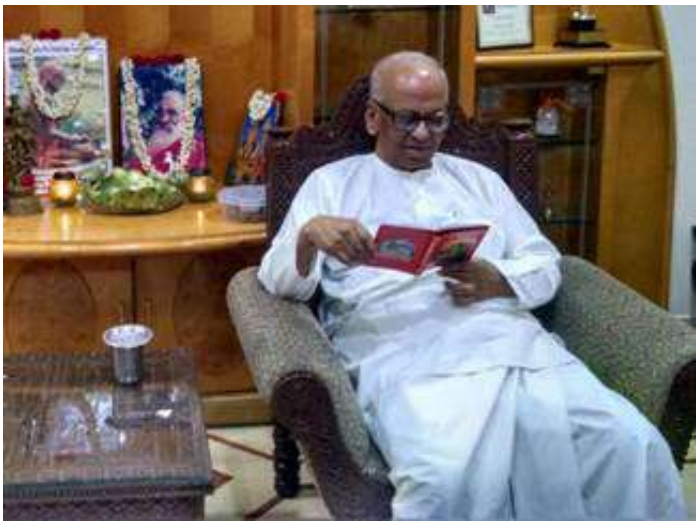
OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Mana Eva karanam Bandha moksha yoh is the well- known oft quoted statement, which means there is no bondage other than our mind.
Gurudev says God plus mind is man and man minus mind is God.

Therefore moksha Godhood being the goal of Vedanta, mind should be ended. Mind is that which splits the one into many, conceals the Real, is Non apprehension and ignorance. Ending ignorance is ending mind. This is what a guru does. This is what our Gurudev did to us and continues to do this in many ways even now." Gu" is ignorance "ru" is the One who removes it, and releases us from self-created bondage.



Aneka janma sampraptha karma Bandha vidahine Atma Gnana Pradanena Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah

Gurudev says "you are limited by your belief because you believe in the limited "

Vedanta page 227
The wondrous things I heard Pujya Gurudev expound -- the Vedantika vision of the Self, the bliss of Realisation, the glory of the man of perfection-- all these filled me with a deep thirst to have a personal experience. Also, in Pujya Gurudev I saw the actual possibility of such a life. He embodied all that He spoke. He being a man of Realisation, showed me that I could also walk the spiritual path and that Realisation is indeed possible.

Every breath a teaching page 179

Ego the frightened ego

Editor

Ultimately Gurudev, said ego binds us because of attachment.
The entire Bhagavad Gita is a screaming cry to end ego and egocentric desires and then relate yourself to things, beings and situations. Then you are free to give love, to show anger, to express tenderness-- without getting yourself involved, bound, tied down, gagged by your emotions.

Love, but let not love twist your arm. Eat food, but let not food eat you. You drive your life-- let not life drive you. This is detachment. End ego and egocentric desires-- and then act.

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to him who liberates us, who frees us from bondage. That is one of the objectives of a master coming and staying with us. Or a Master coming to live in our midst. We live in bondage. He sets us free. The objective of the Master is to make us understand actual freedom, to release us from the slavishness to the body, to the objects around, and instead to make us understand That which is beyond all limitations.

*A revolution movement is easy to start because its all outside. Evolution movement, its not going to be easy. Revolution is easy, naturally. You show it outside. Everybody sees and all can come together for that. That which is subjective, that which is subtle is not that easy. And that theme Swamiji could take and free so many people. That’s why the gratefulness is, that’s why the gratitude is.



*So naturally, we, living in bondage, stuck in the knots of bondage, we get help (by even simply being part of the Mission. And Gurudev's manner of doing it was also so beautiful. At that time, when he came to live in our midst, people could not understand the freedom he was talking about, naturally for they were not ready for it. But Gurudev came down to our level, willing to start from the very ordinary and in stages he took the people to the next level, then the next.... So many he brought to the Mission, just allowed them to be near him, just to be around with them who were not ready for moksha at all.

*How many people would go to him and say please bless me, just put your hand on my head. He was patient and loving with every kind.

Put your hand on my head. Why? Because then my problem will go. Arthaarthi. But Gurudev was so sure: You hang around me, and you will slowly evolve from aarta to arthaarthi to jignyaasu to jnaani. I know people who have come to Gurudev with a list of problems and sometimes he knew their evolution level, and the solution that he would offer was – ''Go to Tirupati. Stand in the queue. Take dharma darshan." What is dharma darshan? Sometimes you may have to wait as much as 3 days in the queue for darshan at Tirupati. You go into the queue and remain there three days to get the darshan! The wait is excruciating. He would say – go, do the darshan and do it for 6 weeks.

*Why? Because at that point of time, the individual was not ready for jnaana like Upanishads or such like. I used to wonder why Swamiji is sending this man like that for such a tedious darshan. Instead, why can't he give him a book and say you read this book. But he knew -- the student was not born in him yet. Neither would he say – 'don't come to me. I can't guide you.' Instead he would guide the person, receive him into his fold, and start him at the very beginning...

*If you ask our Yuva Kendra members why did you join the yuva kendra. If they are honest, different reasons will come out. Do you think they joined at jnani level to realize God? No! Most of the time, the reason is good company, fun! But where are you after 4 to 5 years of association? Many have set God as their goal! Do you see the transformation? Yes, they also enjoy. We know. But if you hang around you will transform. People slowly transform into seekers. A real worker. And when you come to the worker level, you purify yourself.

Salutations to him who liberates us from all limitations, all bondage.

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Salutations to One who Bestows Freedom

Bandhan is bondage. It is the feeling of being limited, of being a samsari (bound by the world). Mochakaya is the one who gives freedom, liberation. The ignorance of our true nature, itself is the bondage and the teacher liberates us from all limitation through the knowledge of his words. He gives us the knowledge that makes us free. Gurudev used to tell the story of an eagle among the chicken. One eagle egg somehow got mixed up with the hen's eggs. In time the eggs hatched and the eagle grew among the hens. He thought he was a chicken because from birth he had been with them.

One day, an eagle swooped down to pick up a hen and saw a healthy grown up eagle in their midst. The older eagle wondered at this and then took hold of the eaglet. The young eagle started panicking. He jumped up and down and said, "Don't eat me." The eagle asked, "What are you doing here? Where are your relatives?" The frightened eagle gasped that the cock was his father, the hen his mother and the others were his brothers and sisters. The eagle replied that none of them were, indeed, his relatives for, in fact, he was an eagle.

The captive eagle was not convinced. He continued to tremble and insist that he was a chicken and had been born and brought up here. Shaking with fear he added, “Everyone worships the eagle as a devata, so how can I be an eagle?” But the eagle from the sky would not give up. He taught the young ignorant eagle to look at his body, open his wings, see their size and feel their power. Slowly he taught him to move his wings and after a lot of cajoling, the young eagle started responding. He made a few tentative jumps and then started flying. All too soon he was flying like the other eagle.

The teacher is like the eagle. He comes down to our level and tells us that we are Brahman. In our childhood, we are not given this knowledge. Nobody had ever told me so until I came to study in the Sandeepany Sadhanalaya. I had been told all the other things that I was (I don’t want to mention any!!!) All the people we know and interact with, friends, teachers, parents and relatives, have something to say about what or who we are. But nobody says, “You are Brahman.” Only the teacher can give this powerful shaking. He says, “You are Brahman. Wake up.”

The statement is fantastic and beyond our experience. Our understanding is that we have taken birth, will die and while living have to put up with sorrow and pain. The Gita says, ‘You are that Brahman, that ananda svarupa.’ But not having experienced that and we just don’t believe it. The Teacher not only proves to us through logic the truth of this statement but also explains the necessary steps or sadhana that will take us there. Slowly and steadily under his compassionate guidance, we come to a point when suddenly the realization dawns, “Yes, I am, indeed, that Brahman. I am always free. I do not have to become free. I have to only recognize my freedom.”

The teacher gives us this freedom.

anekajanma samprapta karmabandha vidahine

atmajnana pradanena tasmai Sri gurave namah.

The karma bandha that we have gathered from many lives is destroyed through this Knowledge. Herein lies the greatness of the teacher. He liberates us from the bondage of samskara and so is greater than everyone else in this world. If we are caught for a small offense, like may be jumping a traffic light, we give money and breathe a sigh of relief. Being released from a small bondage, gives a sense of liberation. The Guru releases us from the bondage of life itself. There is no parallel to what the Master does.

OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH

326. OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

28-03-2016

OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, extracted with his permission

*Salutations to Him who is established in the Higher Reality. Brahmanishtha.

*Gurudev says – after realization, one would be ashamed to say, I am realized; that, I the Supreme, had so foolishly identified with all this!

*If you ask Gurudev – are you realized? Are you a Brahmanishtha? He would just laugh. And sometimes his answers are very direct and strange. PritishNandy asked this question in one of the interviews – are you a realized man? Gurudev's reply was direct and disconcerting as well; he said, "'Man', I can prove, but 'realization' you can't understand! What do you know about Realization?"

*A master like Gurudev would never claim that he is realised. But how do we get to know? We see certain qualities – his way of living;his ability to let go the past completely, with no sense of attachment or identification;his ability to drop it and keep moving, to not hold on to anything; walking across the globe fearlessly - uninhibited, as if he is the owner;meeting people with such love, seeing them as an extension of himself.

*Except for that one statement where he said, 'Swami Sivanandataught me to live in God and TapovanMaharaj pushed me to the beyond,' never ever has Gurudev acknowledged our recognition of the divinity in him. Those were the only references known to us. Probably he said those two statements in reply to someone who asked what the Guru did, and he wanted to explain.

*An interesting moment occurred during the Vivekachudamani camp of 1988. There was a question-answer session. This question was asked – are you a realized man? Visualise this, some 400-500 students have come for the camp. And in their midst this question is sent to Swamiji. Gurudev (Swamiji) takes the question, and reads:

Q. Are you a realized man?

A. No. Then you may ask me why don't you realize?Why are you teaching? Why don't you realize. (a pause...., then) I am at the gate.

Q. Why don’t you go in?

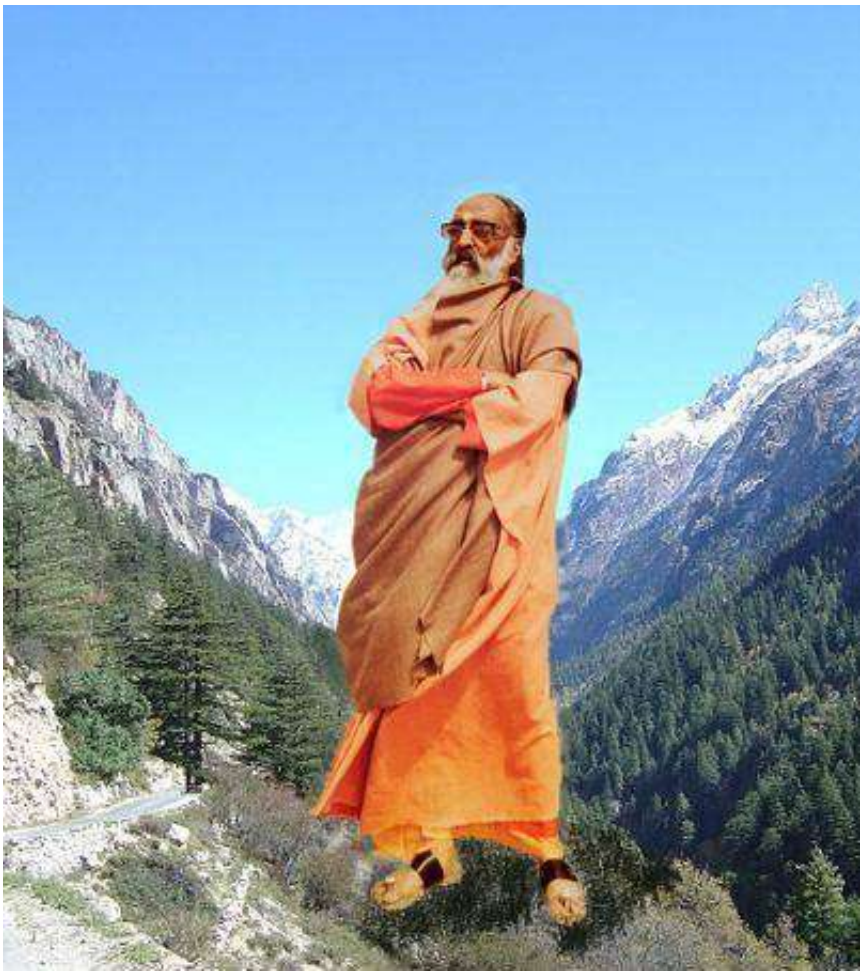
A. Waiting to take all of you in!

What an answer. Only then we understood what he wastalking about. When he answered 'No' to the first question ('are you realized?’) my God, we thought. What do you mean? Where are we then? Then the build up – why don’t you realize? I am at the gate. Why can’t you go in? Waiting to take you people in.

His answer was only to say,'I am hanging around so that you guys can come in.'

I am the gate. Walk in, any time.

Brahmanishtha is a person who lives there.



I am the gate .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

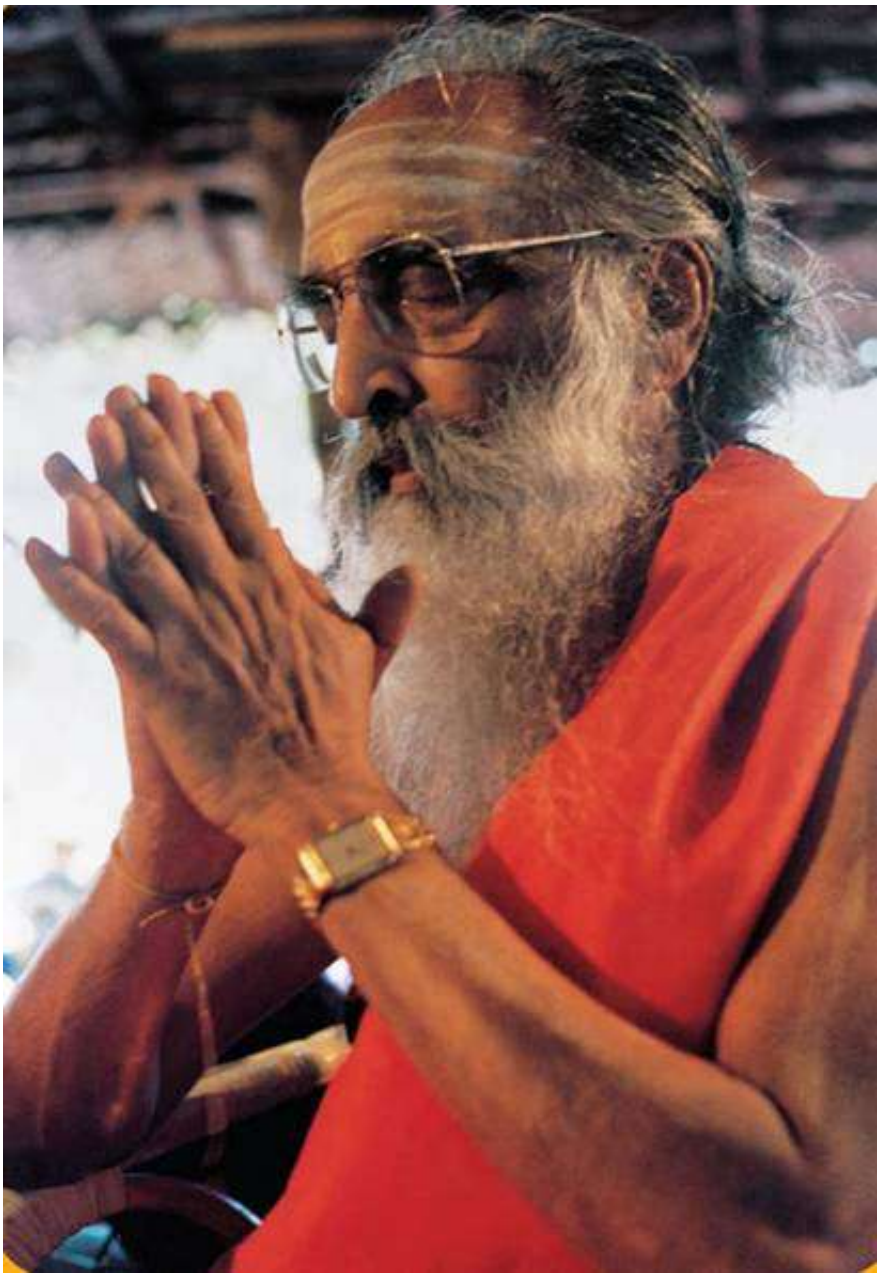
OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Sri Gurudev in His commentary on Vivekachudamani verse 321 says:

“The continuous attempt to hold on to Brahmic Consciousness is Brahma Nishta. He is your Awareness, this brilliant Light of Wisdom expressing in all creatures. Let there not be any carelessness,and consequent forgetfulness and over sight in the constant practice of contemplation called Brahma Nishta.



Natural state ...

.©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

As such this is for a sadhaka. In the GeetaBhashya on sthithapragna Acharya Sri Sankara says what a sadhaka practices is natural state for a Brahma Gnani.
Two qualifications have been said of a Guru. Srotriya and Brahma Nishta. Gurudev says even for Gnanis it is difficult to communicate their experience through words. They cry in despair:

"Na vidmonavijanimoyathaithadanusishyat" -Kenopanishad1-3

We do not know how to teach this state of Brahman.

That being the case a mere srotriya of book knowledge cannot convey Brahman to others. One could be a Gnani reveling in that state of beatitude yet if he is not well versed in scriptures he has, as Gurudev says, instruments to experience but no means to convey it to others.

Therefore a Guru has to be a srotriya and a Brahma Nishta. Our Sri Gurudev is one.

This state has been said as sukhamatyantikambudhigrahyamatindriyam -- infinite bliss which is perceived by the (purified)intellect and which transcends the senses BG 6:21
Yam labdhwa cha aparammanyanthenaadhikam having obtained which,regards no other acquisition superior to that. BG 6:22

Vedanta page 227
Pujya Gurudev's mere presence was the stillness, the bliss; it was not external or internal factor.
The moment I saw Pujya Gurudev for the first time (before joining the course), I was 100 percent convinced that He was a Brahma Gnani Mahatma.

Vedanta page 253
He would be playing with matter ever established in the formless.
He was the reflection of everything that was lovely and beautiful.
Gurudev was our example of how to play through life with joy,centred in the Self.

OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR

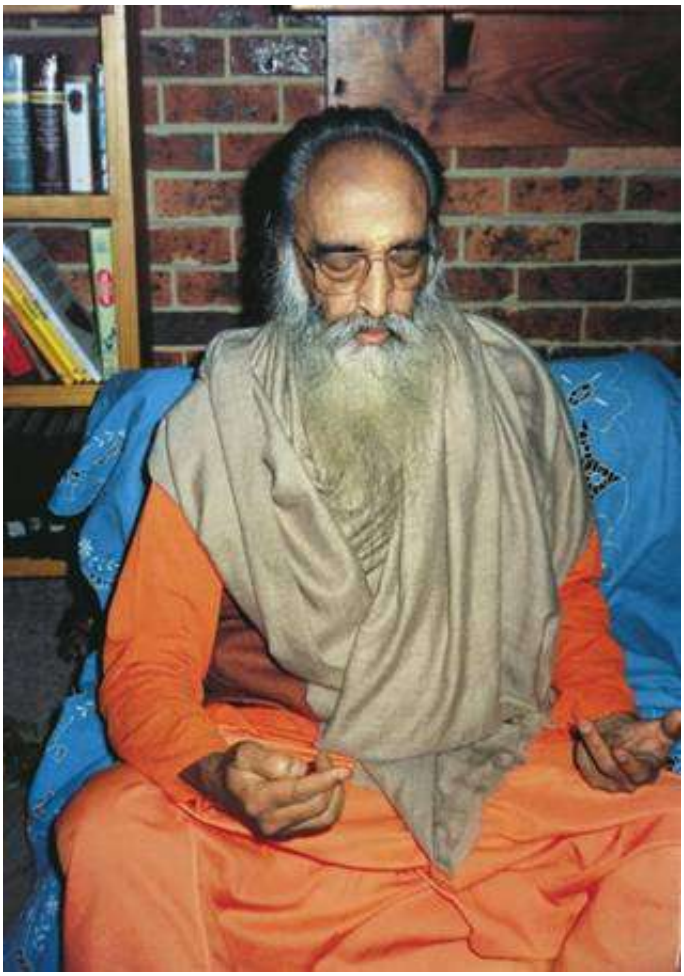
Salutation to the One who is Established in Brahman

Brahman is the Supreme Reality and nishtha is firm
establishment. Brahmanishtha is one who is firmly established in the Supreme Reality.

The Guru can give us this knowledge because he is established in the Brahman. Only one with the direct experience of Brahman, or a brahmanishtha can pass on this Knowledge. In the mind of such a Mahatma, there is no doubt. He says, 'Not that I think I am Brahman, I know I am Brahman. Ahambrahmasmi.' There is complete conviction. This is the state of a Brahmanishtha – well established in Brahman. Sadhakas may have the knowledge but do not have the firm abidance in it. Through perseverance and practice of meditation we have to gain that firm establishment.

Initially when we listen to the message from the Master and contemplate on it, there is understanding but this is short lived. The impurity in our hearts does not allow it to become established. Gurudev used to give the example of the professional beggar, whose father was a great beggar. His grandfather was known as a wonderful beggar and indeed, the whole family was one of great beggars. They even had the capacity to beg from other beggars too. Merely by looking at them other beggars would offer them something.

Someone once gave this beggar a lottery ticket. Being educated he checked it out and realized he had won a lottery. He now had crores of rupees and was suddenly very rich. He bought himself a nice house, a car and all the other trappings of luxury. One day being driven by his chauffeur, he was inspecting his old haunts. Suddenly he saw a sethji distributing something to a group of beggars. In a flash he ran out of the car and joined the line. For so many lifetimes he had been thinking like a beggar. Though India has been free many years we sometimes still feel that we are in bondage. The slave mentality remains!



No doubt in this mind.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Shashant Redemption is a film about a person who has been wrongly imprisoned. After many years he finally broke out and escaped. In prison along with him was an elderly person who had been there for about thirty five years. One fine day the elderly man was told that he would be released in a week's time. The man became very sad and upset because he had got used to that prison. Repeatedly he told his jailors, "I don't want to go, I just don't want to go." The authorities were unrelentless. They told him that he would have to go because his sentence was over. He fought with them and even beat them up in the hope that they would once again imprison him. But they did not allow him to stay.

Out in the open, he was scared. Things had changed in the thirty-five years that he had been in prison. He saw cars moving about and did not know how to behave in the world. Finally he got a job, but there also he was a misfit. Even if he wanted to go to the toilet, he would ask permission because he had got used to asking. He could not adapt to his freedom and finally in a depressed state he

committed suicide. The moral is that even to digest freedom we need some capacity.

Gaining knowledge and understanding is one thing but to get established in that is something else. For years together we have lived with the conviction that, 'I am a jéva.' Suddenly if someone says, "You are Brahman ," we find it hard to believe. People even get used to their diseases. If they are eventually cured they are not happy, because they have formed the habit of eating medicines every day. When the doctor discontinues the medicines, they are sad. It is one thing to gain knowledge but quite another to get established in that. It takes time because we have considered ourselves as low, little, limited, insignificant, samsaris. Just because the scriptures say, 'You are that Brahman. You are limitless,' we are unable to accept it.

manobuddhyahamkarachittaninaham

na cha shrotrajivhena cha ghrananetre

na cha vyomabhumirnatejonavayuh

chidanandarupahshivohamshivoham

The mind just does not accept it. It asks, 'How can that be me?' This understanding takes time and that itself is the sadhana and is known as meditation. Through shravanam first time we hear about it; through mananam we come to understand it, through meditation we get established in it. Meditation is to get established in that understanding. It must permeate deep into us, so that even in our dreams we remember it. The dreaming mind is the subconscious mind. In the Tulsi Ramayana, Tulsidasji says that even in our dreams svapna we should not behave badly. When the knowledge reaches the subconscious mind, it means it has gone deep. That isbrahmanishtha – getting established in the knowledge of Brahman. A Guru is like that, well established in Brahman.

To That One established in Brahman, our prostrations.

OM BRAHMANISHTHAAYA NAMAH

327. OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

29-03-2016

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*Salutations to Him for whom reveling in Brahman is the supreme goal.

* Sometimes, even small things he would connect to the Higher. In Sidhbari, one day, few devotees saw a rat in Gurudev's kutia. So they told him, "Swamiji we saw a rat in your kutia!"

"Hanh...!", He says, "Ganesh came to see his Dad."

You could only see the rat. But the additional elaborations -- Ganesh was travelling on it, came to see his Dad, kutia itself is a Shivalinga.....!

You and I never see a rat like that. We see a rat. We kill it. He says Ganesh was on it. A small thing. But see how the mind is. Ever revelling in That only. Whereas our condition would be: "– really! Bring that trap! My books will get eaten, my clothes will be ruined, go, go, go, bring a trap first. Get it out!"

* It could be such an insignificant incident, or the most profound; but the mind only reveled in That. It did not move anywhere else.

* Once when someone gave him a cup of coffee, Gurudev tasted the coffee, he liked it and then he said – who said there is no happiness in coffee? He's been teaching always that there is no happiness in the OET - in objects, emotions and thoughts. There is nothing here in this world, and all that. 'That' is the real happiness he taught; but he tasted coffee and his reaction was, " ... who said, there is no happiness in the coffee?" And then he added '- yes. But it is temporary.'





Temporary ... Permanent, unbroken bliss ...

* In such a seemingly insignificant moment too, there is a kind of revelation. It is a way of life for Gurudev, a way of living, and continuously, at that. And, connect people to it. Yes, you can appreciate a cup of coffee, but know it is temporary. Don't take it seriously. So it could be a cup of coffee, or it could be a rat or it could be a upanishadic declaration or a thrilling discussion. Whatever it was, his mind was always revelling in That.

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Brahmaparaya is one whose goal is Brahman. Gurudev is Brahman. Therefore this again is of a sadhaka and as said in the previous one what is sadhana for sadhak becomes nature of Siddha. Or for us He looks like the one to whom there is no other thought other than Brahman. It can also be, one who is committed to the cause of Brahman, meaning - leading others to Brahman. He sees Brahman alone in all encounters with the world or experiences. Or one who, having Brahman as goal, has found It.

At Every Breath, A Teachingpg 81

Meeting the Guru - Love at first sight

Anjali Singh
The moment had arrived, a moment that comes just once in one's life time, when the miracle happens, and fate or the grace of God brings a student face to face with her spiritual teacher. This is the sacred moment when the ever present, invisible essence of Godhood comes out from within one's innermost Self and appears before one in the form of the Guru, to lead her along the path that has been set by the creator Himself.

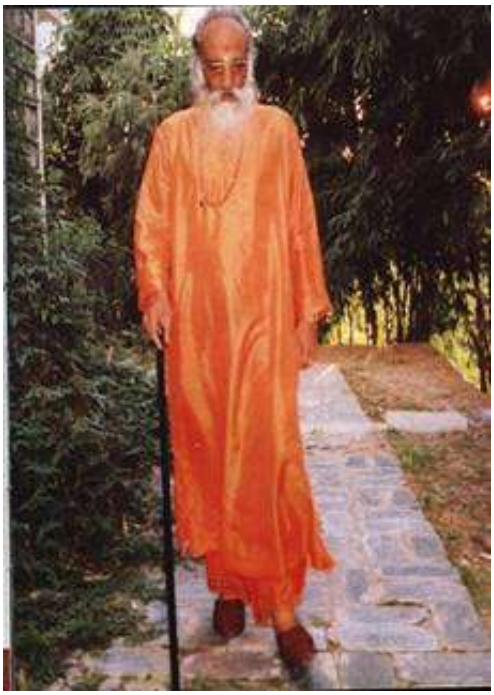
Page 161

God and God's Worship

God's Reality

Hemalatha Ramachandra Reddy

Suddenly, I went to Him with full devotion and touched His feet with my forehead. Something happened within me; I felt some vibrations. I felt that I was before Sarvesvara in the Himalayas and did not know what was happening around me for a moment until I heard Swamiji's voice: "Hari Om! ... "



Sarveshwara Himself .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

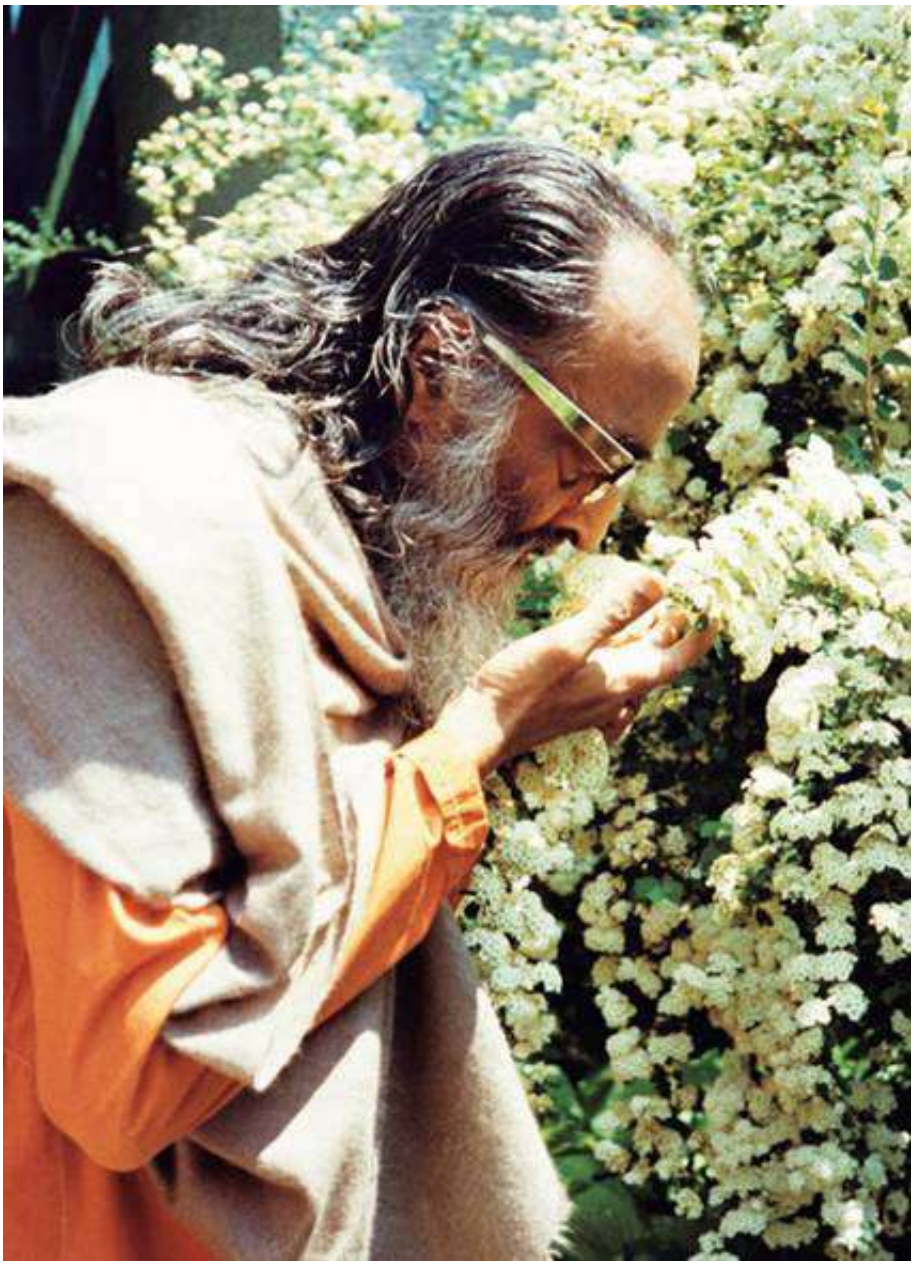
Introductionpg xiv
As one devotee says "I could watch Swamiji slip circles of banana into His mouth along with His breakfast upma and know that all I needed to know about Self realisation was contained in that lucid, fully conscious divinely resplendent act."

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the One Devoted to Brahman



All revering.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

One who considers Brahma as param, as supreme, is brahmaparaya. Para means supreme. Whatever we revere, we start becoming like that. It begins to permeate our system. That is the beauty and the power of worship. Worship means to revere or idealize a thing; thinking and contemplating on it. Worshipping is not just offering flowers, but actually going deep within. Today people worship film stars. They imitate their favourite film stars by dancing like them or sporting the same hair style. These days we find that every hero has ten duplicates who behave like him,

almost as foolishly. They hero worship him or her and want to become like that. That is imitation. Outwardly we try to change and become like that. If we consider Brahman as Supreme, then automatically our psychology becomes like that. Suppose our ideal is Siva or Rama, we will start behaving like them.

Some take their parents as their ideals and so imbibe some of their qualities. Everyone has an ideal. No one is without an ideal. The stories of the scriptures provide us with proper ideals. If we are not inspired by the scriptures then wrong people become our ideals. In our country we are so fortunate to have scriptures like theRamayana, the Bhagawat, the Mahabharata. Our many saints and sages help us to have noble ideals. In the absence of this literature people have film stars and others as their ideals.

Small children look up to their teachers and idolise them. But when they grow, then film stars or whatever is glamourized on the TV or radio, becomes the ideal. When we read the scriptures then Rama and Krishna become our ideals. Our mind and our subconscious take the mould of whatever we revere. A sadhaka is one for whom Brahman is the ideal – tat para. They consider tat – the Self - as para, as Supreme. The teacher is one for whom Brahman is Supreme. He is established in Brahman. That Brahman itself is Supreme. There is nothing superior or greater to that.

OM BRAHMAPARAAYA NAMAH

328. OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

30-03-2016

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*Fear slowly gets destroyed. In his presence fear destroys. It goes off, slowly. Gets destroyed. We already saw – dhairyapradaayanamah. He instilled courage in everybody. Another way of expressing the same qualityis: 'that he destroyed fear in everybody.'So he instilled courage where courage was lacking and destroyed fear where fear was an obstacle.'Bhayanaashanaayanamah

*How many times and so eloquently, Gurudev has said – 'you are not lost in a dream. You are dreaming you are lost!' We think we are lost, gone. Just wake up!

*A seeker of Truth should be willing to walk that path. You must have guts, otherwise you can't walk. What is this Truth? We do not know; but we are willing to walk. How it is going to be? I don't know how it is going to be but I am willing to walk. Prepare yourself. Get yourself free from fear. And we are not the first ones to walk this path. Are we the first? Thousands and thousands of people have walked this path. Since time immemorial, people have walked this path. Our organization is also made up of people who walked this path. What can happen? Either you succeed or you fail.

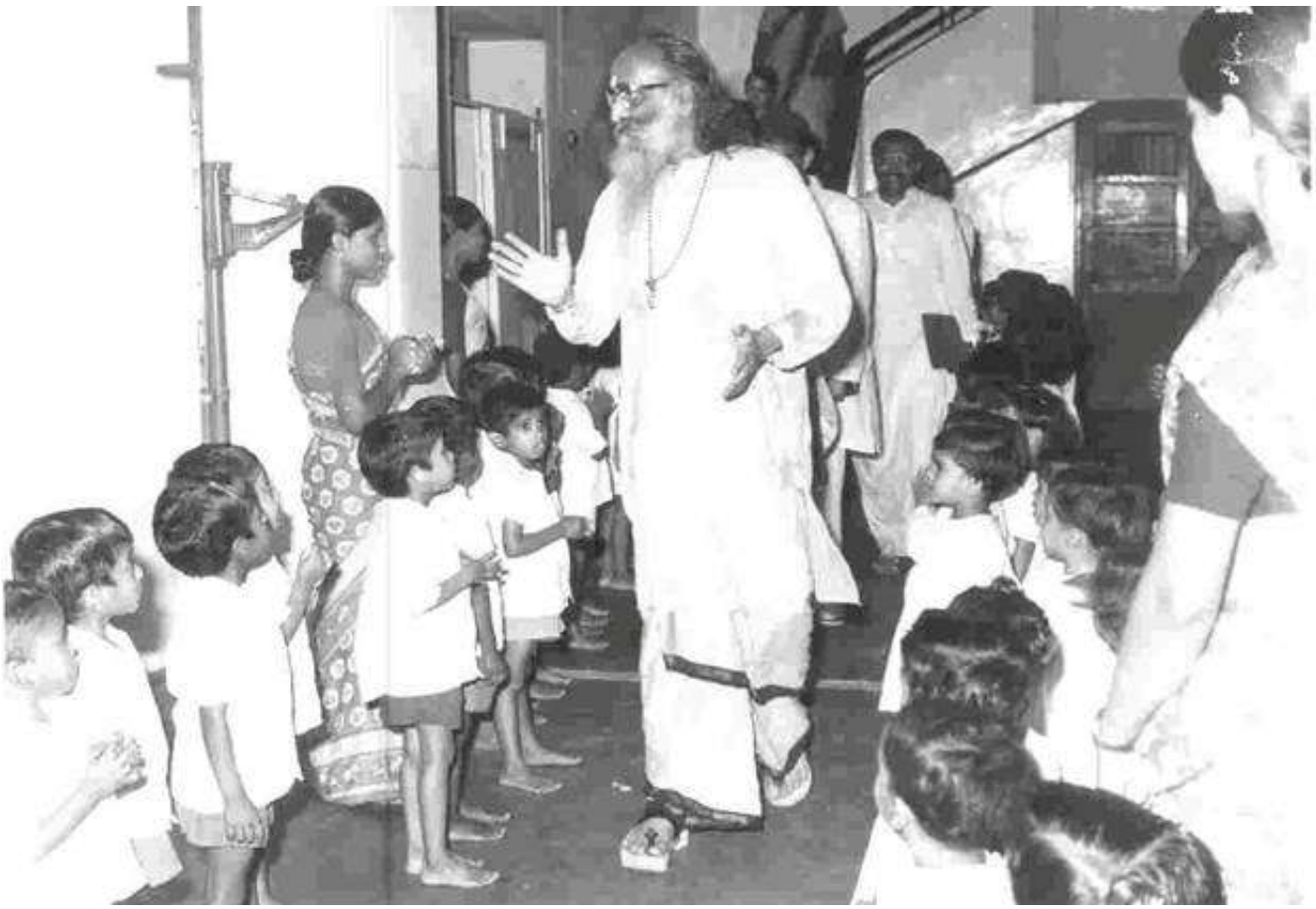
*But is there a failure on the spiritual path? Then hear Gurudev's own words, this is important for you to understand: 'Fallen yogi is a contradiction.' A yogi cannot fall. Yoga is only growth. You may be slow at times; you may sit down, now and then, but where is the fall when you are growing? So only either of two things can happen – one can be successful or one maybego slow. Either you walk fast or you go slow. What is there to be scared? Remember Gurudev's words: 'Fallen yogi is a contradiction.'

Hear this: on another occasion Gurudev said, – where have you fallen? 'From His shoulder to His lap!' More comfortable there!

*When we analyse like that, the fear is gone. Where is the fear? And fear of what? Why is it so difficult to venture into the unknown? Because it is unknown. It is the fear of the unknown and that stops you from growing. But in Gurudev's presence, fear simply goes away. You just see and then you understand. Fear begins to drop.

*'You are not lost in a dream. You are dreaming you are lost.' That is one of the greatest fear. What if I am lost? You are only dreaming you are lost. Dare the unknown. Let the future be unknown. Meet it fearlessly.

*Gurudev had gone there to address senior bal-vihar children. Gurudev was busy whenthe organiserswent and asked him – 'Swamiji what is the topic you will be speaking on?' He smiled, then said – 'Children ... our own bal-vihar, I will come and speak.'



So what...?

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The organizers sent him back, 'Go find out the topic he will address. Then it will be easy to advertise, publicise.' So they went again and said – 'Swamiji what topic....'

Now, you have just asked him. He is busy doing something. But you come back and ask again! Gurudev said,'Why?Go back.'

The poor man went back. But the organisers were restless. 'You didn't get the topic? Go and ask!'

Within minutes the messenger came back to Gurudev and asked, "Swamiji, topic?"

Gurudev said, "So what? There's is no topic!"

This messenger should be one of those brilliant gifts of nature. He went and told the organisers, "Gurudev is talking on 'So What'." And mind you, Gurudev is not aware of it. Gurudev doesn't know that this guy misunderstood the whole thing. And at the appointed moment, this man gets onto the stage and announces,'His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda ji is going to speak to children on 'So What'.'

Oh Gurudev! He understood how people mess up sometimes. He saw what had happened! And he goes up to the podium and talks. In his voice and words 'So What' developed a different meaning altogether after that!

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Maitreyi Chaitanya, CM Pune

In marathi (an Indian language, native to the state of Maharashtra) there's a beautiful Abhang (devotional composition, literal meaning a-bhang non-interrupted) by SantDnyaneshwarMaharaj, which says, 'When one is protected by the Satguru, then who cares for anyone else?'

Indeed, so many of us would have experienced this, that when Satguru protects, nothing can cow us down. This faith and experience is what generates fearlessness in a devotee.

Indeed, if Satguru is our protector, who can harm us?

To bring home this point, there are two examples given in the abhang.

1.Would the queen of an emperor, ever need to beg for anything? Ofcourse not. Whatever, she needs, will be available for her, even before she completes the command. Similarly, when the Guru himself has taken up the responsibility of protecting us, do we need to have any other support?

Pujya Guruji, explains this example taking it a step ahead. He says, Yes, the queen will get all that she wants, but can the King give her Mukti? No. She can only get material gains. But our Satguru is – Bhukti-Muktipradaata...



Bhuktimuktipradaata..... with Shri Y.T Tarkas

2.Would a person sitting under Kalpataru, lack anything? He has to just think and it is present in front of him, for his use..

Again, Pujya Guruji says beautifully, if we are sitting under Kalpataru, we have to be very careful about what we think, because the tree won't have any viveka of which desire to fullfill and which not, whereas our Satguru is not our wish-fulfiller but our well-wisher, who will make sure that we get all we need and we don't get that

which will be an obstacle on our path.

Wow! Dont these thoughts themselves have the power of relaxing our mind completely and surrendering it at HIS feet?

Blessed are we all, who got such a Satguru.....

SatgurunathMaharajki Jai!!!

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Most of the negative tendencies are born out of insecurity. Fear is the worst of the lot. It takes away all peace, based mostly on imaginary or exaggerated perceptions.

Many things we fear never happen. Whatever bad experiences we go through are also seen through our mind and they are very limited compared to the blessings God has bestowed on us. Yet all our life we spend worrying over these fears. Also they are related to my upadhis, equipment -- the BMI. I manage them I need not lose myself over them. But in our ignorance we identify with them; we feel we are the BMI. We forget that we are in fact the owners of them.

Solving problem after problem is done at empirical level. Spirituality shows the very problem is a confusion. This confusion is removed by Guru and fear is removed permanently.

Upanishad says perception of duality is the cause of fear,sorrow and mortality. DwayatBhavathiBhayam. Chapter 16 of the BhagvadGita mentions fearlessness Abhayam as the very first of divine wealth--daivisampathi.

Let us see how our Gurudev has helped many to get over fear.
Vedanta page 253

West seeks East

How did Gurudev guide your life?

Brahmacharini Robyn

Gurudev was our example of how to play through life with joy,centered in the Self. Gurudev once said "Be a great girl and enter life unafraid". Take the world as it is,it has its own beauty but it is not the absolute. There is nothing to fear. "What is there to fear when He alone is within and without?" And how He used to say,"We are sitting on God's shoulder,and where can we fall but on His lap!"



Where can you fall?

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

At Every Breath, ATeaching page 272

Beyond the Body

"I am not the body "

BharatiSukhatankar

BharatiSukhatankar was preparing the syringe for Swamiji's daily injection of insulin. He took the syringe and the alcohol saturated cotton and dabbed his thigh with it,ready to give himself an injection. She found it painful to watch and turned her head away,looking out of the window.
"Why are you looking away?" Inquired Swamiji.
"Swamiji it is painful for me to watch," replied Bharati."Doesn't it hurt you when you do it day after day?"
Swamiji's reply was simple and direct: " When I say, ' I am not the body,' I am not the body!"

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

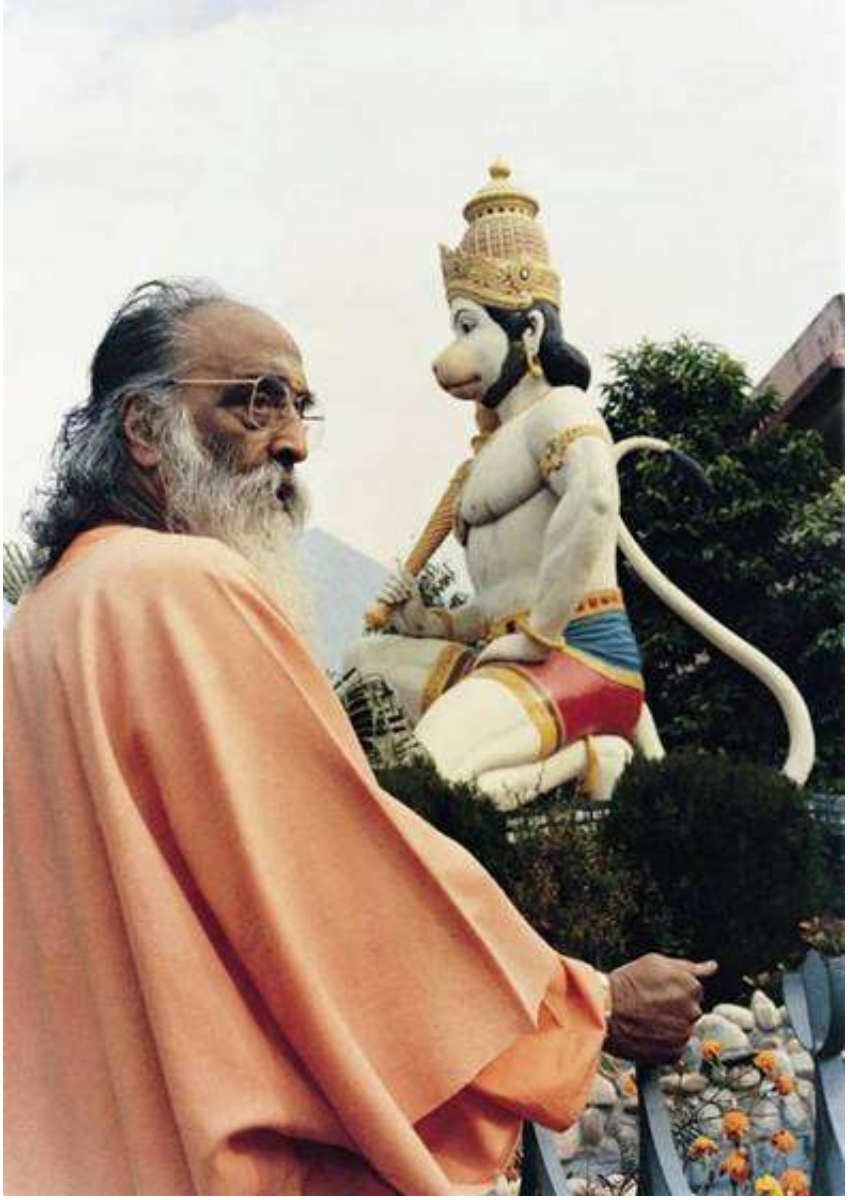
Salutations to the Bestower of Fearlessness

Bhaya is fear. Abhaya means freedom from fear. The teacher frees us from fear. The devatas also bestow us with abhaya. Often we see them holding up their right hands, as though blessing the world. This mudra called abhaya mudra. Fear not, ma shuchah. The Teacher makes us fearless. Dana is of various kinds – annadana, bhu dana, go dana, vidya dana, but the greatest of all is abhaya dana. This fearlessness can only come through right knowledge. Any other dana is impermanent, after a while we are back to square one. But fearlessness remains for ever. We become totally fearless only when we recognize the Self.

People entertain various different types of fear – of death, pain, sorrow, separation, poverty, failure, success, of relatives coming, relatives not coming. We have fear of cockroaches, rats, cats, dogs biting, dogs chasing us, fear of hair falling, fear of hair not falling, fear of growing fat, thin, tall, so many fears. One could write a book on different fears. Fear has a crippling effect. It prevents us from moving ahead. Therefore in the Gita Bhagavan says that one of the greatest qualities of a seeker is fearlessness. abhayamsattvasamshuddhiù (16.1), if you are fearless you can move ahead.

One can meditate only if one is fearless and there is no fear of death.
The Astavakra Gita says that people are afraid to meditate because meditation destroy the ego. Meditation is like the experience of death and nobody wants to die. In serious meditation the ahamkara dies. In the deep sleep state, the ahamkara is temporarily suspended, but when we awaken, it again surfaces. It is like a pot tied to a rope and lowered into the well. We cannot see the pot because there is water in it as well as around it, but when we pull the rope up, the pot surfaces. Temporarily it becomes one with the waters, but remains intact. When we pull, it comes up, but if the pot breaks, then the water inside and outside the pot become one. We cannot separate them again. In the same way, the ahamkara is temporarily dissolved in the deep sleep state. We become one with Brahman but still retain our separateness, for we wake up with that feeling. But in meditation the separate 'i' dissolves and we no longer appreciate it. As long as the little 'i' remains we do not experience Brahman. Most of us hold onto that 'i', implying there is fear of attaining moksha. Many people are disturbed at the idea of attaining moksha. They are happy with samsara.

The Guru frees us from the different types of fears. Fear exists because of a sense of separation. Temporarily we become free of fear when we have vairagya:vairagyamevaabhayam. When there is no attachment, there will be no fear. Alexander the Great once got angry with a Mahatma. He took out his sword and said, "I will cut off your head and see it rolling on the ground." The Mahatma said, "Yes, I too, will see it rolling on the ground; because I am not the head nor am I the body." He was fearless. Another example is of Hanumanji when he went to Lanka. Faced by the might of the court, he faced Ravana fearlessly. When we have vairagya we gain fearlessness; but when we gain knowledge, we are totally free.



When we have vairagya we gain fearlessness...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Those who can distinguish between fear and fearlessness have a sattvikabuddhi. In samsara there is fear but by knowing the Self and going beyond it one attains fearlessness. The buddhi knows the difference. Generally we run in the direction of fear like fools who rush in where angels fear to tread.

Life is a strange thing, and we should let it remain so. Our endeavour should be to understand and recognize ourselves. Don't try to understand life and death. We have to understand our own self. Everything else will be resolved automatically.

Try to focus on and find the centre. If we try to go around the circumference, we will only go round and round. There are an infinite number of points on the circumference. We may find one point and think we know everything about it. We must remember there are other points as well. Only the centre is unique and there is nothing like it. Though it appears like any other point, it is, nevertheless, quite different.

There is no need to be afraid of anything. We have died as jévas so many times. All we have to do is develop love for God and pray for knowledge. Bhagavanmeinvishvaasho,bhagavanko hi jananachahie. We are looking at everything from one standpoint. What is required is a paradigm shift of that standpoint. For example, a question about the size of a watch is a relative. The answer would depend on who is looking at it, from where and compared to what. In books we sometimes find close ups of objects which we cannot recognize. Suppose we examine the close up of a button, we may not recognize it, because we are used to seeing it in a particular size. When it is blown up beyond capacity, it changes its character. Similarly, we have blown our lives beyond their real capacity and take them to be the whole. We need to shift our vision and the best time to do it is now. Don't postpone it for tomorrow. We have to decide to recognize ourselves as we are.

The fear of death is a very real fear. An astrologer told Swami AkhandanandaMaharaj, formerly Shantanu that he would die at the age of sixteen. This really frightened him. He went to different mahatmas wanting to know how to avoid his impending death. They were unanimous in their opinion that if death is decreed then nobody can do anything to change it. Finally, he went to Udiya Baba, a great saint. He told him about his fear of death and asked how he could avoid it. Baba told him that he would give him something that would free him of the fear of death. He said that what we want to avoid is fear of death and not death itself. We cannot be scared of death because we don't know what death is. I have never died, the very fact that I am alive and that I am here means that I have not died before. I don't know death. The very fact that I am now means that there was no death for me before.

Udiya Baba promised to give something by which he would become free of the fear of death. He gave him this knowledge of the Self and he became free of the fear of death. At the age of sixteen he took sannyasa and sannyasa, in the worldly sense, is considered a death. So the words of the astrololger came true and at the same time, he also conquered the fear of death.

OM BHAYANAASHANAAYA NAMAH

329. OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

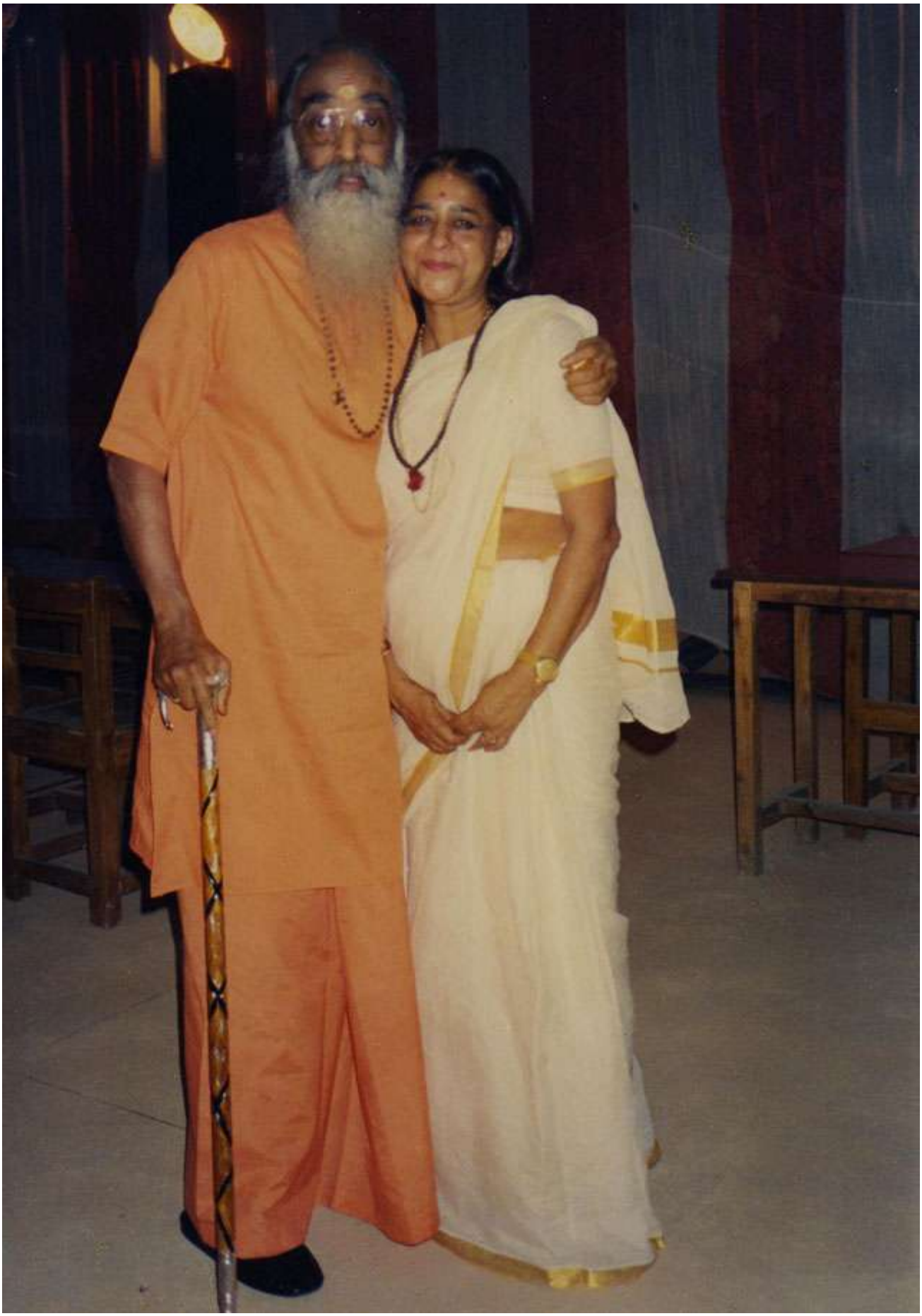
31-03-2016

OM BHARATAGAURAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SwaminiGurupriyananda, Chinmaya Ranjan, New Delhi



Shri Guru Paduka Pooja



With Gurudev

Salutations to the Pride of India

His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, the Light of Eternal India's Enduring Heritage, Philosopher, Saint, Visionary, Teacher of Humanity, Exponent Extraordinary of Vedanta, Harbinger of Spiritual and Cultural Renaissance – handed over the wisdom of Vedanta to the masses of India and the world.

Chinmaya is the eternal Jyoti, AtmaJyoti of every Indian.

The Pride of India

A Living Legend!!!

OM BHARATAGAURAVAAYA NAMAH

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya MahadevanParameshwaran, Acharya CM Rameshwaram, Los Angeles

The 108 names of Pujya Gurudev are like 108 facets of a multifaceted gem. Here are my comments on Gurudev as the pride of India:



Acharya MahadevanParameswaran

ॐभारतगौरवायनमःTo Him, who is the pride of Bhaarat.(India)

In a camp at Ambalamedu, in Kerala as he talked about Gita Ch.3., he emphasized the qualities of a leader

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्टस्तत्तदेवातरो जनः I स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते II (Gita 3.21)

Whatsoever a great person does, the other people also do; whatever he sets up as a standard, that the world (humankind) follows.

Talking about the corruption that goes on everywhere he emphasized that the youth of the future would answer this call. He was a true lover of Bharat, as we also saw his role in the struggle for India's freedom. The "Quest" movie depicted this in wonderful detail. Gurudev not only looked out for India's freedom, but also made sure that the great values of the Bharatiya culture was followed.

The word Bharat has its origin from the two words "Bha" (भा) (meaning Light & Knowledge) and rata"रत (meaning devoted). This would mean "devoted to light (as opposed to darkness & ignorance). It is the official Sanskrit name for India.

Looking at the meaning in its context, it symbolically reveals the fact that the whole country was highly enlightened spiritually.

The word (गौरवाय) would mean "pride of". In its totality, this "naam" for Pujya Gurudev would mean "one who is the pride of Bhaarat", the land of enlightened

souls.

It is very appropriate to single out Pujya Gurudev as the pride of Bharat.

It is not surprising that the name Bhaarat refers to the people of a country who are enlightened, since we know that Bhaarat is a country where the spiritual heritage originated from the Munis and Sages. Pujya Gurudev was a special member of this enlightened group. He was truly a Maharishi (Om Maharshayenamah:) who was able to transform the entire thought process of each individual. The “religious people” dominated the spiritual scene with their narrow minded vision, where only certain groups of people were privy to “Religion” based on the language of expression. In the process they lost the spirit of the message. It was Pujya Gurudev , our Master who is our Pride and the Pride of Bharat who brought the true message of Spirituality to the masses; a message , free from Caste, Creed, Language, Gender or any other barrier.



Seated to the right of the Pride of India; with his family and Pujya Guruji

I also have a letter from Pujya Gurudev who said that those who were supposed to do this task, did not do so wholeheartedly, and that it fell upon us, the Sevaks in the future generation to complete and carry on this task.

Pujya Gurudev brought this knowledge down to the educated masses as well in the English language.

Hence we also see आङ्ग्लभाषा वदितमायनमःas one of the 108 names.

To this treasured Pride of India, Our Gurudev, our salutations!

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Glory of India. Honour of India. Pride of India. Gurudev said a Bharata is one who revels in knowledge. Bha is knowledge. Rata is one who revels. Thus when we say BharataGaurava, we mean Pride of all spiritual (knowledge) seekers all over the world.
Respected by the enlightened.

That He is respected, is visible in the fact that other organisations are emulating His schemes like study groups,yuvakendra, balavihars etc. Gurudev has introduced Matru Puja in our schools and balavihars. Recently in Chennai this was done on a large scale at the most sought after auditorium.
Many national leaders and presidents were His followers. President Rajendraprasad inaugurated Gurudev's 23 yagna in Delhi in 1956. MrZail Singh, the 7th President of India (1982-87) and Mr.C.Subrahmaniam, a BharataRatna who served variously as Minister for Law, Defence, Education and so on between 1952 and 1972 have also inagurated Gurudev's Yagnas. Revered artistes Mrs.M.S.Subulakshmi, Mr.Balamuralikrishna,Mrs Padma Subramaniam were all closely associated with Gurudev.

To mark Gurudev’s centenary year, the Indian Prime Minister released commemorative coins.

Gurudev has addressed the United Nations. He was to address the parliament of Religion at Chicago to commemorate the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's address, but Gurudev attained Maha Samadhi a few days before that.

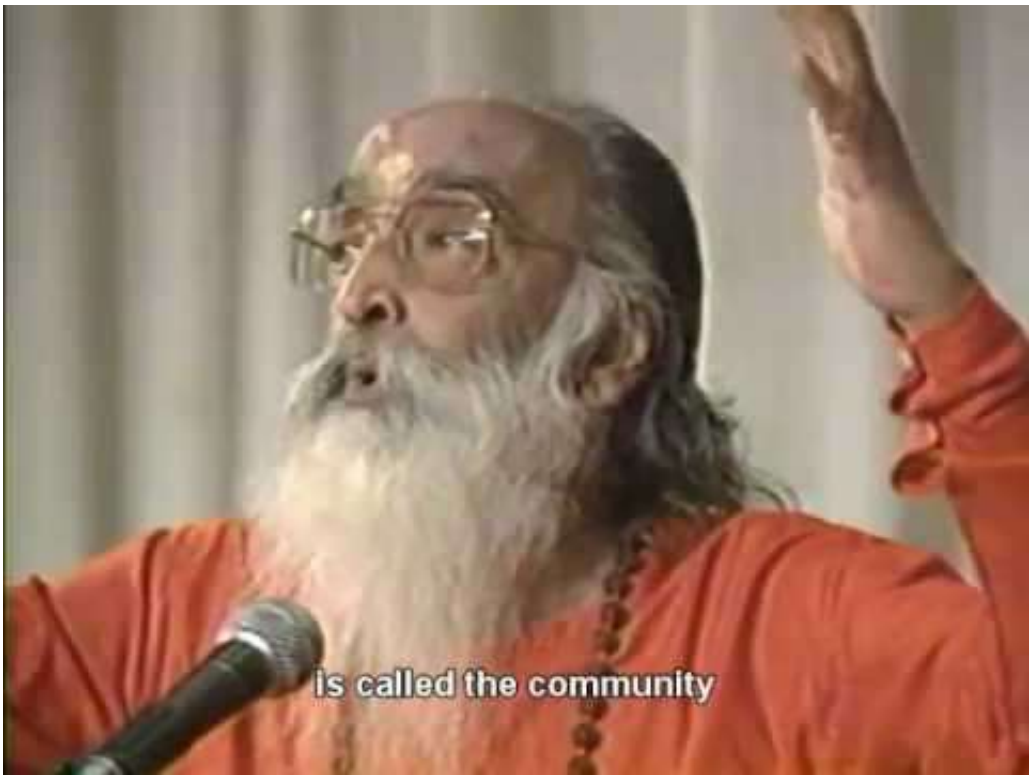
His mission centres are there all over the world with disciples from all religions. After Gurudev's second global visit there was a reception for Gurudev in

Shanmukhananda Hall the biggest most prestigious auditorium in Mumbai. The dignitaries were the top most of the country -- the Vice President of India, the Chief Justice of India, the Governor, Bharat RatnaC.Subramaniam, the Sheriff of Mumbai to name a few.

In this list there can be some omissions. This should be taken in the spirit in which it is meant to be.

He Did It pg 93

At one point the Brahmin priests went in a group and complained to the saint of KanchiKamakoti Mutt, but it seems the Saint reprimanded them,"You don't know what Upanishads and Gita are all about. Here is a person who not only knows them, but has come to interpret them for our people."



Addressing the UN ..... a planet in crisis...

Swami Chinmayananda as I knowHim – pg6
Mr. Karthikeyan - ex chief secretary, Tamil Nadu

I consider Him the Greatest Hindu of the current century. Swamiji Vivekanandaraised the flag of Hinduism in the world Parliament of Religions in Chicago,a hundred years

ago. He [Swami Chinmayananda] was to address the same Parliament a hundred years later in 1993--but it was not meant to be! This shows the universal acceptance and recognition of Swamiji's teachings.

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Bharata is India and gaurava is pride. Bharatagaurava is the pride of India. The name Bharat actually comes from Bharata. One Bharat was the brother of Lord Rama. He ruled the kingdom for a few years when Ramachandraji was exiled in the forest. He placed Bhagavan'spadukas on the throne, became His representative and ruled the kingdom as a trustee. There was no sense of mamatva or ego only total dedication and service. When Lord Rama left the kingdom, it was prosperous but when He returned the prosperity had increased.

Another famous Bharata was the son of Shakauntala and Dushyanta. Their story is also very interesting. Dushyanta fell in love with Shakuntala and married her in the forest hermitage. Subsequently when he returned to his kingdom, he forgot all about her. Bharata born as their son was a very brave child whose past time was to play with lions and their cubs. His bravery showed his royal blood.

One Bharata dedicated his life to the service of the Lord, another was brave and powerful. Yet another Bharata features in the BhagavatMahapurana. The story of Jada Bharata is also very wonderful. Born a Realised soul, he behaved as a totally ignorant and deluded person. So people started calling him Jada Bharata. Despite this he was a wise person known for having given the Supreme Knowledge to the king.

The name Bharata itself has a beautiful meaning. Bha means light — prakash, not jadaprakaç, but the light of Knowledge, the light of Consciousness. Rata is one who revels in it. So Bharatiya or Bharat means those people who revel in the light of Knowledge, in the light of the Divine and are of this nature. The name Bharat is full and holistic. Another meaning of the word is – bhara hua (full) .

Many greats have taken birth in this glorious land of ours. One realizes how special it is when we return home after traveling abroad. Then we appreciate its innate inner depths and beauty. Staying here we are unable to see this and tend to take it

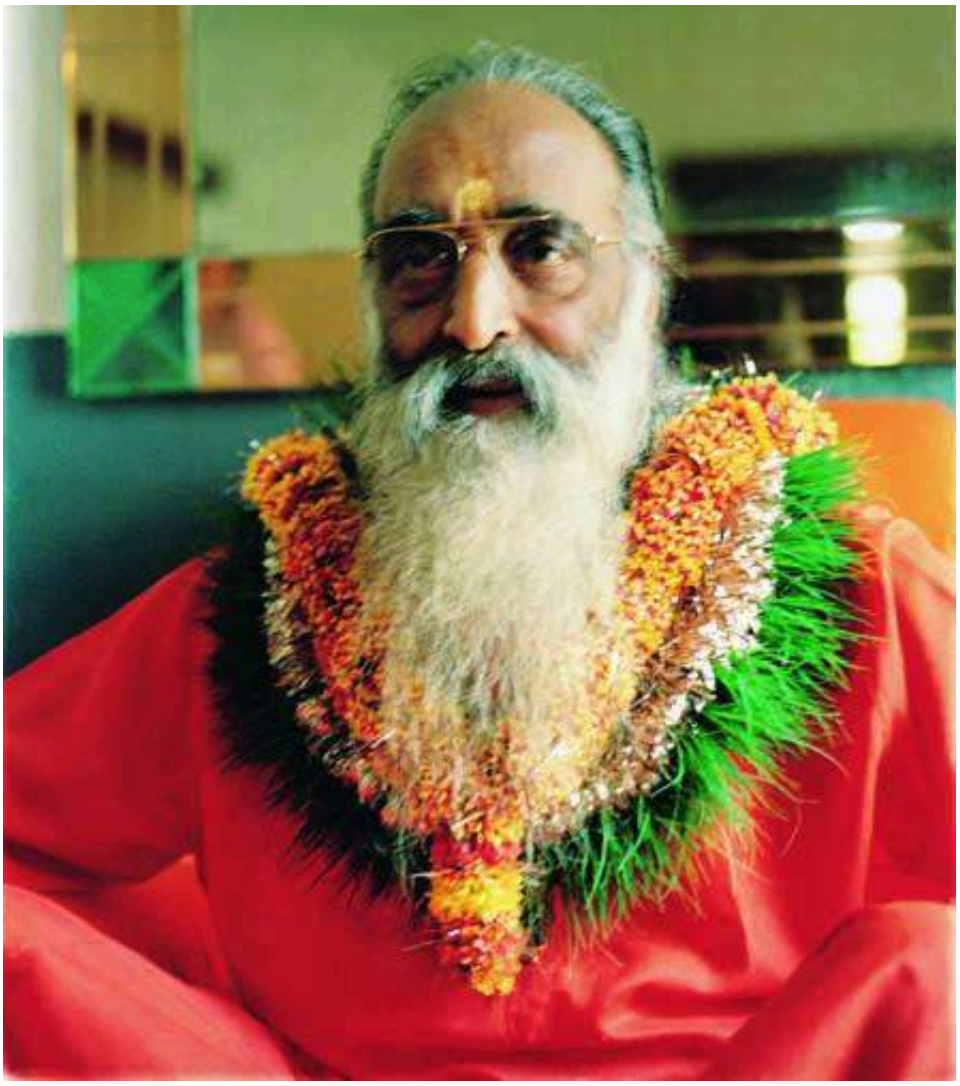
for granted.

Every land has some effect on our minds. Countries have their own vibrations and create certain types of feelings. For example, America creates some sort of depression. Our Bharat is a very holy and ancient land. Many Avatars have taken place here and wonderful scriptures are linked to the country. The scriptures extol the beauty and divinity of the Himalayas, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. It is as though the whole land is a scripture. Every place is like a tirthakshetra. Being dedicated to the Divine each has its own glory.

Great people have taken birth in this wonderful land of ours and have become the pride of the nation in different fields. The field of spirituality has produced a virtual galaxy of Enlightened Masters. In the field of science and medicine too many famous names are connected with significant scientific thought. Despite this brilliant past, in the past two hundred years India has not contributed significantly in the fields of science. We are just imitating or using the technology and knowledge, already existent in other countries. Indians abroad may be making a mark, but here in India we are slowly losing our touch.

In ancient times we have produced many luminaries but we cannot rest on the laurels of the past. Pujya Gurudev realized this and reconnected us to the glory which was once ours. During his early years, India was going through great turmoil. We ultimately gained our independence but due to centuries of foreign rule under the Mughals and the British we lost our national identity. Along with our pioneering spirit, we lost the ability to command and unless we were commanded or threatened we could not work.

Pujya Gurudev was instrumental in reintroducing us to our own culture. Someone once asked him what his aim and goal was. He said he wanted to convert Hindus to Hinduism. We call ourselves Hindus but we have no idea of our own glory and greatness. He wanted Hindus to know and be proud of their own cultural heritage. So he introduced us to the glory and philosophy of our timeless scriptures and our great culture. People across the globe came to realize the import and beauty of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-gita.



Pride of India....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

During his time discoursing on the scriptures in the English language was frowned upon. The orthodox decried his speaking on the Divine in this impure language. But he opined that language is meant for communication and since English was spoken by a growing majority, he had to communicate in this language. This was path breaking. During that time only a few books were available with English translations and it was difficult to grasp their teachings. Pujya Gurudev took giant strides in bringing the essence of the Indian culture to the masses.

We tend to associate our culture with cultural programmes like Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi performances or music programmes but that alone is not our culture. Culture is our philosophy, our rituals our various scriptures, our customs, our saints and sages, our centres of pilgrimage, the various festivals we celebrate, our diverse

languages, our Sanskrit, our dress, our food, our music, our art, our dance - all these together make up our culture. Gurudev has defined culture comprehensively and beautifully. He says, “A group of people staying in a particular geographical area for a long time, following certain values and philosophy of life emanate a particular fragrance that permeates their behaviour and life and that is called culture.”

In India, we follow the philosophy of the Upanishads, knowingly or unknowingly. The general public may be unaware of this, yet the Upanishadic philosophy expresses in our customs and culture. Ours is an ancient and sublime culture and through Pujya Gurudev’s grace we are connected to it. He not only traveled the length and breadth of our country spreading this message but also took it abroad. He established Mission centres, ashramas, retreats and schools, in order to bring out the glory of our culture. Gurudev became the pride of our nation — Bharatagaurava.

People get different national awards like the Bharat Ratna or Padma Shri, but Bhagwan Himself has conferred the ultimate award on Gurudev, by placing him in the hearts of millions. Bharatagauravayanamah — the very pride of our nation. He expressed his views boldly, without fear on all issues — on politics, on religion, and on current affairs. He fought for the country’s freedom, went to jail and almost lost his life in the process.

OM BHARATA GAURAVAAYA NAMAH

330. OM BHUMNE NAMAH

01-04-2016

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar

Salutation to the infinite one

Vedanta says our true nature is infinite but we feel finite as we identify with finite. If I consider myself to be the body mind and intellect then I am bound to be finite. Going beyond the limits of instruments, Gurudev had identified with the Lord infinity.

How do we see this displayed in His life? There are three limitations when we identify with the limited body–

1) We are limited by space : if we are in one place, we can't be in another place. I do not feel I am everywhere.

2) We are limited by time : We can't be on two time zones at the same time

3) We are limited by thing: As I consider myself to be only one body I can't be the other body.

He identified with the Lord who is infinite and hence broke all the limitations.

Many have found that when they were to speak at some lecture, unprepared, they felt Gurudev was the one who spoke through them.

Everyone is Shree Krshna…

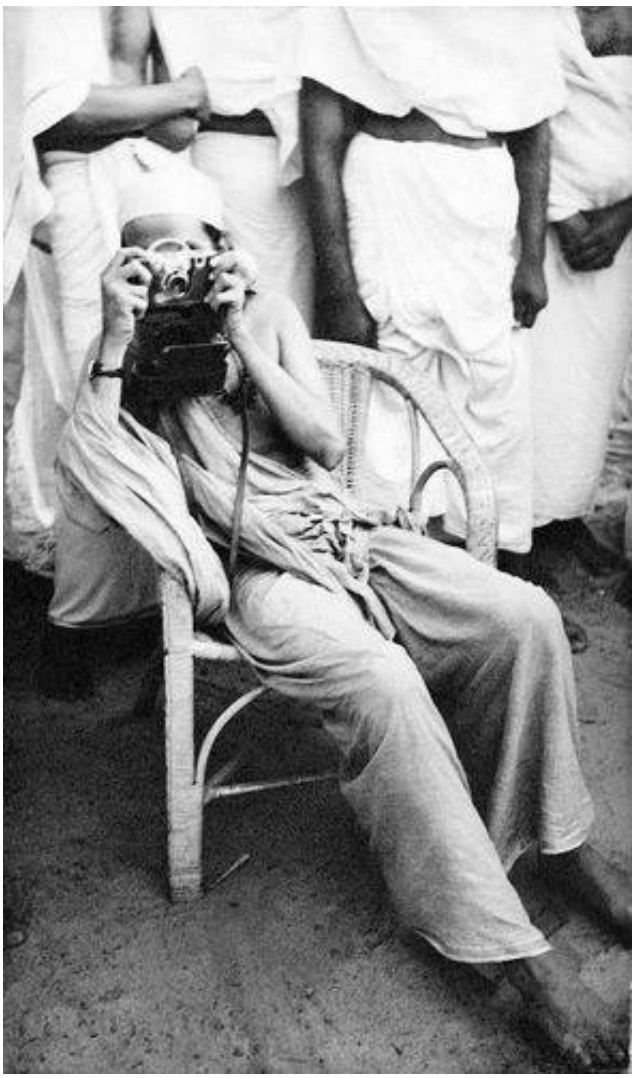
It was October 1990 in Bangalore. Gurudev's Yagna was going on in the heart of the city. It rained unusually that year, and the roads were overrun with water. After the talk when we started the return journey in the car, we would not use the usual route. Gurudev's host decided to drive the car across the grounds to reach other side. Gurudev did not know this. When the car was disturbing the dispersing crowd, He strongly objected.

As the car moved through the crowd, he rolled down the window and with the

folded hands he said to the people walking by:

“KrshnaKrshna I am very sorry to disturb you all. Sri Krshna may forgive me!” He turned to us to the host and myself who were seated in the back seat, and said : “Everyone who was listening was Sri Krshna Himself. He is the one in all. Who else speaks? Who else listens?”

We could not hold the tears flowing from our eyes.



Seeing Krishna everywhere

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Thus, neither He saw any difference between Him and Lord nor He saw any

difference between Lord and others.

HE IS LORD AND LORD ALONE WAS, IS AND WILL BE ALL THE THINGS AND BEINGS.

Prostration to the infinite one.

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

salutations to the one who is the infinite

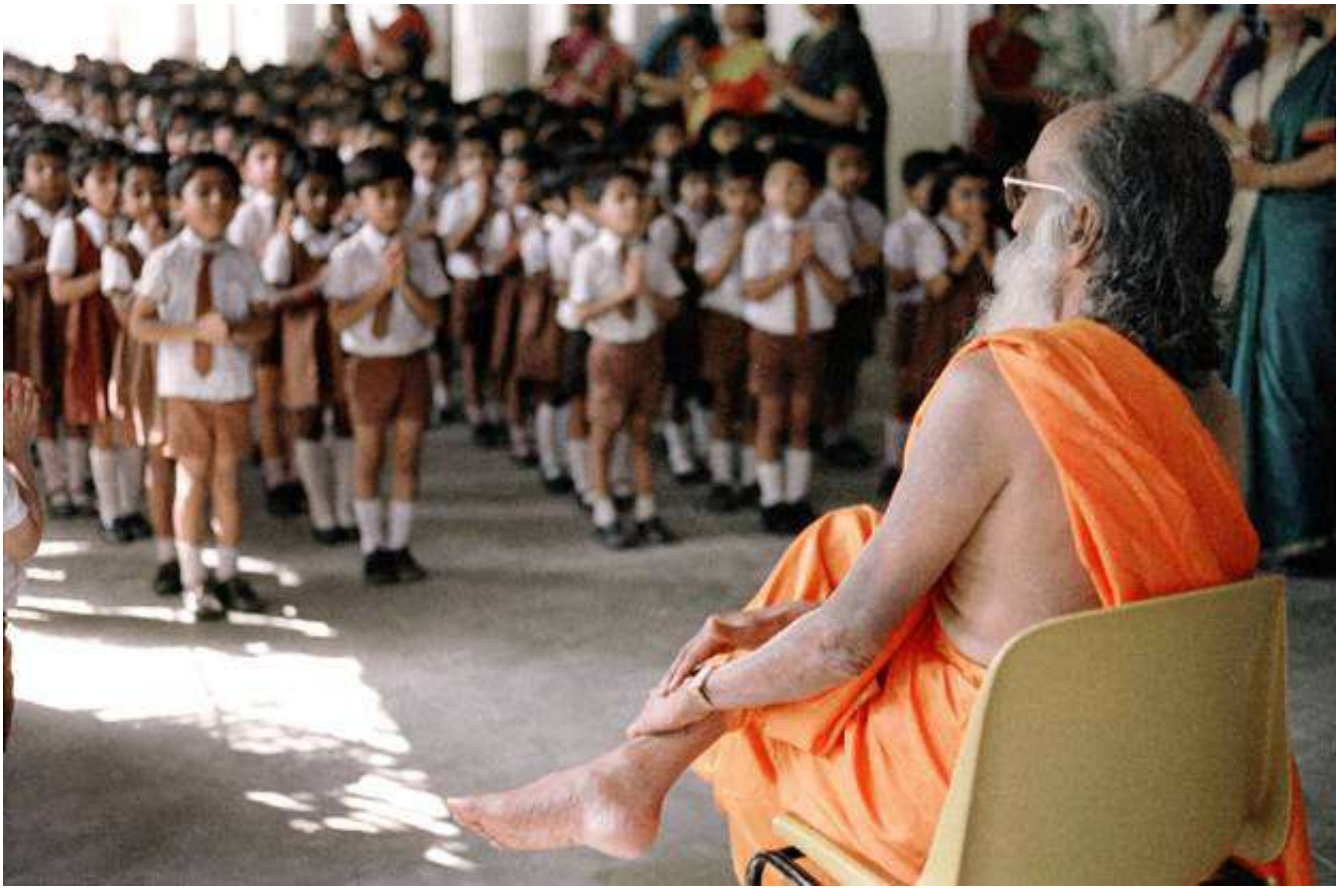
Bhuma is biggest Infinite. In essence it is the same as ‘brahma’ in meaning. Since brahmavitbrahmaivabhavati Gurudev as Brahman is Bhuma.
He is there as the all-pervading Satchitananda and also relatively, through His work He has left an Infinite blessing on Society for all times to come.
There is a lovely section in Chandogya Upanishad VII -23 where this State of Bhuma has been explained and glorified.
YovaiBhuma tat sukhamalpesukhamnastiBhumaivasukhamBhumatu Eva vijignasitavya.
That which is indeed Infinite,that is joy. There is no joy in the finite. The Infinite alone is joy. But the Infinite indeed has to be sought after.

Having explained the nature of Bhuma in this, in the next this Bhuma is explained in terms of our known world of experiences.
YatrananyatpashyatinanyatsrunothinanyatvijanathisaBhuma.
The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else,does not hear anything else, and does not understand anything else.

Vivekachudamani 436
He is the liberated one who is engrossed in the enjoyment of that Brahmic consciousness which is the experience of Bliss (ananda).
At such moments of experience of the essence of Infinite Bliss which is homogeneous and whole, one knows no inside or outside. He does not know the outer world of objects nor does He know the inner world of emotions and thoughts.

Vedanta 251
I saw in Gurudev the same power that Jesus had to calm the waves--the waves of the mind. The religious principles taught from childhood,but which had remained

merely beautiful ideals of concepts, I now could see completely in Gurudev.
He also showed us that He knew our thoughts, and knew us more deeply than we know ourselves! He effortlessly lived the truth that "the Self in me is the Self in all"



The Self in me is the Self in all...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

253 Vedanta
Gurudev was our example of how to play through life with joy,centered in the Self.

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who has no limitations

The word bhuma means that which is Unlimited, All Pervasive and without any limitation. The disciple in the Chhandyogya Upanishad, in his quest for happiness and peace approaches the teacher and enquires about the Supreme Reality. The teacher tells him that that which is limited cannot give us happiness and peace. Only that which is Infinite can give us happiness— yovaibhuma tat sukham.

We don't like limitations of time, space, object or movement. We have limited ourselves by our own thinking and so feel limited. This phenomena is called maya. I am that Brahman but I have limited myself by my own thinking or I feel limited. Ma means to limit or to measure. Ya ma samaya - that which limits me is maya. Having made myself small and limited, I find there is no sukha. The one who breaks all limitations and bondage comes to recognise the Self as that Unlimited, All Pervasive Reality.

A mahatma, a great saint and renowned teacher Pujya Gurudev did not limit himself to any one particular place or type of people. Once when he was going abroad, someone asked him, "Why are you going abroad? Why not stay here only?" He said, "My brothers and sisters live abroad also. I want to share my knowledge with them too." There was no limitation in his thinking or feeling. He identified with the whole world and understood himself as All Pervasive.



My brothers and sisters are everywhere ...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

As a rule before leaving Sidhbari, Gurudev would deposit the money and donations he had received in the office and get the receipts. On his last visit somebody gave Him Rs one lakh. Before leaving the äçrama he gave the money to Shivaraman, a very senior sevak with explicit instructions. He said, “Don’t give this money to the office. Keep it with you. When I come, use it for me. Use it on me only.” Shivaraman did not understand the import of what he was saying, but he didn’t argue. He implicitly followed Gurudev’s instructions without any hesitation. He asked, “Where are you going?” Gurudev answered, “Now I will be closer to you and to everyone.” He then went abroad and attained mahasamadhi.

When he attained mahasamadhi his body was brought to Sidhbari. Money was required for the Bhoosamadhi arrangements. Shivaraman knew that the money had been left for this purpose. He said, “Gurudev has kept this money, and only this will be used.” So that money was used for his Bhoosamadhi. Gurudev used to say, “Once I leave I will be closer to all of you, because I am that All Pervasive Reality only. Now you look at my body and limit me by thinking that I am only limited to this body.”

In the temple, when we offer pranaams to the Krishna idol we believe that he is present only in that. But that is not so. He is present not only in the murti but outside as well. He is everywhere. We are so attached to the murti that we don’t see Him outside it. So, he said, ‘See Me everywhere.’

The Guru is bhuma meaning All Pervading — in the world, in the sky, in the air, in water, in all beings, in the stars, in the moon, everywhere.

OM BHUMNE NAMAH

331. OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

02-04-2016

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to the Teacher who teaches the mahavakyas

*If you listen to Gurudev's tapes on VakyaVritti or even SadhanaPanchakam, he builds a beautiful story around the mahavakyas. It's just the idea to go in. A student goes to the teacher and asks – what is God. The teacher says God – prajnanam brahma. Go meditate. For some time the student meditates, meditates … then he comes back to the teacher. The teacher moves to the next level and says, 'ayamatma brahma'-- This atma is that Brahman. The student goes back to meditate.

For each mahavakya, let us say he took few weeks, or few months, or few years, meditating. Then he comes back asking, "Is this correct (Have I approached the statement well and gleaned correctly?" Then the next mahavakya is given and when the teacher is satisfied with his understanding then the next and so on. . Finally the third mahavakya is given -- tattvamasi. Go meditate. You are That, That Thou Art.

So student goes and meditates for a long time and does not come back.

What a beautiful story! 'Does not come back.' So the teacher goes to see what happened. He does not find the student. Then he finds him sitting there meditating. When he sees his teacher approach him, the student gets up and says, "ahambrahmasmi." Just the mahavakya! That is how Gurudev has explained.

*Personally whatever the Guru tells you is a mahavakya, for your growth. Vakya is a commandment. Mahavakya, according to Gurudev, is a great commandments. Whatever he tells you is a mahavakya, a great statement. You hold on to the mahavakya, the meaning of it will reveal to you one day. You will experience its meaning. Just being consistent with that, hanging on to that one mahavakya, one will reach its purport.

*The Prashnopanishad is a beautiful Upanishad where six questions are asked. Six students of high spiritual background go to the teacher and ask different questions; even so, the teacher says – go, go, clean the cowshed. Go take care of the fields. Go do this, do that. After a year you may ask; if I know the answer I will give you the knowledge."

After one year of so working, the students repeats his questions. The teacher says, 'Now, you can't ask. Go. Do what I say. Keep working. After one year you may be permitted to ask. If we know we shall give you the knowledge.'

Why one year? The question being the same, why not answer it on the first day? The teacher and the student has to understand each other. The commune has to happen. The attunement has to happen. And once that kind of attunement happens between the student and the teacher, the teacher knows where the student is; and then what he tells him in order to move, to grow, is a mahavakya. Undoubtedly a great statement. And you live to that statement, it is change. Why? Your Guru gave it, therefore it is a mahavakya. It's a commandment given by the teacher. Follow. There you have shraddha and you follow that one statement. There is no doubt one would definitely transform.

*And you take Gurudev's statements. In the letters we are reading, all those lines, are they not mahavakyas? Whatever he is instructing, everything takes you there only. I read one this morning, which says – whatever leads man to god is acceptable. Mahavakya. Whatever leads man to God is acceptable. Acceptable as what – acceptable as sadhana. Whatever, whichever way if it can lead you to that, that is acceptable. But whatever takes you away from it, stops you, has to be ... he says you must reject it ruthlessly. Get it out. Unceremoniously get rid of it. Whatever that leads a man towards God is acceptable as sadhana.



Just be .....divine.

*There was a very good statesman, by name C. Subramaniam. He was key to the green revolution in India. He was a devotee of Gurudev. Once he came to inaugurate Swamiji'syajna. The president of the Chennai Mission then was one A.

Subramaniam.

During the Yajna inauguration, Gurudev is sitting between the two. Yajna inauguration talk begins, Gurudev says, “A. Subramaniam to my right, C. Subramaniam to my left. I must be Subramaniam! I must Be Subramaniam!” Then he tells you also be Subramaniam. Be Subramaniam. Powerful message, mahavakya. Be Subramaniam, be divine. Don’t try to be anything. Just be.

Look at the teacher! See how he said that!

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

salutations to the teacher of the great statements of truth (in the upanishads)

Mere words do not become a sentence. Words that together convey a message or a meaning becomes a vakya -sentence. Mahavakya is that which conveys the greatest message that I am what I am searching for,total security,freedom from death,total happiness. That thou artis one of the four Mahavakyas. Any sentence that shows the identity of the individual with God is a Mahavakya. There are many but the scholars have chosen four to represent one Veda each. Out of them two are popular. That thou art (TatwamAsi) and I am Brahman(Aham brahma asmi). Gurudev has made this very simple through an example:

That Gupta is this Gupta.

Otherwise traditionally, inorder to explain this vaakya, they bring an elaborate treatise of lakshanas like JahaLakshna, AjahaLaksana, Jaha-AjahaLaksana etc. Also His one sentence on this is remarkably comprehensive and simple to understand. Gurudev says ""That" dressed up in Matter is the vainful "Thou." Therefore, man undressed of Matter, is the eternal and the infinite Spirit. “

Atma Bodh 30
The Mahavakyas are not mere aphorisms,but they are the golden keys which open the gateways to a richer experience which is beyond words and equally beyond the comprehension by our intellect. By a process of negation of the false and assertion of the positive Truth, one reaches the holy land of the full and pregnant spiritual experience 'I am Brahman '(Aham brahma asmi) '

"This is that Gupta." Here, though two pronouns are used as "this" and "that", they both indicate one and the same Gupta. The difference is only in the conditionings around Mr. Gupta." That Gupta whom you met at Banaras in 1950 as a petty shop keeper,is this Mr.Gupta now we met in Delhi in 1960,as a multimillionaire. "

Similarly this jiva conditioned by the body,mind, and intellect,bound by its own vasanas tempted by an array of objects,going through a thousand sorrows and despairs is the same Unconditioned Infinite Immutable Sacchidananda Truth.



Sat-cit-ananda .....

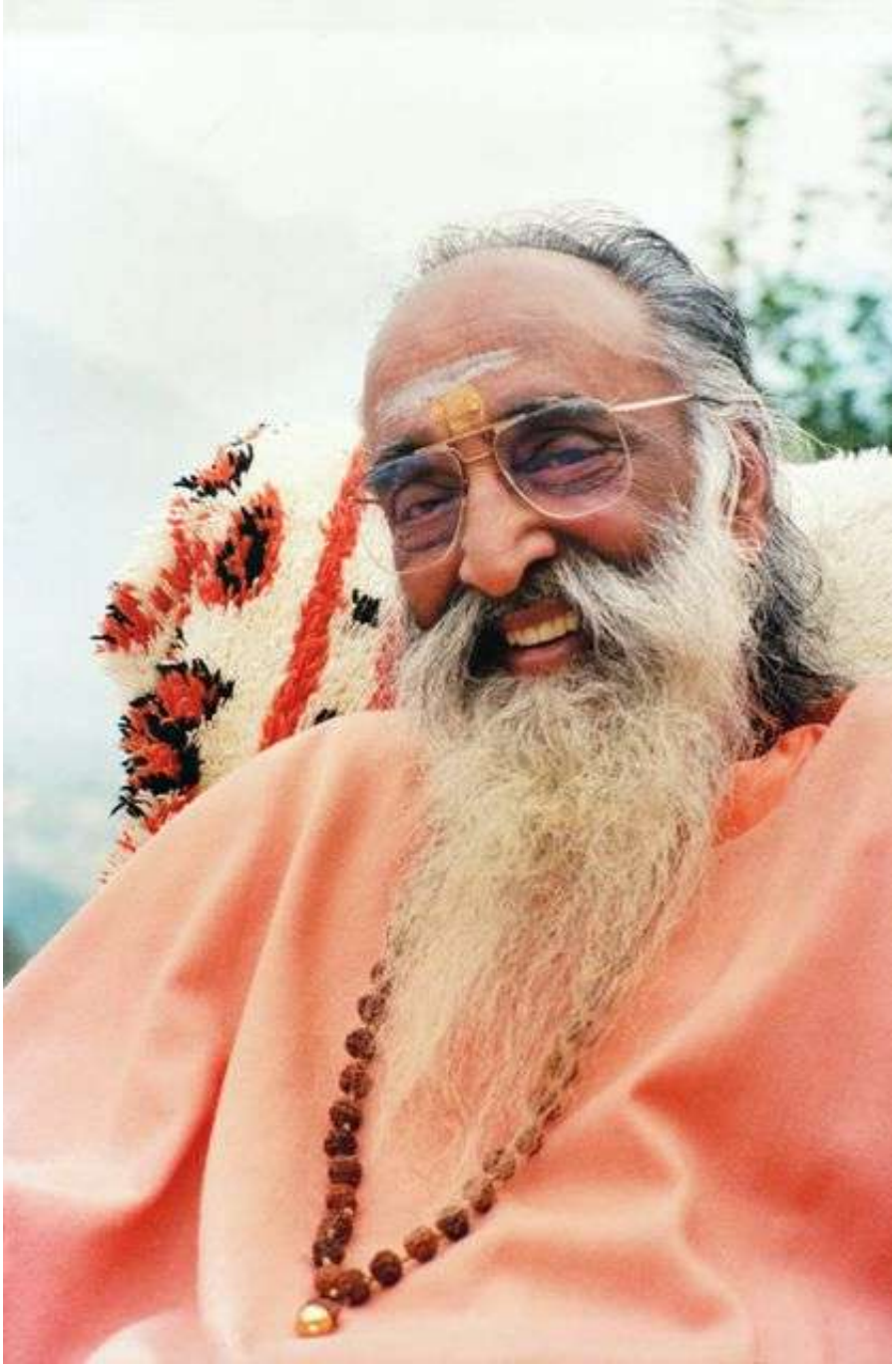
He did it page 259
When He spoke on Sat-Chit -Ananda (existence consciousness bliss), the mind dissolved into sat-chit-ananda. For me it was That which was underlying his

words--which was most remarkable.

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

Contributed by a devotee who has and continues to find Gurudev in his words.

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH



According to our scriptures, there are four Mahaavakyas, namely, ‘AhamBrahmasmi’ (Yajur Veda), ‘Tat TwamAsi’ (Sama Veda), ‘AyamAtma Brahma’ (Atharvana Veda) and ‘Prajnanam Brahma’(Rig Veda). These Mahaavakyas guide the spiritual student to the Ultimate Reality. Gurudev untiringly explained this subtle topic with a lot of anecdotes to make the subtle topic appear simple. Apart from these well accepted Mahaavakyas, Gurudev taught many more Mahaavakyas which have guided His disciples to lead a better life with all their limitations and confusions. The list can be endless.....Here are a few pearls of wisdom....They serve as Chinmaya Armour. It

protects the devotees from various onslaughts of life.

“You get what you deserve and not what you desire.”

“Does a picture ever question the painter.”

“Even this will pass away.”

“Doing what you like is not freedom. That is the privilege of an animal. Doing what is right is the privilege of a human being.”

“Our true character is what we do when we think no one is watching.”

“Do not put the keys of your joy is someone else’s pocket.”

“Perform your duties, understand your responsibilities before you demand your rights.”

“Faults are thick when Love is thin.”

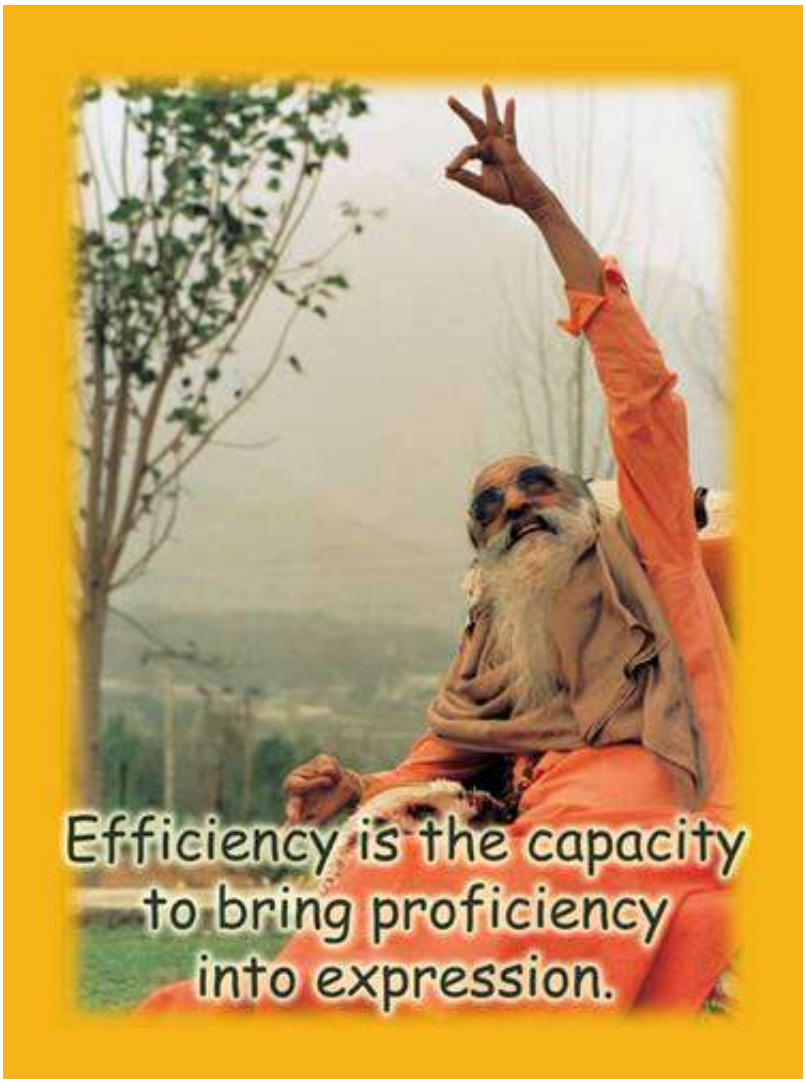
“Be quiet and peaceful in mind…….active and dynamic in body”

“Live in the house in such a way that nothing becomes an impediment to your supreme goal.”

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Great statements from a great story-teller .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Mahavakya means great statement. Upadeshakaya is one who explains the teaching enshrined therein.

Mahaväkyas are tiny sentences, or words that convey the very essence of the teachings of the scriptures. The four Mahaavakyas in our scriptures are:

Tat TvamAsi

AhamBrahmasmi

AyamAtma Brahma

Prajnanam Brahma

Tat TvamAsi— the scriptures tell us that ‘tat’ is the Supreme Brahman or the Supreme Reality, ‘tvam’ is you and ‘asi’ is are. The hidden message here is - you will not become that but you are already that.

When we meditate we come to realise that —Aham Brahma asmi, I Am That Brahman.

Prajjanam brahma—who is this I? Who is this Brahman? Prajna, the Consciousness is Brahman. Thoughts themselves are not Brahman. They are also illumined by Consciousness. We are aware of the rising and fading away of the thoughts. So that Consciousness, Pure Consciousness is Brahman and that am I.

AyamAtmä Brahma— that Reality is also called Atman. Atman means I — the Pure Self. Pure ‘I Consciousness.’ To prepare the student to understand the main teaching of the scriptures we follow the path of karma yoga or upasana. All this prepares us for the final statement. If this statement is given in the beginning it will not have the proper impact. It is like the punch line in a joke. If it is told in the beginning itself, it will not have the desired impact.

The punch line should come in the right sequence, in the right words, at the very end, or else it will all fall flat!

The mahavakyas are like punch lines. Therefore they come at the very end of the scriptures. The student is prepared slowly and steadily. In the old days students lived in ashramas. They spent many years in preparation. On the first day itself they were not told —You Are Brahman. First they were given work in the ashrama. After many years spent in tapas, finally the teaching was imparted.

Kenopanishad tells the story of six disciples who approached Pippalada rishi, a great muni with a request. They said, “We have some questions regarding that Supreme Reality. Please can you answer them for us?” The teacher’s answer was non-commital. He said, “You stay in the ashrama for a year doing seva, tapas and observing brahmacarya. After one year, you may ask your question and if I know the answer I will give it to you.” The story goes that the students stayed with the Guru for one year. There after that he gave them the Knowledge.

Suppose we are shown a bottle of water, we will not think it is anything special. But if someone says, “I went on a pilgrimage to Manasarovar and after an arduous trek and much struggle I finally got this little bottle of Manasarovarjal.” It will make a special impact. The water will then be regarded as holy.

The Mahavakyas punch lines and require a great storyteller to deliver them correctly. Pujya Gurudev was an expert in the art. A great teacher is one who conveys the punch line in just the right way to create the maximum impact. The knowledge was given once only and after intense preparation. So it was received in the spirit of reverence and awe. It is certainly not an everyday occurance. No one can hear Tat TvamAsi, go back home and return the next day for something more. This incomparable knowledge must be received with the feeling of wonder and

amazement.

Gurudev was a great teacher. Sometimes, during his pravachan, while speaking on Brahman, he would suddenly go into the state of samadhi. His eyes would go up and there would be pin drop silence, even in the midst of thousands of people. The message would penetrate the whole system in a flash. Instantly one would get a feel of what he was conveying.

This Mahavakyopadeshakaya is an extraordinary experience. 'You are that Brahman', is the greatest of all upadeshas. The one who can convey this is the greatest of all Teachers. People give advice on what to do and how to behave. Parents give instructions to their children. All these make an impact but cannot compare with the Ultimate Teaching - 'Tat TvamAsi.' The Teacher lifts you to his level and you realise that, 'You Are That!' We can learn these words by heart and even speak them, but when they come from a Realised Master they have an electrifying impact because they are rooted in His understanding and actual experience. The impact is deep, lasting and electrifying. Gurudev was a great Teacher and also a Maharishi.

OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH

332. Om Maharshaye Namah

03-04-2016

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

Offered by Swamini Nishthananda, a very old devotee of Gurudev who is staying at Sandeepany, Powai, Mumbai.

Om Sri Chinmaya Tejomaya Sadgurave Namah

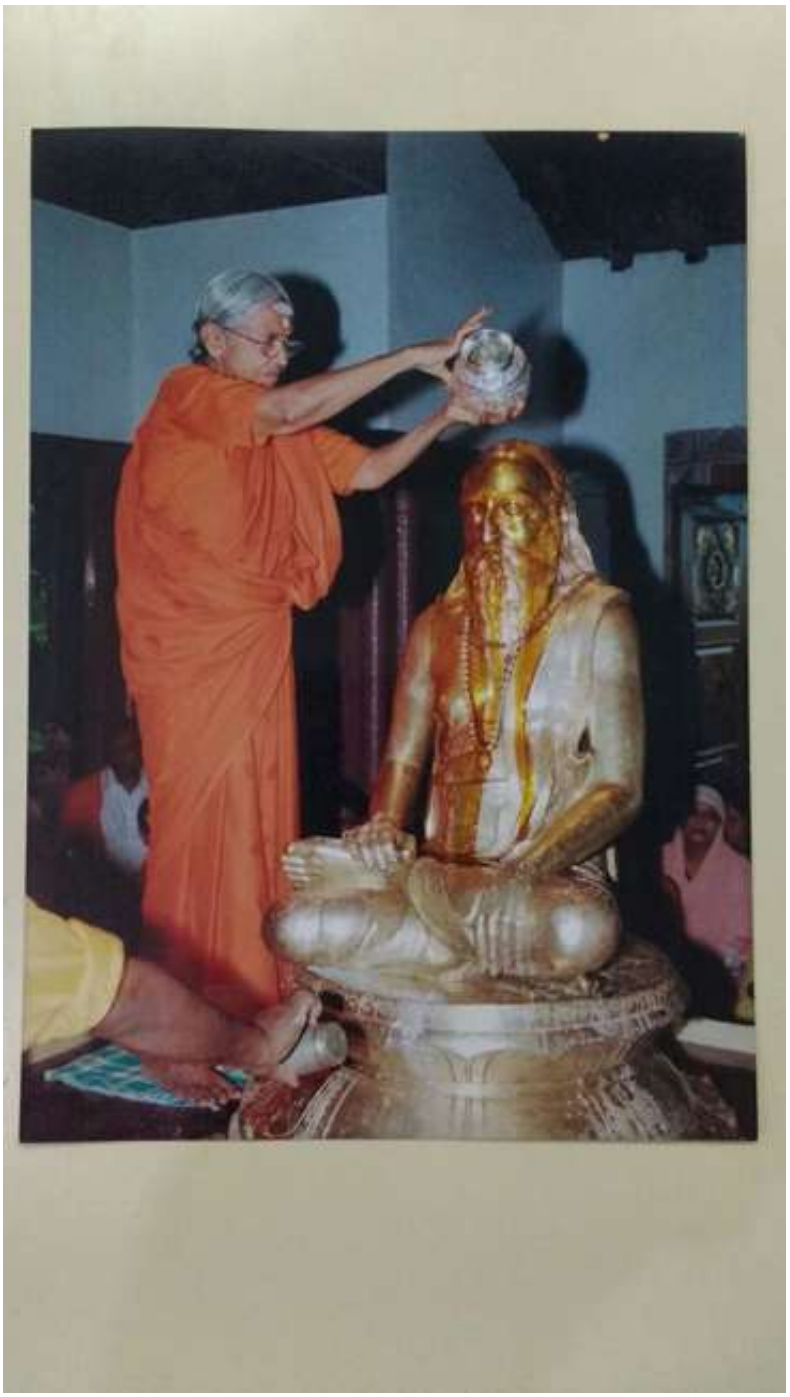
The two components of the word Maharshi are- Mahat and Rishi. Word meaning of mahat is 'great'. The implied meaning in philosophy and scriptures is 'Cosmic Principle'. It is variously called as 'Hiranyagarbha, Cosmic Consciousness, Cosmic Mind, Total Mind (Katha-valli I:iii-10 etc. [Budhehe raatma mahaan parah (Read Sankarabhashyam). In the Puranas it is called Brahmaji the Creator. In Vedanta it is called Saguna Brahma – Conditioned Brahman. Nirgun Brahman is actionless; Saguna Brahman is engaged in action – of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe.

Logicians say the "Potter knows the pot he makes." In the same way the Cosmic Mind knows everything in the world He has created. So He is called "All Knowing" sarvagnyah – meaning knows everything in general. And He is Sarvavit, He knows everything in particular.



He is Sarvatma – the Atma – Truth, Essence of everything, so there is nothing that is not known to Him. He knows all minds. He knows past, present and future, we will see how perfectly this applies to Pujya Gurudev – in the experience of millions and millions of devotees.

Rishi – the etymological meaning is rishati-jaanaati – knows. What does he know – He 'knows' the Absolute nondual Truth as the only Reality – by direct immediate knowledge – saakshaat; aparokshaat – without the medium of mind (not vritti gnyaanam). He knows also th truth in the subtler planes of Consciousness which are beyond the empirical mind. For example – the Vedas are eternal. They are in the form of mystic formulae, called **Mantras, the sound symbols. Sages 'saw' ,'heard', 'received' these Mantras, not in the ordinary way. They were revealed to them in the Supra or Superconscious state. These sages were called Rishis – Seers of the Mantras (Mantra drashta rishi). Their importance is seen in the rule that Rishi, Chhandas and Devata must be mentioned before chanting the mantra – if not the mantra will be ineffective, will not give the desired result.

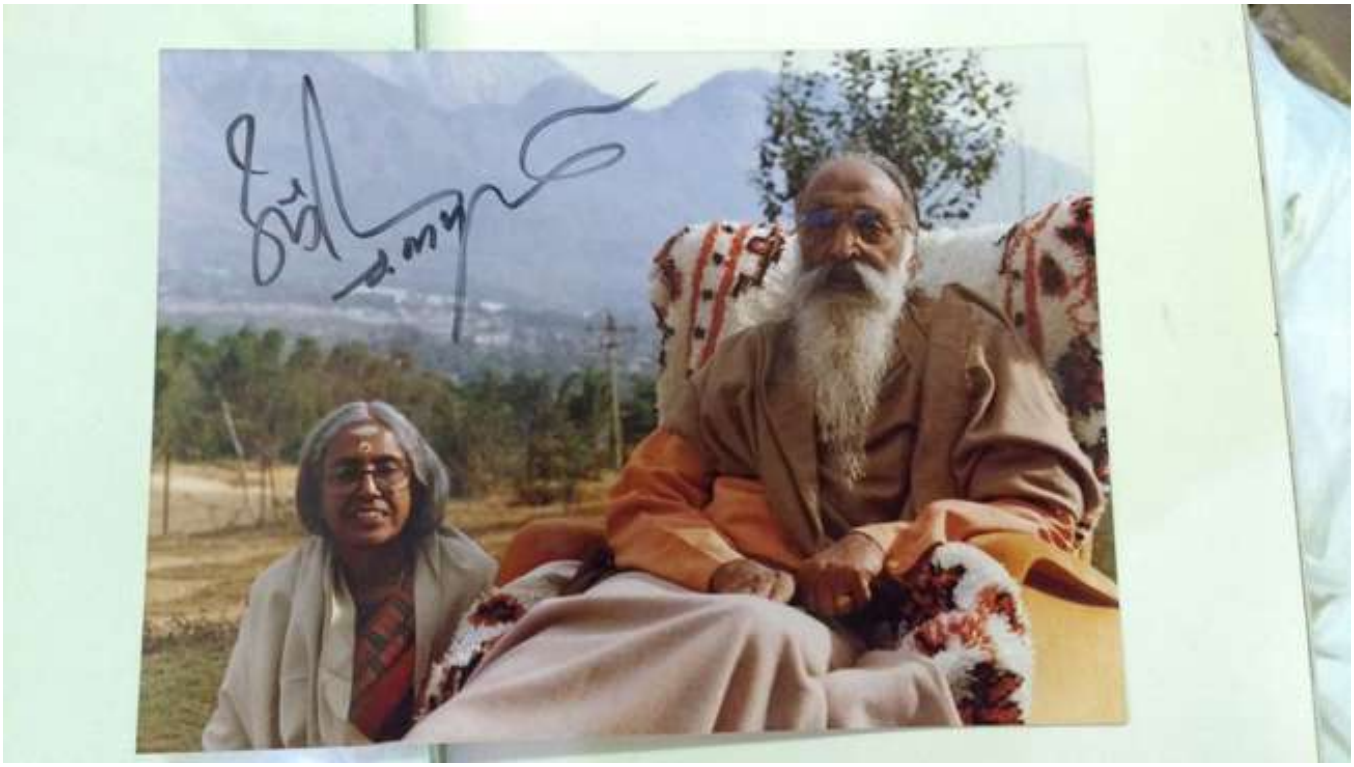


Agastya, Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Bhrigu, Angiras and many more saints and sages are called Rishis because they could know anything they wanted to know in the extra sensory superconscious subtle realms of Consciousness. Gurudev had this knowledge, this vision. He could know past, present and future. He knew the purport of the Vedas in His Highest Vision and spoke from That Knowledge. He did not have to read Sankara Bhashyam or Anandagiri teeka to know the meaning of the Upanishads and the Bhagvad Gita.

The ancient Rishis did not stop with “seeing” the Mantras. They preserved the Vedas, Upanishads for posterity, for eternity, so that generation after generation

can benefit by training shishyas, creating paramparas. When the safety of the Vedas was threatened by opposing philosophies, Rishis like Valmiki, Vasishtha, Veda Vyaasa, Sri Sankarachaarya incarnated to protect them.

Our most revered Pujya Gurudeva is an incarnation in the modern Kaliyuga. He revived the ancient tradition of study of the Scriptures, the Rishi Gurukula System (tradition) by establishing Sandeepany Sadhanalayas which impart knowledge of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras – called the Prasthana Traya to eligible students, providing all the facilities for them with no cost – accommodation, food, clothing, healthcare, books stationery – everything. He is of course Rishi in the true sense.



He is a Parivrajaka Samnyasi Rishi. He trotted the entire globe, north and south, east and west imparting this knowledge, propagating this sacred knowledge by jnana yagnas, to millions and trillions of people. He created a band of dedicated Acharyas trained in the Sandeepanys to work, teach, train, propagate this knowledge in the innumerable Chinmaya Mission Centers all over the world.

When He attained Samadhi, Pujya Guruji said, “So far you have seen the glory of Pujya Gurudev. Now you will see the glory of His Name.” He lives. Like all the Rishis like Vasishtha, Valmiki, Vyaasa are living through the work they did. That Gurudev’s work continues, His Name inspires, we have seen in the Grand Glorious inspiration, devotion, gratitude of the people and institutions wherever the Jyoti Yatra visited and blessed. Among the millions who had the good fortune to come to Him, hear Him, learn from Him, or even to have seen Him, everyone will tell you a story of how He changed their lives from the dull day to day routine bound life to the uplifiting peace-giving spiritual life.

The Eternal Yoga Vasishtha tells how Vasishtha Maharishi awakened the Inner Awareness in Sri Rama and communicated to him (Rama) the Highest Nondual experience by his Spiritual Power (called Shaktipaata). Pujya Gurudev also awakened the Inner Spiritual Essence of Self-Knowledge, the Realisatiom of the Inner Self in the disciples who were eligible, who had the necessary inner transformation to receive it. He proved that Guru is God; Guru is Brahman, without doubt giving proof of It.



II. The Mahat aspect of Pujya Gurudeva.

Kambar is a great Saint Poet of Tamil Nadu. There is a saying that even the pegs to which cows are tethered, will sing glorious poetry. His Ramayanam in Tamizh (Tamil) is revered as a Veda. He lived many centuries ago – most ancient. Once the Kamba Ramayana Committee arranged for Kamban's Birth Centenary Celebrations in Chennai. At that time Pujya Gurudev was in Chennai for a Gita Jnana yagna. The organisers invited Pujya Gurudev to inaugurate and preside over the Kamban Centenary Celebrations. Gurudeva readily agreed. One of Gurudeva's close devotees, Sri Seshadri from Madurai, who had translated the Kamba Ramayana into Hindi became very much worried. He asked Pujya Gurudev, "Swamiji shall I bring some references on Kambar?"

Gurudev said, "Have you ever seen me preparing for any talk?" That was all. Seshadri who had come for Gurudev's camp in Sidhabari told us all all this and concluded saying Gurudev gave an eloquent talk on Kambar that kept the audience spell-bound and highly elevated in mood – an audience knowledgable and well-versed in the Ramayana!

Brahmachari Vivek Chaitanya –now our Parama Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda ji – Global Head of Chinmaya Mission, was the first acharya of the first Vedanta course in Hindi at Sandeepany Himalayas(Sandeepany Him) at that time.

One of the devotees in the camp who heard Seshadri, was curious to know how Gurudev knew Kamban and his Ramayanam. He came to Pujya Guruji (Acharya Vivek Chaitanya) and asked his question. Pujya Guruji said, "Gurudev is sarvaatma. He can know anything He wants to know."

The devotee was more surprised. He asked again, "Oh, will He know Engineering? Will He know Medicine?" Guruji said, "Yes."

Devotee: How?

Guruji: Sarvatma ! His mind is Cosmic Mind. All minds are in Cosmic Mind, the Total Mind. For any particular knowledge He has only to contact that individual mind which has that knowledge."

I was present there during the entire dialogue, so I am giving, soeaking, from first hand knowledge of what Guruji said.

Gurudev did not have to search outside for any knowledge or information, including the Upanishads and the Bhagwad Gita. What he said is the Veda. He is MahaRishi – Cosmic and Beyond.

What I am going to say is my own personal experience. Sept.1981 – the first Vivekachudamani Camp after the inauguration of Sidhabari Ashram in April 1981. I am there. But I am new to the Mission and t the devotees. Pujya Gurudeva is seated at the farthest end of the hall in His Kutiya. The Kamla Hall was not yet built. The hall was fully packed with devotees. I am sitting at the farthest corner of the hall, all to myself. There was much talking, laughing – with Gurudev leading. Alone in my corner I was in my own reverie. The thought running in my mind was, "If He would say something to me, I will treat it with the greatest respect as His sacred upadesa

for me – and sincerely practise it."

Nearly an hour passed. I had forgotten my thought on upadesa. Pujya Gurudev got up. All the devotees prostrated to Him and filed out. I was the last. When I prostrated and started leaving, Gurudev followed me from behind. When we reached the door, He opened it for me (it was a heavy hefty door and I was frail) out of kindness He opened it and held it for me to pass.

These words came out from His mouth:

Yadyatkarma karomi tatradakhilam shambho tavaaraadhanam ||

"Ha! What I asked for, He is giving me -- His most sacred most Holy upadesa!!

O Lord give me the sadbuddhi to, and strength for obeying and practising it as your worship." I was thrilled. After the Camp, after reaching Delhi I write to Him about it. To my great surprise He wrote back to me. Where is His High Elevated State, and where am I, most insignificant creature! In that reply He simply stated, "Your name is AKHILAM – that reminded me of that mantra."

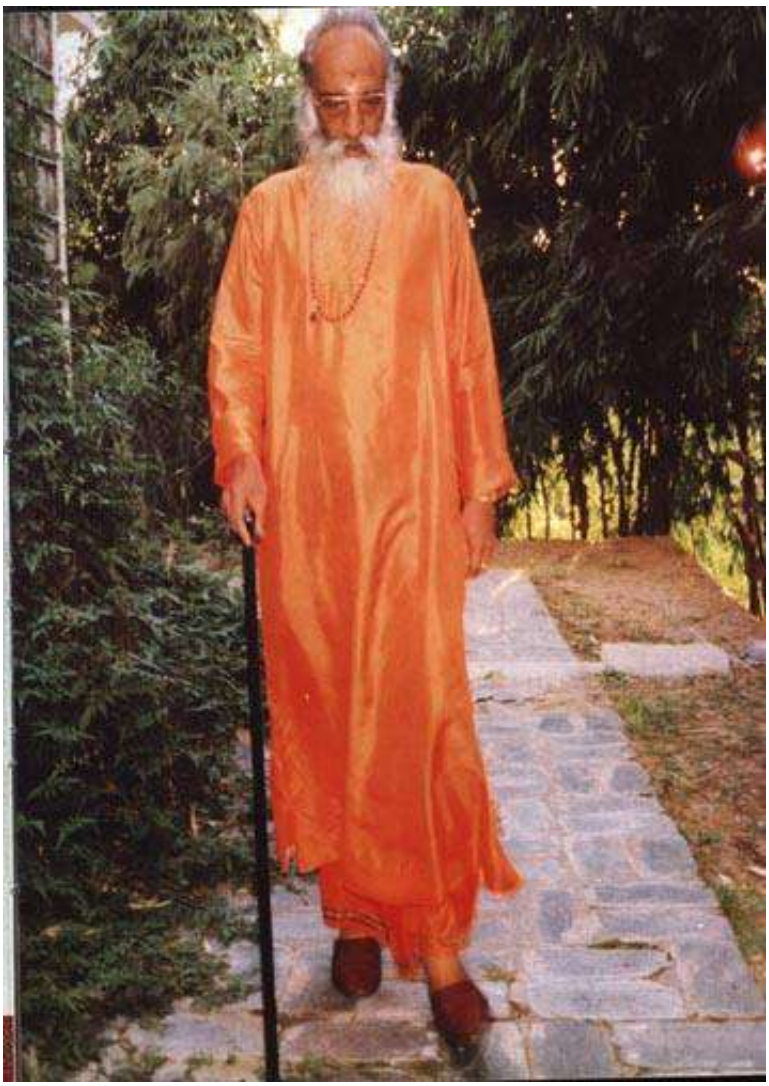
He 'heard' what my mind was asking – sarvaatma. In this context I would like to say this. People are generally obsessed with ideas of miracles. Some hankering for it, some slighting it. What Mahatmas do is the same as avataras Rama, Krishna, Buddha did; they are to be understood not as miracles but as Vibhootis, leelas, sport. Imagine Krishna sucking the life out of Poothana, when still a baby; the many leelas of His childhood – Malla, Chanura, Kamsa – as a little boy; Rama building a bridge on the ocean with monkeys, killing rakshasas single-handed in Dandakaaranya, fighting the war with Ravana only with an army of monkeys and much more.. What Gurudeva did to many of us, curing incurable diseases, lifting souls from drowning in the ocean of samsara – is not miracle; it is His infinite Compassion for Humanity. His Grace is unfailing, all-powerful.

Jai Gurudev!

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH!

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission



* Salutations to Him who is a great sage.

Rishi, maharshi. Rishi itself means one who can see things much ahead. One who knows about one's own action and one can see much ahead. That is why sometimes we see that what these great sages say, starts happening, because they can 'see' very clearly.

Maharshi – a great sage who has inspired thousands of people, who has given direction, and shown the way to thousands of people. Not just individuals, but there are programmes which are for the collective, and we see the society growing.

* Rishi also 'sees' the student very well. How this student is, what is the student's potential, what is his strength, what is his weakness – he can see. How he would unfold, he can see. This is the potential, this is how the person is, where he will reach… he can see it clearly. Superficially, there could be some weaknesses, which the Guru would notice; but he would also see, yes, the person has the potential to unfold.

* Take Swami Sivananda ji for example. A person goes as a non-believer, he looks at him and says ok you stay here as long as you want. Write what you like. Sivananda ji could see…

* Tapovan Maharaj also would have seen in Gurudev, 'unacceptable methods', yet, a disciplinarian like Swami Tapovan Maharaj accommodating Gurudev! And when people went and complained he smokes too much, he said – who is interested in the outer smoke. I am looking at his inner fire. He could see what is in that rishi!

*Likewise, Gurudev too could see through us, straight. You need guts to go and stand there, he can scan you straight if he wants. He could see through a person clearly.

* The last itinerary of Gurudev before He attained Samadhi, said on top – 'if health permits'. That whole year, the itinerary which was printed, it would have – if health permits. These programmes will take place if health permits. In 1991, during Swarna Tulabharam time Guruji was in the US. Gurudev called him, made him a CCMT Trustee. He could see. That's when Guruji was brought into the Trust, 1991. He could see who will take up and move on.

* So a maharshi is like that -- reaches out to thousands and thousands of people, and a movement unfolds or in small small ways, he will teach and guide the individual too. It doesn't require only books. A lesson in small acts also brings about transformation. This only a Maharshi can do.

* Asha Charoborty was taking care of our Gurudev's kutia. Once her complain to Gurudev was – its very difficult to follow what you are teaching. How would householders follow His teachings? He would say 20 pages of Upanishad reading daily. What? Very difficult to follow.

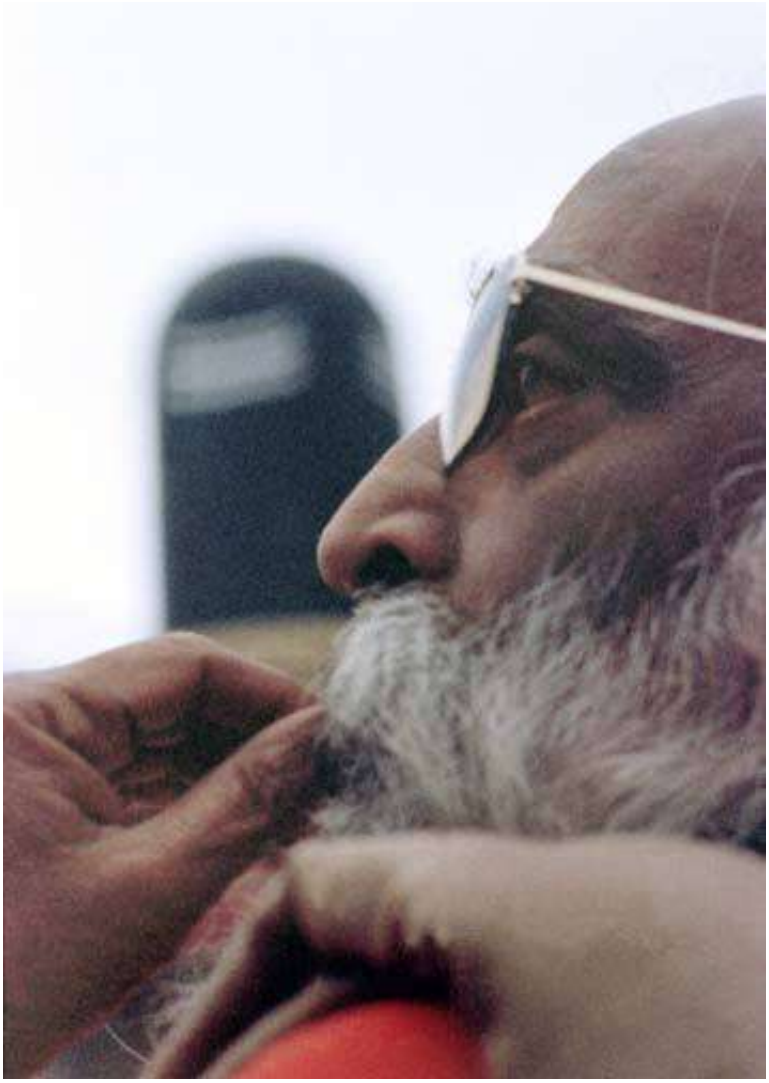
Now see the teacher; he told her – "You are a doctor, every time when you write a prescription, stop and think of the Lord. In the mind you say, or verbally you say – Om Namo Narayanaya and then you write and tell me if it is effective or not."

You are just writing a prescription. Connect to the Higher, then write it. A Doctor who is a professional could become a devotee, could become a jnani, could become a karma yogi, if he follows. So even on a small piece of work, he says you just think

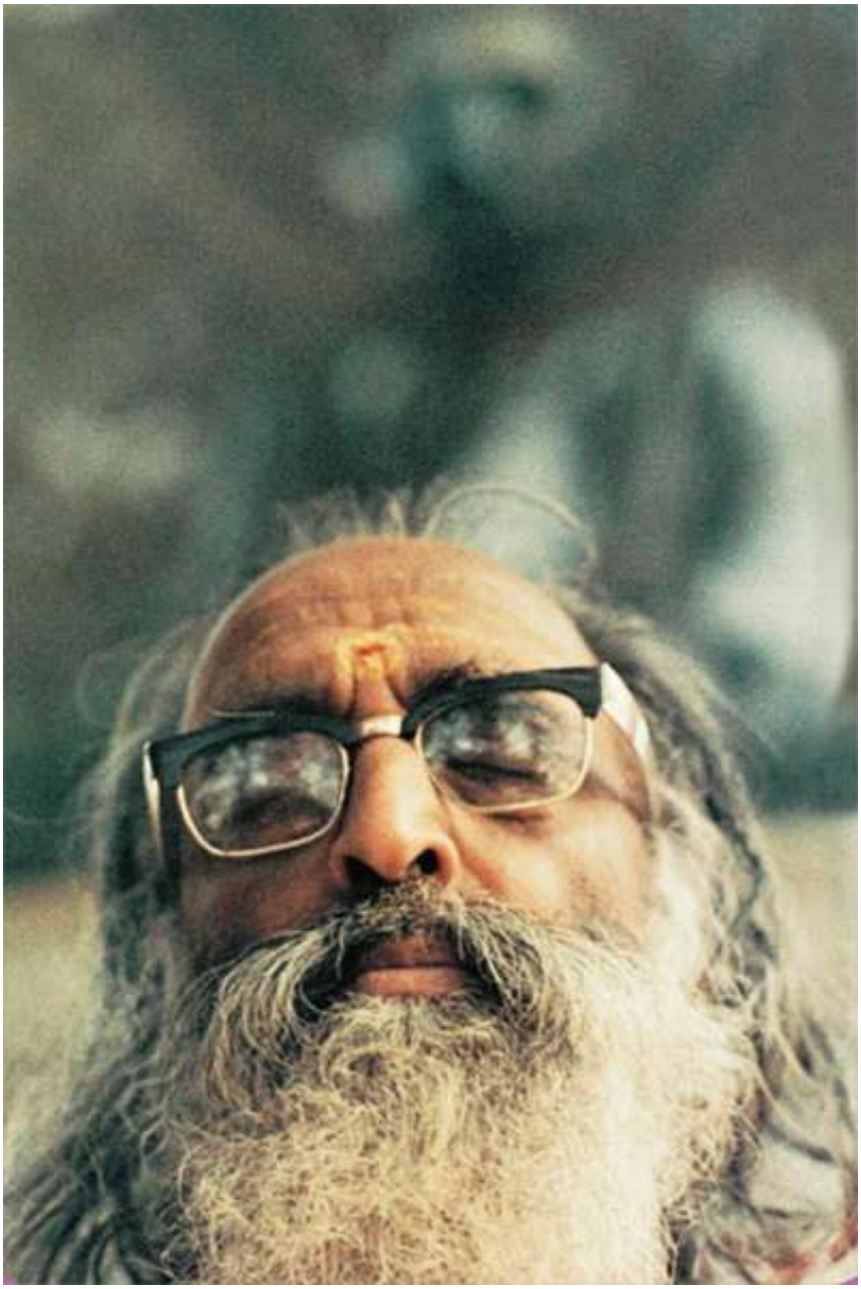
of the Lord and then prescribe. And tell me if it doesn't work.

Vedanta can be practiced wherever we are. Maharshi's message was that.

Om maharshaye namah



OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH



OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

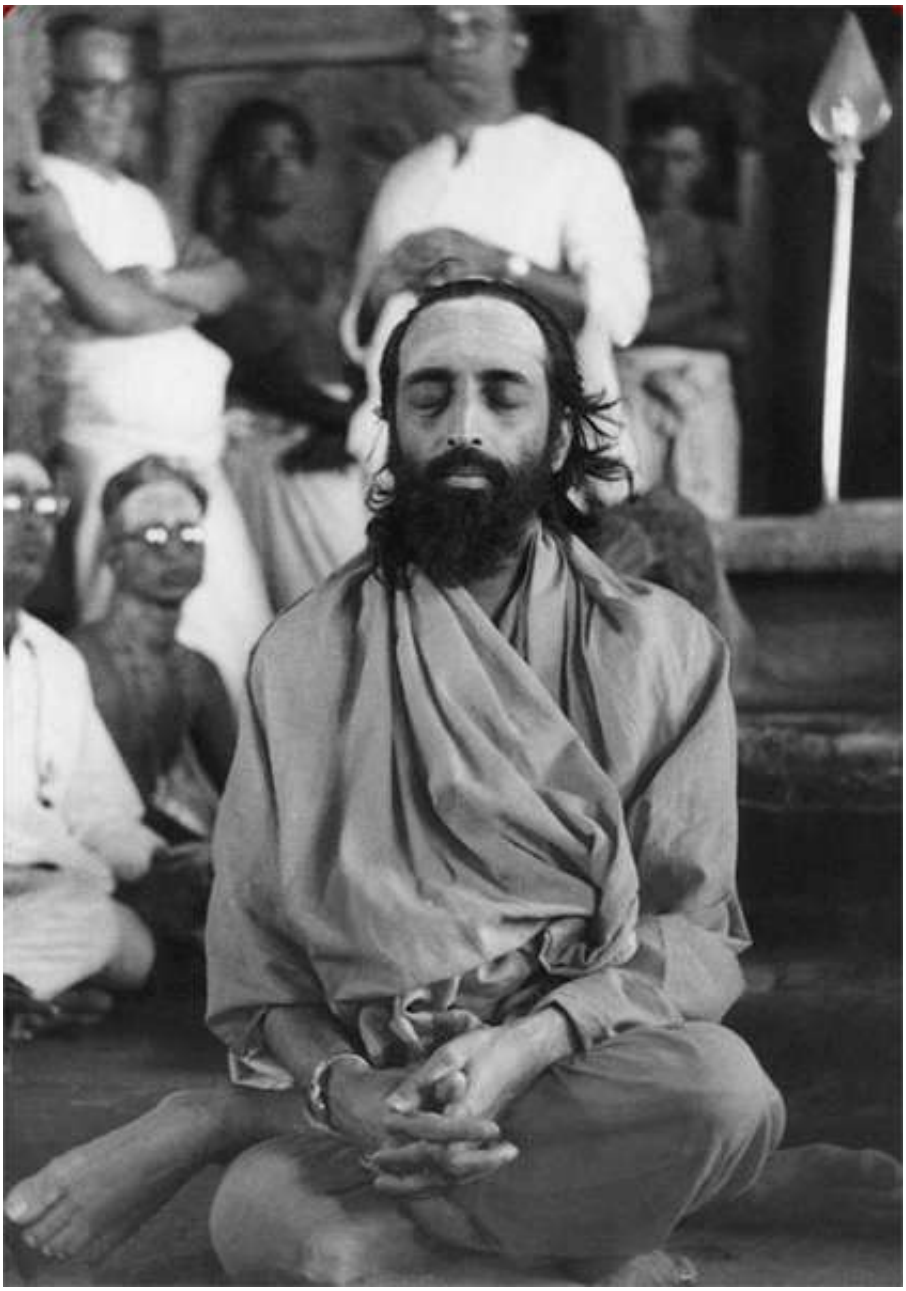
Rishi in Sanskrit means one who has controlled the senses. It is in this sense Hrishi Kesa is used in Bhagavadgeetha. And also one who is the Seer of Mantras, a Mantra drastas. One who had the vision of truth etc.
Maharshi is the best amongst them. Or one who is a rishi is great. Mahanscha rishischa.
Monier Williams says in his dictionary rishathi gnanena samsara Param meaning One who reaches beyond this mundane world by means of knowledge.
*"Dris" is to see
*Arashan a sage a seer a man world in wisdom.

Gurudev explains what is sense control. Senses -- the eyes the ears the nose the tongue -- are always in their positions without any change. They are ever controlled. It is the mind that runs through them. Therefore, controlling senses is a mind turned towards its source consciousness "avrutta chakshuh". When thus the mind is turned towards the Self then they become "Seers" thus there is a connection between the two meanings of rishi: i. Controller of senses ii. Seer.
Gurudev in His commentary on BG 10:2 explains sapta rishis:

The following is a philosophical explanation of the "Seven Seers".
When the Infinite is seemingly identified with the total intellect, or Cosmic intellect (mahat) and develops thereby an egocentric personality of Its own (ahamkara), It projects Itself, for It's own joy-transactions, as a world of sense objects. These sense objects are called 'Tanmatras'. The 'Mahat', the Ahamkara and the five Tanmatras together constitute the Seven Rishis [...] together represent the intellectual and mental life of man, the Efficient and Material causes for all Creation.

He Did It page 254 and 255
A young boy asked Swamiji, "What made you renounce the world? You were a post graduate in English literature and Law, and a very successful journalist." Swamiji asked him in return "When will you spit that thing out?" Referring to the chewing gum in the boy's mouth. "Oh I am just about to spit it out. There is no juice left in it ", said the boy. " Ah! I too did just that," laughed Swamiji. "I had chewed the world sufficiently and did not find any more juice in it".
Vedanta page 230
My way of looking at Gurudev is that He is a Rishi. One who thinks independently and who thought over the purpose of the Sastras, who made a science of Religion. Not only that, He lives for it and wants the same knowledge to be disseminated all over."

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

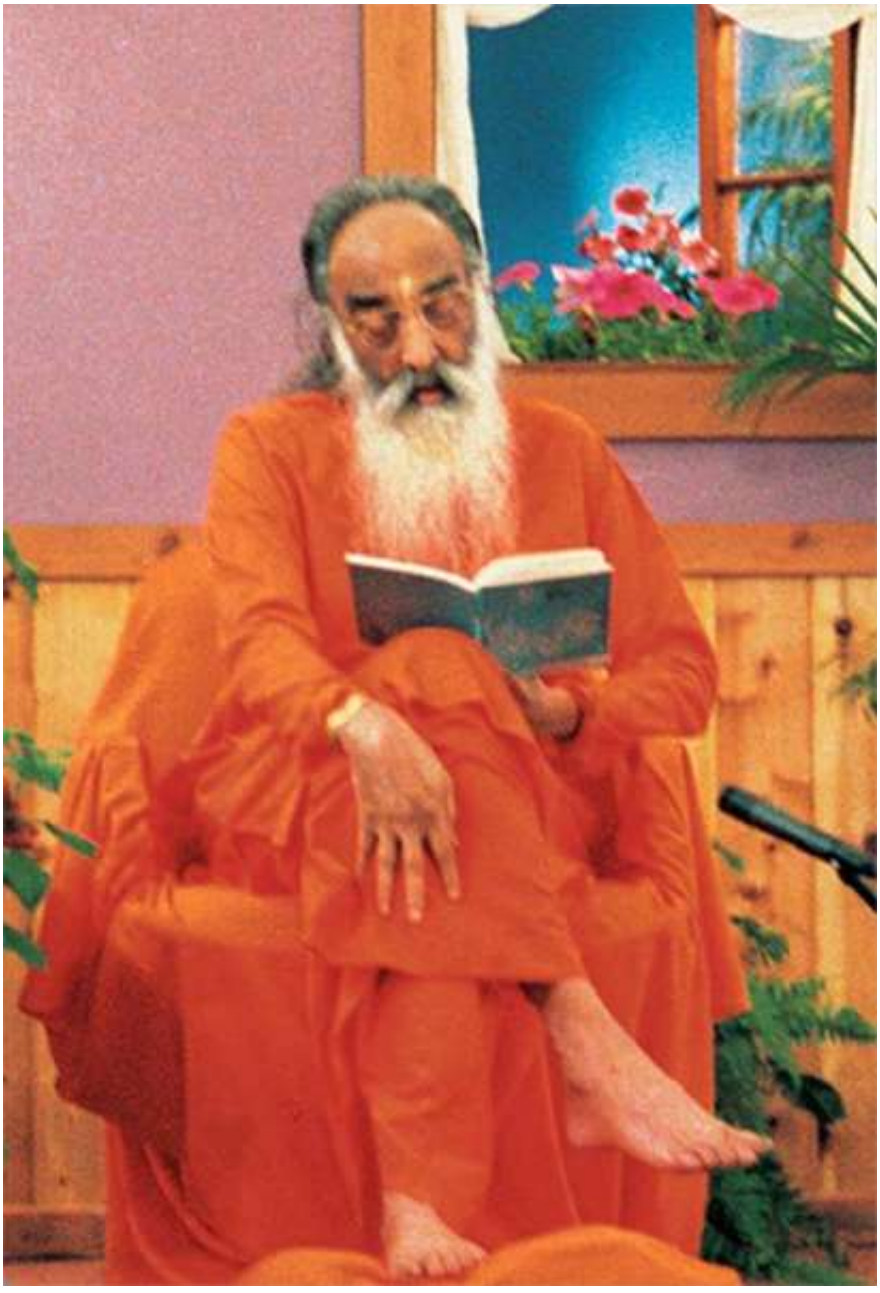


OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to A great rishi.



Rishi means mantra drashta —the seer of mantras.

Mantras are great statements from the scriptures, which convey the sublime Truth. The one to whom the secret of the mantra is first revealed is the mantra drishta.

Newton's Law of Gravitation is a powerful formula, which was first revealed to Newton. Newton was sitting under a tree when suddenly an apple fell. He was surprised and this set him thinking. After much research and experimentation on the earth's gravitational pull he saw or understood the reality of this gravitational law. Since he was the first to discover this formula or law, he became its the seer.

The mantras in our scriptures are like formulas, conveying certain truths of this world, about life, God, the devatas, karma, upasana, karmaphala, svarga, naraka, just about everything. Those who have seen and recognized this first hand are the rishis. Like the rishi of the Gayatri Mantra is Vishwamitra. Before that even though the Gayatri Mantra existed no one knew about it. Vishwamitra rishi unlocked its secret. Even now, before we chant the Gayatri Mantra we first remember and acknowledge him and respectfully seek his permission. Only then does the mantra become effective, otherwise it is not open. The chanting will not have any effect unless the rishi gives us permission. The rishis are Mantra drishtas who have seen the Truth and have discovered the secret of the mantra.

Rishi has another meaning. They are those who understand the secret of these mantras. Everyone does not understand their depth and essence. Those who understand the essential tattva of the mantra, its secret and can communicate it to others are also called rishis. Our scriptures are a vast storehouse of knowledge, but their knowledge is deep and everyone does not know their secret. Great saints, sages and mahatmas who have understood their depths and revealed it to the world are the rishis. They are great thinkers who reveal the truth of the scriptures after understanding their depth. They interpret them and convey it in their own words. In that sense Pujya Gurudev was a great rishi.

The rishis of old had one prayer in their heart. They wanted disciples to come to them from every corner of the world to learn the scriptures. They were willing to do everything for them. Pujya Gurudev was a Åñé of the old school. He established Sandeepany Sadhanalayas where brahmacharis from across the world studied and were taken care of. The tradition he established continues even today. In ancient times it was the norm that brahmacharis collected bhikñä for themselves and the Guru. In the case of Chinmaya Mission brahmacharis, Gurudev took care of all their material needs and also gave them the Knowledge of the scriptures. He had all the qualities of a great Åñé.

He discovered and used various new techniques to convey the message of the scriptures. A most wonderful innovation was the BMI chart - a pictorial, teaching aid. Pictures convey more than words, so with the aid of the diagram, he explained the path to the Totality. At the top of the chart is Om, below that the vasanas, below that the BMI — body, mind, intellect, followed by PFT — perceiver, feeler, thinker and at the end OET — objects, emotions, thoughts. At a glance the whole picture is clear.

Om is the Ultimate Reality, but clouded by our vasanas we don't appreciate it. With the body, mind, and intellect if we follow the path of karma, upasana, jnana and bhakti the perceiver, feeler, thinker is purified and our vasanas exhausted. In that peaceful, quiet and pure mind we recognize that I Am That Brahman. We realise that Om. To convey the thoughts of the scriptures to the common man he used the

powerful tools of anecdotes, stories and examples.

One elderly lady used to attend Pujya Gurudev's lectures. He spoke in English and she had no knowledge of the language. Later when they met, Gurudev asked her, "Amma you don't know English, so how can you understand me?" Someone translated for her and she answered, "When you speak, I don't understand the language but I understand what you are conveying. I understand what you are conveying to me."

Language is just the outer expression. When a mother is angry, the child gets the message, through not just words, but the expression and other nonverbal communication. Gurudev had the ability to convey the subtle Truth without speech, to even those who did not know the language; to small children, to youngsters, to scientists, to lawyers, in fact to people from all walks and stages of life. That was his greatness.

OM MAHARSHAYE NAMAH

333. OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

04-04-2016

OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission.

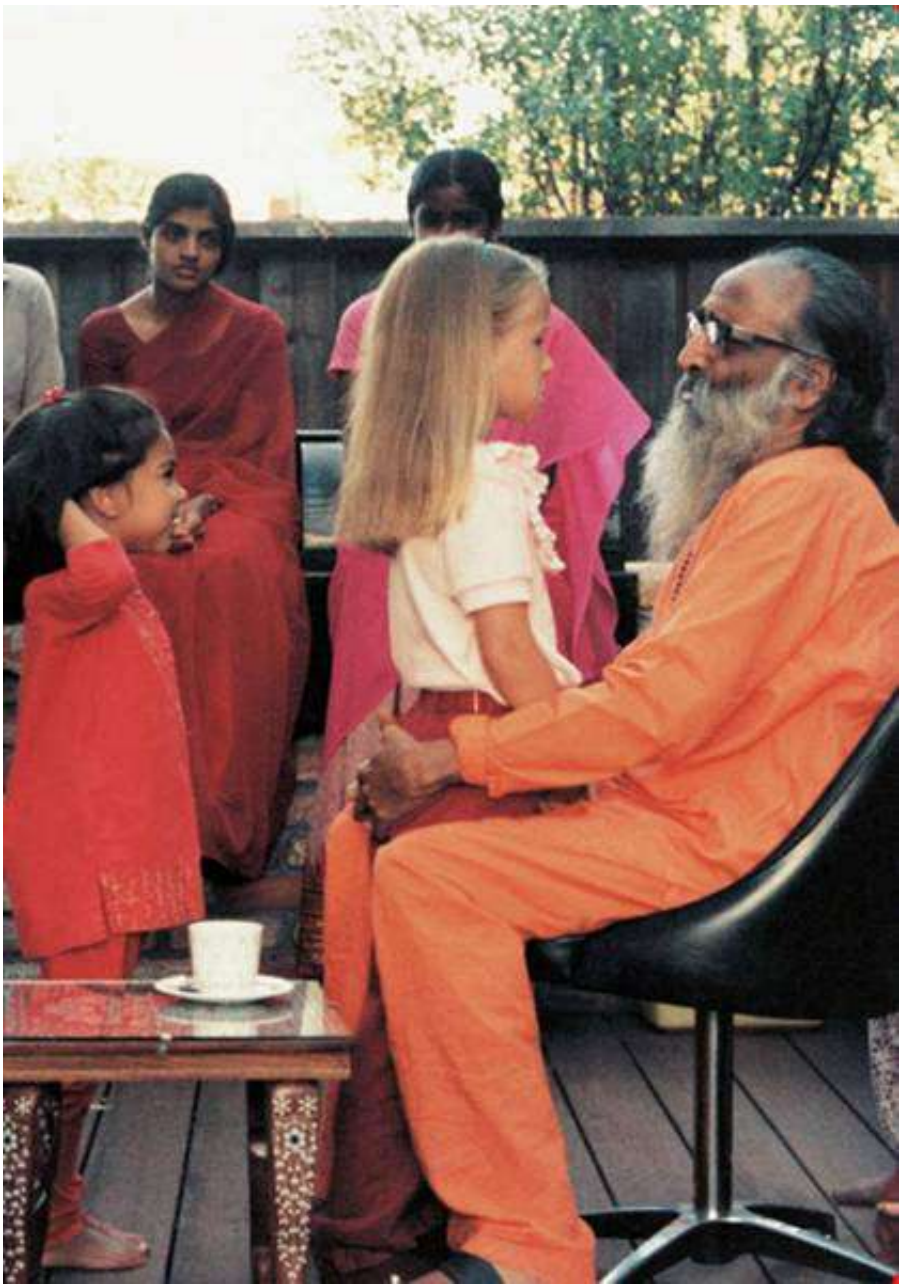
Salutations to Him who is of a pleasing nature. sweet, pleasing, pleasant. A difficult quality, but worth attempting.

*When I left home in 1989 to join Sandeepany, I came from Chennai, driving to Mumbai. There was all-India Chinmaya Mission workers conference in Bangalore. So I went there because Gurudev was there and Bangalore comesenroute Mumbai. And for me also it was nice meeting Swamiji. He was in an ashram, Rajarajeshwari Ashram where the camp was going on.

Seeing me he said – you are still here! You should have been there (meaning Mumbai). Course has already started. Course started in February I joined in May. He said, why you are still here. I said Swamiji I left, all that over, I have left the house now I am on my way to Mumbai. He knew certain vasanas are very deep in people. My motor-cycle vasana was known to him and he figured that I had come there to meet him on motor-cycle.

He asked how did you come. I said I am enroute Mumbai, I'll go there on a bike, then somebody can pick it up and so on. Imagine, brahma vidya, compassion han! Ok. This you have to drop it whats the big deal, the mind works that way straight away. This is the last time you might go long distance, all kinds of things. He must have ... . Then I told him Swamiji I am leaving. I did namaskar, I came out, suddenly he came out of the room, to the verandah.He comes out, and I started the bike. I am on it, revved up the engine. He says,"Brahmachari ...!"First time I am being called that. I am still in civilian clothes. "Brahmachari ...!"

Immediately I switched off the engine, took off the helmet, went running to Him. He said, "Be Alert. Alertness is the price one pays for perfect living."



So much love for us .....!

That instruction is very very powerful. If we want to get through the woods, this alertness is necessary. And he knew, he could have told me, he could have written in a letter, he could have said anything, but it must have just occurred and the timing! Saying it at that point of time, He knew how I would value it and how I would hold on to it.

Why should Swamiji come outside from his room, to the hall, to the verandah? And standing there he says – come here. I am already on the bike, engine on, helmet on.

Too many things if you think of it. If my mom was there she would do that, isnt it, she will come outside to the door and see me off. Especially since it is a long distance journey like Bangalore-Mumbai. Just like that, he was standing outside and giving last minute instructions. That one instruction – be alert. Alertness is the price you pay for perfection. You are now venturing on a journey, whatever be the way, till we reach there, what can take us is alertness only.

*Such brilliant instructions which can make us evolve, holding on to it. Why such brilliance comes? So much love for us. Interested in my well-being.When we have that kind of love for the people who come to us, for their well-being, for their growth, very naturally we will become madhurasvabhava. Swamiji was like that. Difficult yes, but in this line if we can work at it, we can also become like that.

OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Him, who is sweet by nature.

…who is sweetness.

All of us are essentially sweet. This sweetness is concealed by the bitterness of the ego. In a gnyani, free from the ego, this sweetness manifests in totality, in the form of unconditional love – as it did in Gurudev.

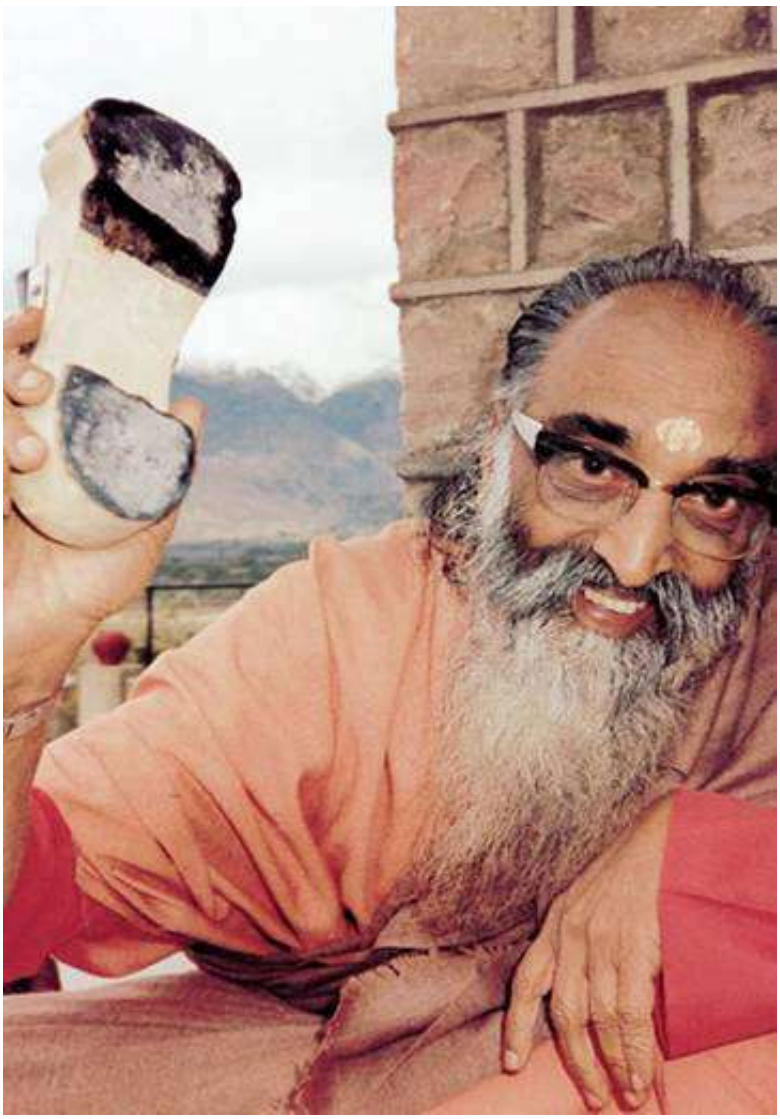
Even so, in many it can manifest as quiet love. In Gurudev it is vibrant love expressing as sweetness. It has been mentioned in these very same pages, more than once, yet for want of a better comparison or example, that He was for His devotees as Krishna for the Gopis.

Gurudev said to a child, put a chocolate in your mouth, and then see the world …. the whole world will look sweet. The meaning is if you are happy sweet inside the whole world is happy and sweet to us. This is obvious in Gurudev who is sweetness, happiness personified. Swamiji says world echoes you. In fact he puns on the word when he says echo-logy. He has love and He meets love. Where He is, PremaMayamMadhuratmakamjagat.
Though Gurudev was a strict disciplinarian, nobody can take Him for granted He allowed people to take liberties out of love. People had reverence for Him not fear.

Even when He admonished, people took it as a blessing.

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Himpg 46

Dr.D.K Garg and Mrs Asha Garg Lucknow
Gurudev was requested to take some fruits as dinner at Delhi would be delayed. He agreed. I peeled and cut an apple,and offered it to Him. He ate a few pieces. I asked, "How about a Mosambi?"



Teasing like Krishna....

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

"Only if it is sweet, " replied Gurudev. I took a fruit and started peeling it. I was quite engrossed as it was a cherished chore and I didn't notice Gurudev's intense observation. I looked up and was a little intimidated by His steady gaze,while all the others smiled and looked at Him. Soon came remark, "I was watching carefully how good you are at skinning!" With a bemused expression, He turned His attention towards my husband and said, with His hand outstretched."Poor you, your prarbdha!" All this ended in uproarious laughter. I could just blush,and mumbled "No Swamiji,this is not fair ".
Those who missed Him in person watch His Geeta videos; some traces of this sweet Krishna like behaviour can be felt.

Page 121 Swami Haridas Giri, Madras.

Whenever Swamiji came to Kunju mama's house,He went directly to his mother,who was an old lady. Calling her "Amma ", He sat beside her and started pressing her legs. She used to say, "Kunju,look my first son has come. "

Kunju mama said " Mummy I am older than Him ". Yet she regarded Swamiji as her elder son. They had a very close relationship.
Even in Sri Krishna's life, sweetest was Balakrishna.

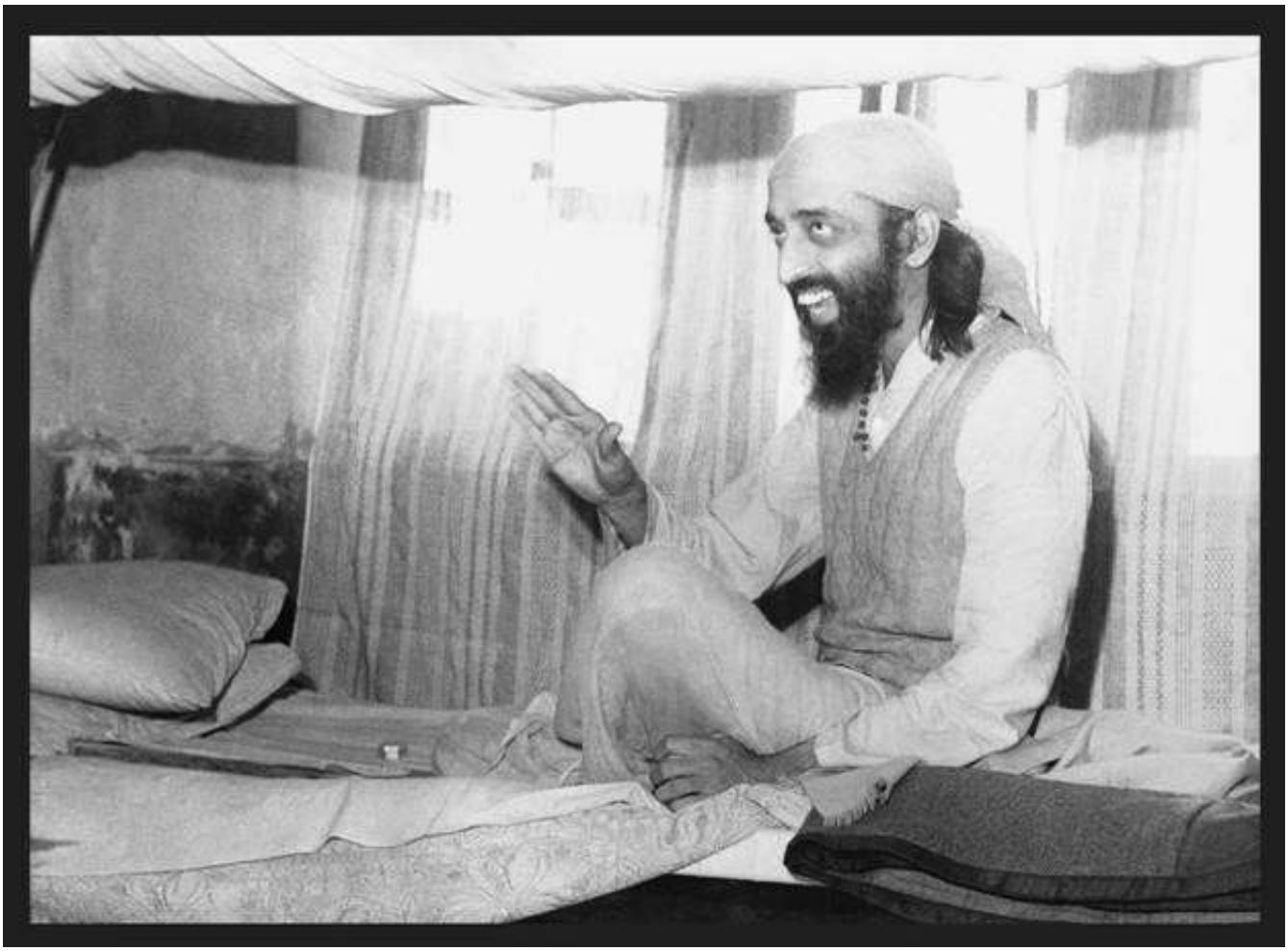
OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati,Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to one of a very pleasant nature.

Too much information and useless knowledge sometimes makes a person dry. The right understanding of life and the beauty of the Supreme Reality brings forth beauty from within the personality. Gurudev was madhur or sweet. He was full of humour; full of joy. Even in the worst of situations he would have something interesting to point out. He could convey the highest Truth through even mundane actions like watching television or some thing equally ordinary. With small children he would behave like a small child, with youngsters he would be a youngster. He could communicate with people at any level. A doctor in America once asked him for a message. He quipped, “Yes, you deliver into this world; I deliver out of this world.”



More than sweet disposition ....

Madhur means not just a sweet disposition, which he had. It also stands for gentleness. His expression portrayed the gentleness within. He understood human nature and was kindness itself. There was sweetness in his heart. The knowledge he had did not make him dry. Dryness comes with mere book knowledge. Softness comes with proper understanding. One becomes humble when one deeply understands the simplicity of life. Life is really not complex, it is quite simple. The greatness of a great person is in enjoying the little things in life.

A great person enjoys the little things of life and a little person enjoys only the great things of life. For the latter there is enjoyment only if there is a big impact. “When was the last time you enjoyed yourself?” “Oh let me see! Ten years back there was a big party and I just enjoyed myself.” What about in between? No enjoyment! But ask a mahatma or a great person the same question. He will say, “Oh just now I was looking at that bird flying and I enjoyed it. I was playing with a small child or looking at a flower and there was so much of joy. There is joy in the small things of life. We don’t have to wait for some special event to take place. If

there is sweetness in the heart, one experiences it in each and every event of life. Pujya Gurudev had a sweet and loving disposition.

OM MADHURASWABHAAVAAYA NAMAH

Kindly SEE 331-72 OM MAHAVAAKYOPADESHAKAAYA NAMAH page - one more contribution has been added. A devotee has a different take on His great upadesha's that were life changing...

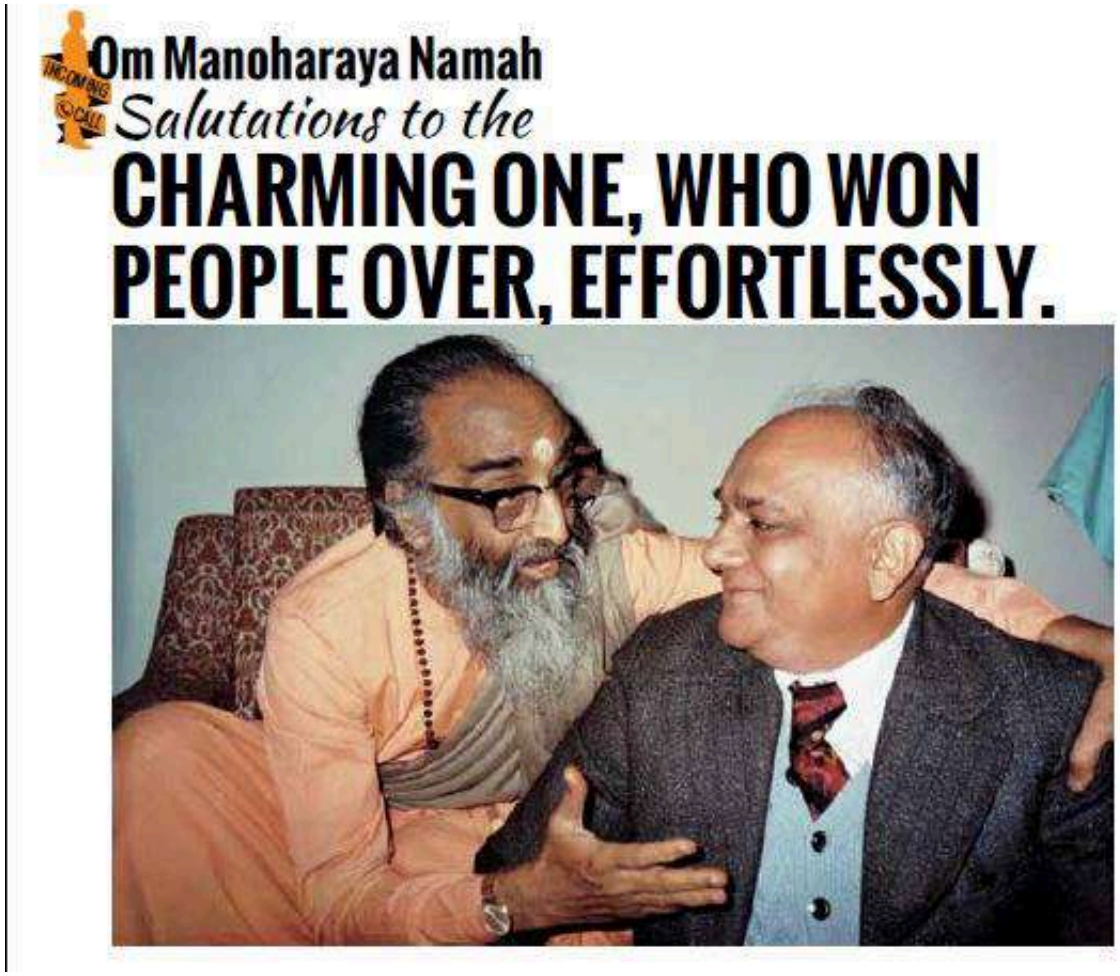
Sorry for not posting this yesterday. There was a power failure that lasted a very long time.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

334. OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

05-04-2016

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH



Source: Found in an old issue of Udghosh, a CHYK journal

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Manohara one who loots your mind. What stands between our Real Self and us is the mind. Gurudev used to say man minus mind is God.

Therefore if Gurudev loots our mind He had made us have at least a glimpse of our Being!

Even people who had an accidental encounter were pulled towards Him. In His presence our turbulent mind becomes serene and beautiful.
Even strangers at places like airports etc, would make way for Him out of reverence. He had that magnetic personality. Majority of youth who normally have no interest in spirituality are drawn to Him and they would just want to be in His presence. They if at all develop taste for studies it is out of commitment to Gurudev. Of course there are lots of them who had deep interest in spiritual studies even before they finished their academic studies.
A Gopi once was lost in her thoughts and Naradji who happened to be there asked her if she was contemplating on Sri Krishna. On the contrary, she said, I am trying to pluck Him out from my heart as with Him I am unable to do anything else. This was the state of most of His devotees. To them He was as of an obsession. To them salvation or erudition take a back seat. All the way it is love for Him.

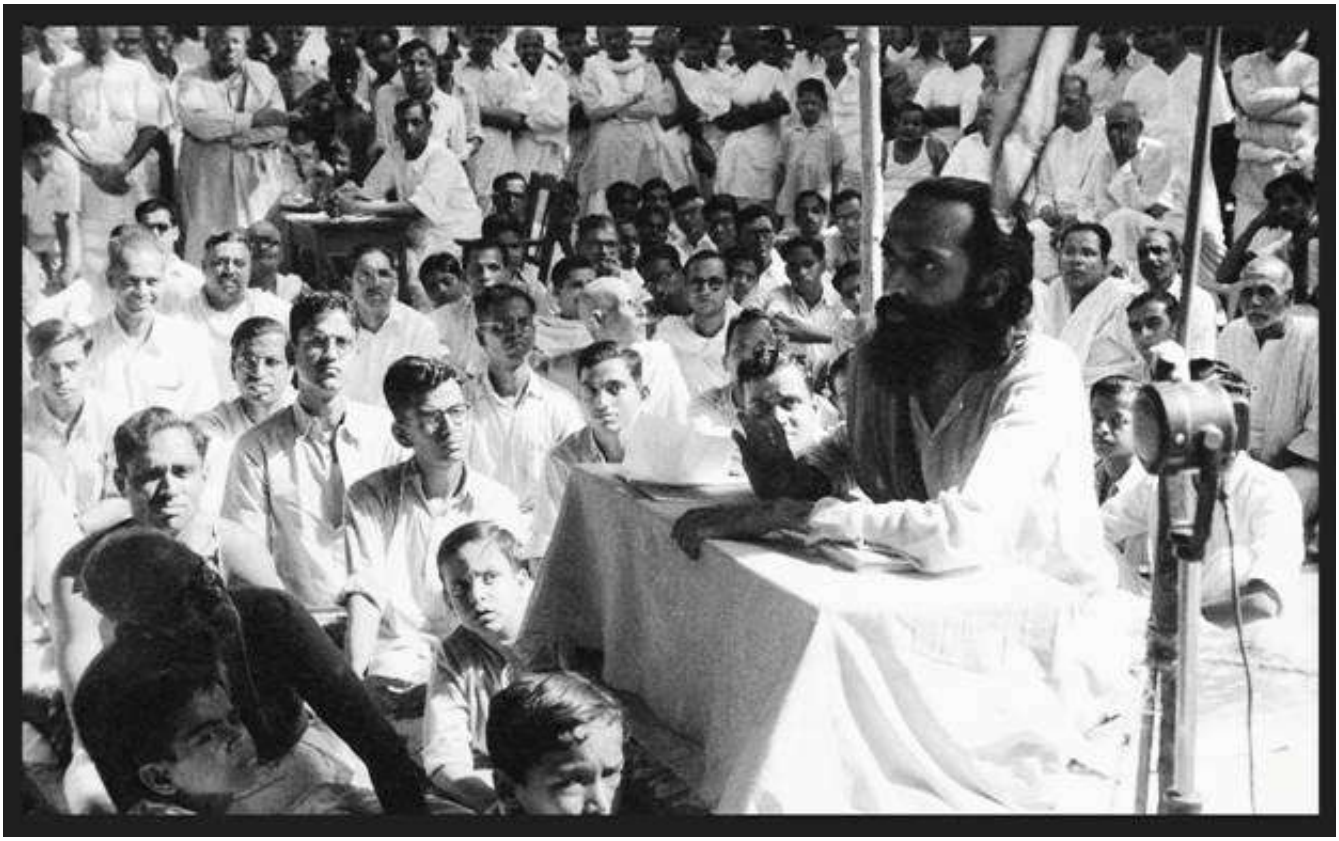
To many who could not stand the thought of parting from Him, He said ,close your eyes and you will see me in your heart. He also promised them, 'the farther I go the nearer I am to you'.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him page 62

Mr. K.B.Shroff Bombay

Coming from a family of very religious people, one tends to be either very religious or very skeptical about religion. Somehow I always kept myself aloof from such "complex issues".

Yet curiosity was lying dormant within me. At that point of time I attended a yagna conducted by Swamiji in Bombay. It being the first time that I was going to any "Swami talk ", I was extremely skeptical and did not expect to stay for more than a few minutes. I SAW, I HEARD, AND I was CAPTIVATED. I knew that my CHOICE of a sudden SPIRITUAL MASTER was made.
There after I was waiting for every opportunity to listen to this man who had transformed me to such a great extent.



Captivated ...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him
Page 70

K.S. Bhatnagar Indore.
Being in His presence was so soothing, it sent a thrill through the entire body, reminding one of the benign presence of heavenly spirits, a feeling which elevated one to a state of "Tranquil Joy," a feeling rarely experienced in one's life time. Upto

this moment one feels that he has lived for ages in this tranquility.

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

— Manohar is one who attracts the mind.

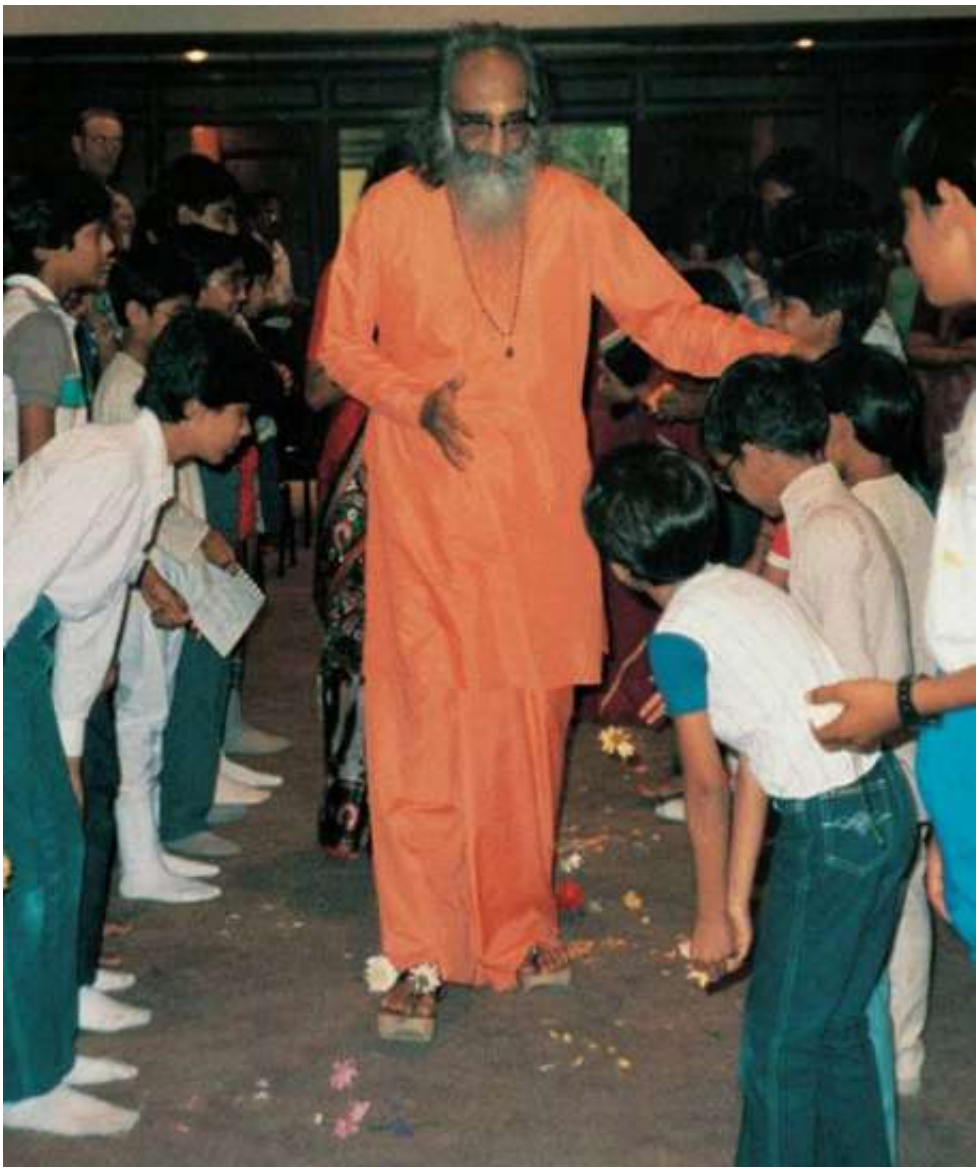
Manohar is also one of Bhagavan Sri Krishna's names — jo man koharletä hai. He attracts the mind which in turn gets totally lost in Him. The mind is mercurial, like quicksilver and normally we cannot hold it still. Mercury cannot be easily held if it falls. If it is picked up with a gold ring, it colours the gold and then cannot be removed easily. It remains stuck. The mind is like mercury difficult to hold steady. It runs wild. In the Bhagavad-gitaArjuna tells Lord Krishna—

chanchalam hi manahkrishinapramathibalavaddharidm,

tasyahaànigrahammanyevayorivasudushkaram (VI.34)

The mind is never steady. It runs from one place to another. It is very turbulent and firm. It has great stamina. If it starts fighting it will not give up till the end of the millennium. Arjuna says that to control the mind is as difficult as controlling the air or the wind. Such is the strength of the extrovert nature of the mind.

But Bhagavan and great Mahatmas have a strong power of attraction. The mind is riveted to them and doesn't want to leave. In Gurudev's presence all our minds were all the time absorbed with him. To the exclusion of everything, we would be looking at him, observing him or listening to him. The mind was as though totally captivated by him.



Strong power of attraction ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Krishna conveyed the message of bhakti to Uddhava in the most unique manner. He sent Uddhava to convey his message to the gopis. Being a great thinker and a nirguëa upäsaka he did not think greatly of the gopis. He thought they were foolish, emotional women. From his superior height, he told the gopis, “You should have no attachment to anyone. You should sit and meditate on the Nirguna Brahman and become free of all these attachments. This is the highest goal of life.”

The gopis said,“Your advice is wonderful. We agree that we should withdraw our mind’s attention from everything and meditate on that Nirguna Brahman. We would

have followed your instructions, but what to do, we had only one mind and that has been taken away by Krishna. We don't have any mind of our own now. Who will then meditate on that éshvara?"

mana nahidasabisudho

ekahato so gayoshyamsangkoaaradheIsh.

It is the greatest miracle to witness or experience the mind simply disappearing. One thing is to meditate on God, another is to be made to meditate on Him. Great mahatmas have the power to take our mind and keep it with them. When the mind goes to a mahatma, he purifies it and returns it back. We don't have to do anything. The mind thus cleansed is so beautifully polished that even we find it difficult to recognise. The one with this power is called Manohar or captivatingly attractive.

The attraction begins from the physical appearance itself. Pujya Gurudev had His own charisma. Gurudev's walk, style of speaking and dressing, all had the stamp of class. His presence was both magnetic and majestic. Watching him eat was a joy. Listening to Him talk was a great joy. Just to observe him sitting silently or in meditation was a great joy. It was a spiritual treat to be in his presence on Shivaratri day. He would observe mauna and go into meditation, sitting steady as a rock.

Mahohar is one aspect of Bhagavan. He alone has the ability to master or take away the mind. When Ramchandraji went to Mithila He heard the tinkling of Sita's anklets. He did not know whose anklets they were but His mind was drawn to them by some irresistible force. He told Lakshmana, "I don't know why but my mind is attracted by this sound. It does not usually wander, so there must be some connection. Her walk and every step attracted the Lord, because they were not two. They were only one, like one soul in two bodies.

Again when Lord Rama and Lakshmana went to Mithila with Vishwamitraji, JanakMaharaj was instantly attracted to them. His mind was so enraptured that he just could not shift his attention. It just refused to move away from them. He was stunned by this reaction, because he was a great Realised Master himself, and had total control over his mind. He wondered why his mind was irresistibly drawn towards them and then realized that this was the Lord Himself. Manoharaayanamah – one who attracts the mind and keeps it.

OM MANOHARAAYA NAMAH

335. OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

06-04-2016

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by BrniAnupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

Salutation to the GREAT soul.

Mahan means great. One becomes great when one can embrace all without duality, as one's own self, when one has unconditional love for all.

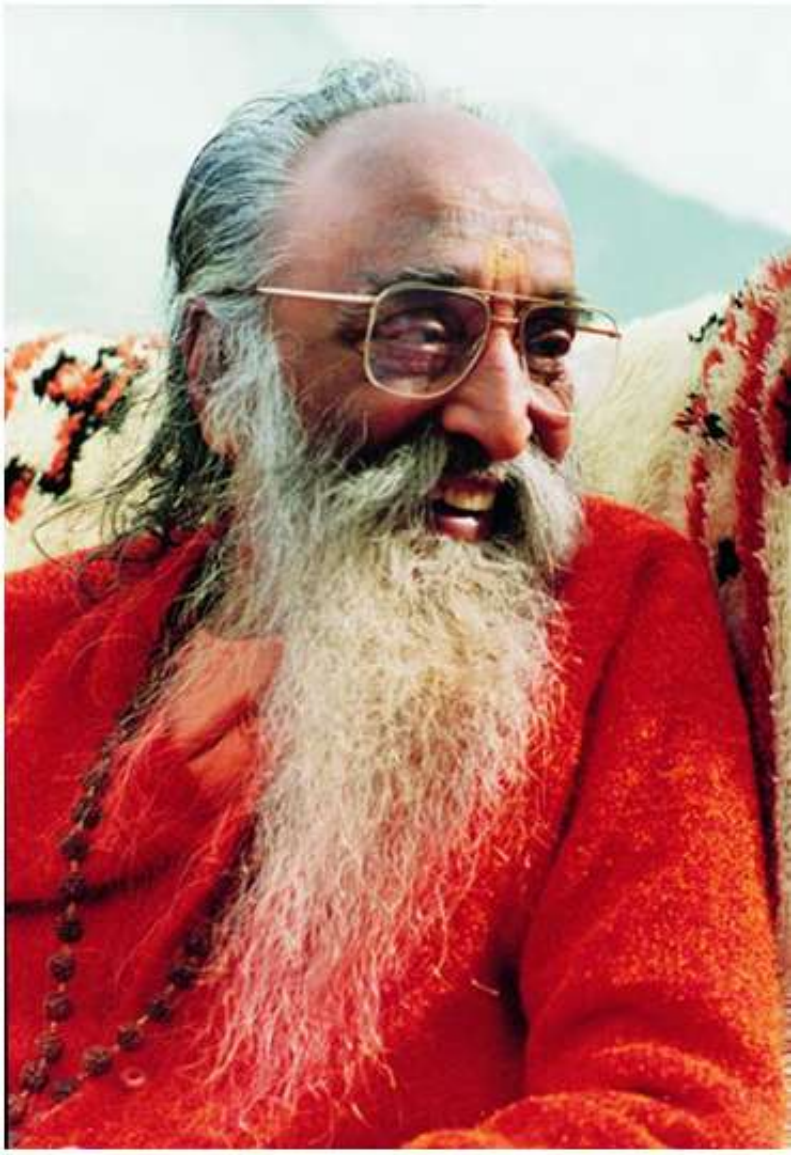
The heart has expanded so much so that it can accommodate EVERYONE in it.

At one such occasion Gurudev laughs at His large Heartedness...

Here is an anecdote narrated by a devotee:

Years back a cardiologist had diagnosed a 'heart enlargement' in Gurudev. On hearing this, we promptly wrote to Gurudev at Uttarkashi, referring to the ailment and extending our prayers for the speedy recovery.

Promptly came the witty reply: "All these years I have been trying my best to expand my heart to accommodate all! Now the doctors say it is also an ailment!"



Laughing at His large heartedness…..from the collection of SubhaPathial, Krishnalaya USA

Swamiji wrote similar letter to other concerned devotees: ‘The doctors have now suggested that my heart is slightly enlarged. (They don’t know this is what I have been trying all through my life! This is between us, let not the doctors hear!)’

He had space for everyone in His heart, be it youth, old, child, male, female, one who respected Him as well as those who did not respect Him – all!

Ah! Salutations again and again and again to such a great Master.

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

Mahatma is one who has a large heart, one who is magnanimous,one who is noble. It also means Mahan (cha) Atma (cha) – i.e, One who is great, magnanimous,noble and at the same time the Atma in all.
Gurudev is both Mahan and Atma. He held everybody in His heart. And He was in everyone's heart. He lived in ecstasy with unconditional love for all. His love was beyond boundaries of religion, nationality, age, and personal traits. When people complained some undesirable people are His devotees, He would say only sick ones need a doctor not the healthy. He never made them guilty.
The nature of this Mahatma is explained in Vivekachudamani verse 38by Sri Gurudev:
"This is another mellifluous verse to emphasise that the noble qualities of magnanimity,cheerfulnessetc in a perfect Master are natural and not products of a self-tutored habit.
"Sankara compares a Seer with the moon, and directs our attention to the fact that the moon alone can, and with effortless ease does,cool the parched earth which gets baked in the burning ray's of the Sun. Nothing else can cool the earth so satisfactorily as moonlight. Also,there is no chance ever of the moonlight adding a single calorie of heat to the earth. The company of the wise is the surest remedy to cool down the bosom to a state of complete happiness when it is in conflagration,fed by desires and hatreds,attachments and yearnings."



Basking in the cool moonlight.... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Here are a few experiences of devotees all taken from the book Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him.

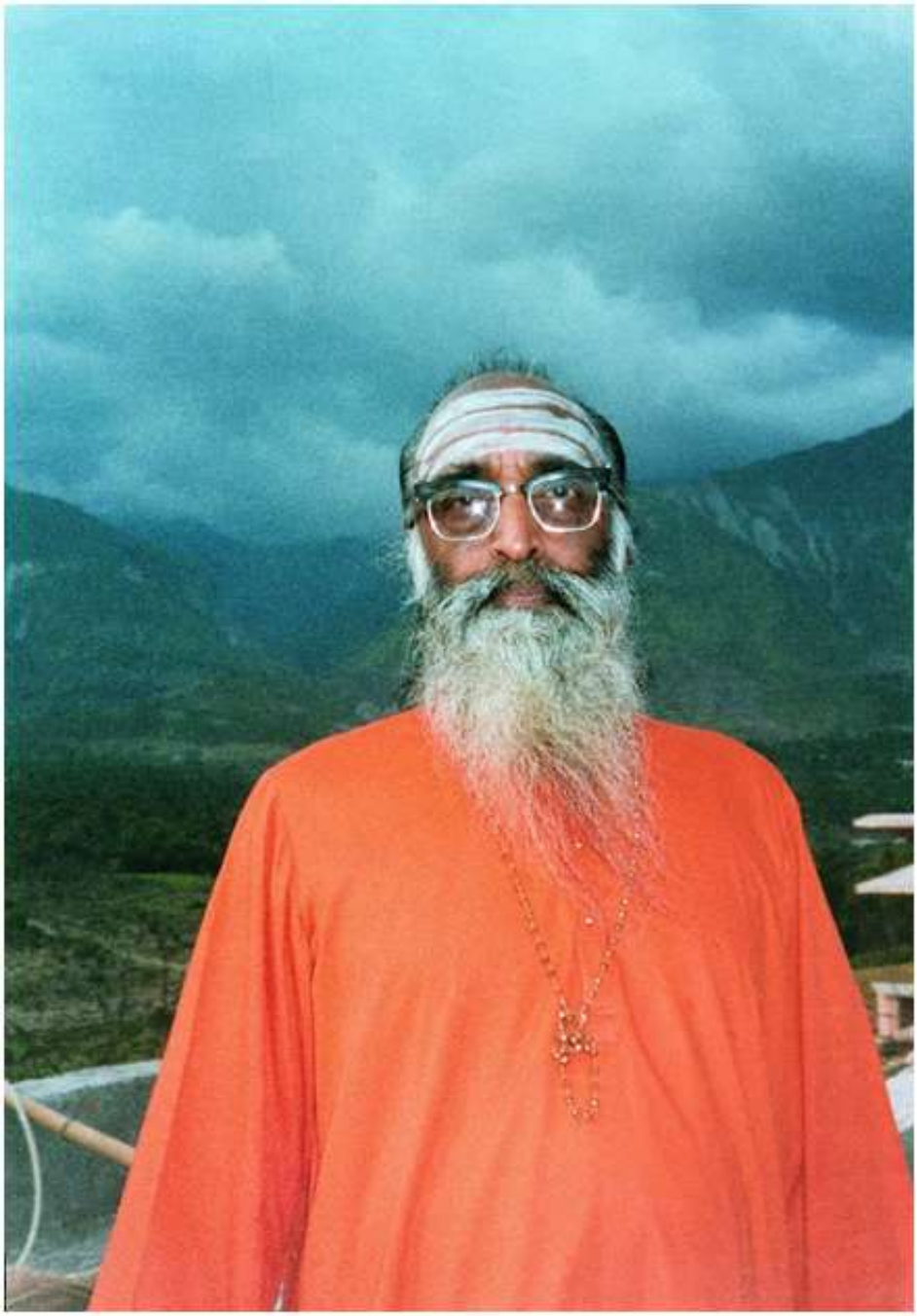
MrsKuppanChettiar Trichy. Page 33
He treats every one alike--does not discriminate between devotees on the basis of caste or status.
SmtLataTandon Lucknow page 37
His heart was as large as universe. He treated every one equally with love and kindness. I have seen Him greeting a Muslim with "Salaam-a-lekum". At a bhiksha in Allahabad the hostess was a Christian. He asked her"Do you go to church? You should go to church." A Sikh girl met Him at my house. Swamiji greeted her with "Sat Sri Akal" then He asked her if she reads JapjiSaheb!
Mrs Nirmala Ahluwalia page 60
He has a very big heart and it encompasses everyone and everything. He neither criticizes nor finds fault with any other saints. His behaviour towards everyone is equal whether he be rich or poor,young or old.

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om MahatmaneNamah



The One being in all ....[from the collection of SubhaPathial, Krishnalaya, USA]

A mahan Atman is a great soul or one who is All Pervading. It is the one Atman in all beings, which is therefore without parallel and great. Atman in Sanskrit also means 'I.' When 'I' identify with my own limited self, which includes, the body, mind and senses, 'I' become an insignificant, little person. The more 'i' identify with 'I', it is as though the more 'i' expand myself. In I Love You, Pujya Gurudev says that in love one expands oneself and sees the world from the standpoint of the beloved. Expansion is seeing oneself as other beings.

In the Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krishna describes a mahatma as one who takes the

support of his daivisampatti or good qualities -- 'mahatmanastu mam parthadaivimprkritimashritah (IX.13).

Daivi and asurisampatti, both come under the control of the Lord.The good and the bad, or the asura and the devatä co-exist within us. We have the choice to choose either. Daivisampatti embraces the values of fearlessness, love, compassion and humility. Asurisampatti takes the support of pride, ego, and arrogance. When we support our good thoughts and take refuge in them, the daivisampatti becomes stronger, ultimately leading to our own spiritual growth. A person whose thoughts are predominantly good is called a mahatma.

Good and bad thoughts come to everyone's mind, irrespective of whether a person is a sadhu or otherwise. They arise from past impressions and from the three gunas. The challenge lies in how we deal with our thoughts. A mahatma supports good thoughts, and a duratma or a non-mahatma is one who supports negative thoughts. So our good thoughts should be supported or they should be acted on, immediately. We have both positive and negative qualities within us. They both require our support. It is up to us to be either good or bad. If we are bad, it means we are supporting the bad. If we are good, it means we are supporting the good. A mahatma is one who supports that which is good, not only in himself, but also in others.

Tulsidasji in Ramacharitmanas, describes a mahatma as a sadhu. He says, ' Sadhu charit shubhcharitakapasa - the character of a sadhu is like that of kapas or cotton.' Cotton is pure when it is white and has in it many threads. These threads are like our gunas. Like the cotton, a sadhu is pure, as white stands for purity and good qualities. Cotton undergoes a lot of pain, in order to be converted to thread, and then cloth. This cloth then covers our body. It also covers all that is negative and enhances that which is positive. This is one of the qualities of a great person. He undergoes much suffering and hardship to understand the secret of life, and then spends his entire life blessing the world. A mahatma removes our negativities and enhances the positive qualities. The effect of satsanga is very similar.

All of us have both good and bad, but with satsanga our good qualities are highlighted. They are harnessed and we remain indifferent to our bad qualities. There is then no need to fight with our negativities. If we fight with them their strength increases and they come together in hordes. At present the negativities we see in ourselves, is only the tip of the iceberg. When we look deeper the whole structure emerges. The strategy should be not to fight with our negativities but instead to focus our attention on what is good. We should always encourage and support the goodness within. Then goodness will gain strength and we will be able to progress in our spiritual journey.

A mahatma takes the support of Bhagavan's good qualities. He is one whose Self is as large as this world. Our self is limited to this body, but a mahatma's Self encompasses the world. He looks at this world as his own Self - 'sarvabhutatma — he sees his own Self in all beings.' A Guru's Atman is the Mahan Atman that has identified with everything and everyone. Our Pujya Gurudev not only identified with the Mission but with the masses, with everyone. Even people from other organizations came to him for guidance and he blessed them as well. He had the

ability to identify with the entire world. To build the central office block, in the ashram in Mumbai, the engineers wanted to cut down a tree. Gurudev heard of it and ruled that the building be built with the tree in the centre. He took care of the tree and this is now an integral part of the building and can be seen even from the terrace. He was a real mahatma one with a large heart.

OM MAHAATMANE NAMAH!

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

336. OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

07-04-2016

OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

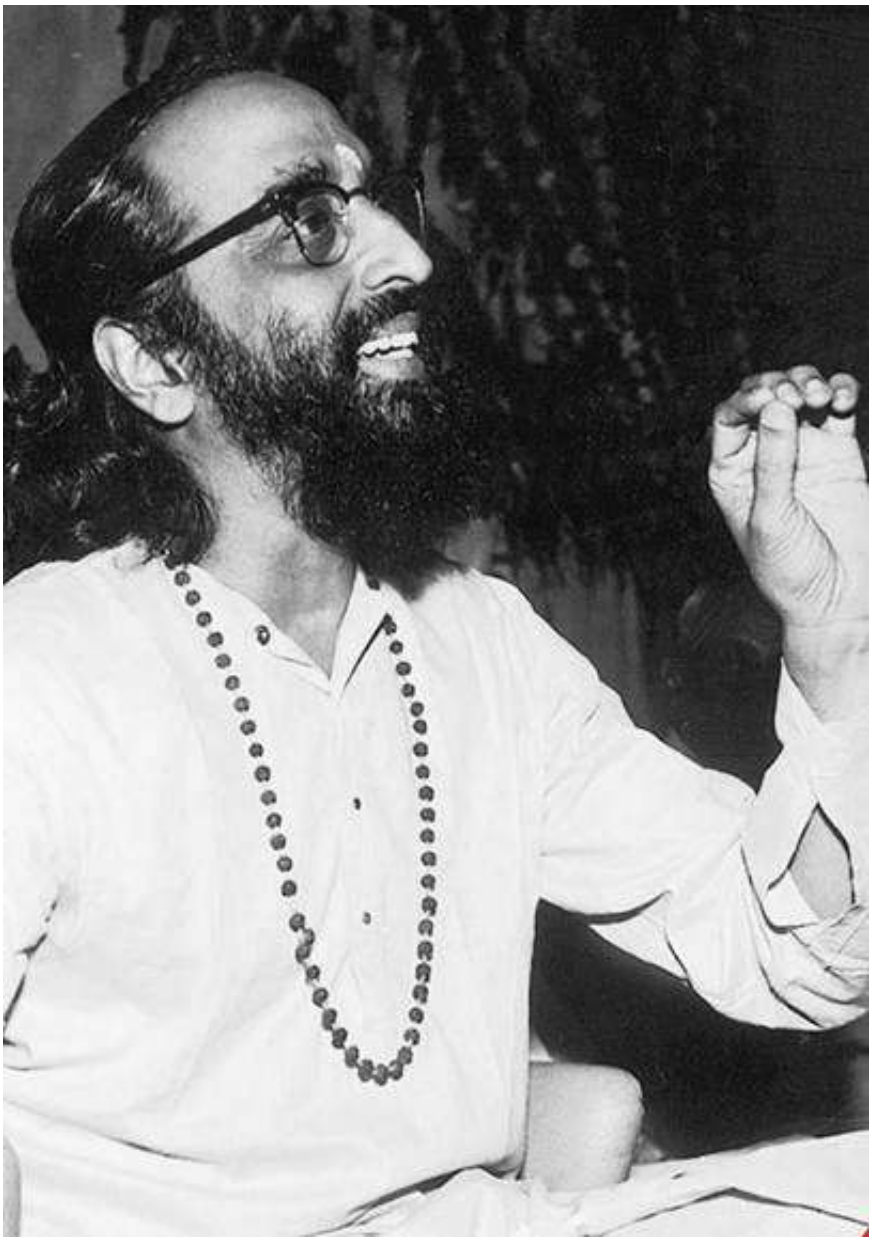
Offered by Brni. Shruti Chaitanya, CM Puducherry

Salutations to the intelligent.

Medhavin is one who is intelligent and also one who has good memory to retain and remember.

In our own life, sometimes we may have to go into a fight mode, sometimes go on a flight mode and move away and sometimes we need to know to face the situation. But everytime we need the intelligence to do the right thing for which one needs to know what is to be done, how it is to be done and when it is to be done.

As a student in school and college, Gurudev was good, both in academics and co-curricular activities. After His Sanyas Diksha on his visit to Calicut on 6th Feb. 1950, His father Kuttan Menon accompanied him and listened to his lecture on Divine Life. He later wrote to Swami Sivanandaji '...I was really surprised at the knowledge you have been kind enough to impart to him in such a short span of time. The lectures were so instructive, and I was convinced that the whole audience was impressed by him. His solving the various doubts was so clear and convincing that the audience had no further questions to ask him after his explanation...' Om Medhavine Namaha.



So instructive, clear and convincing.....

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

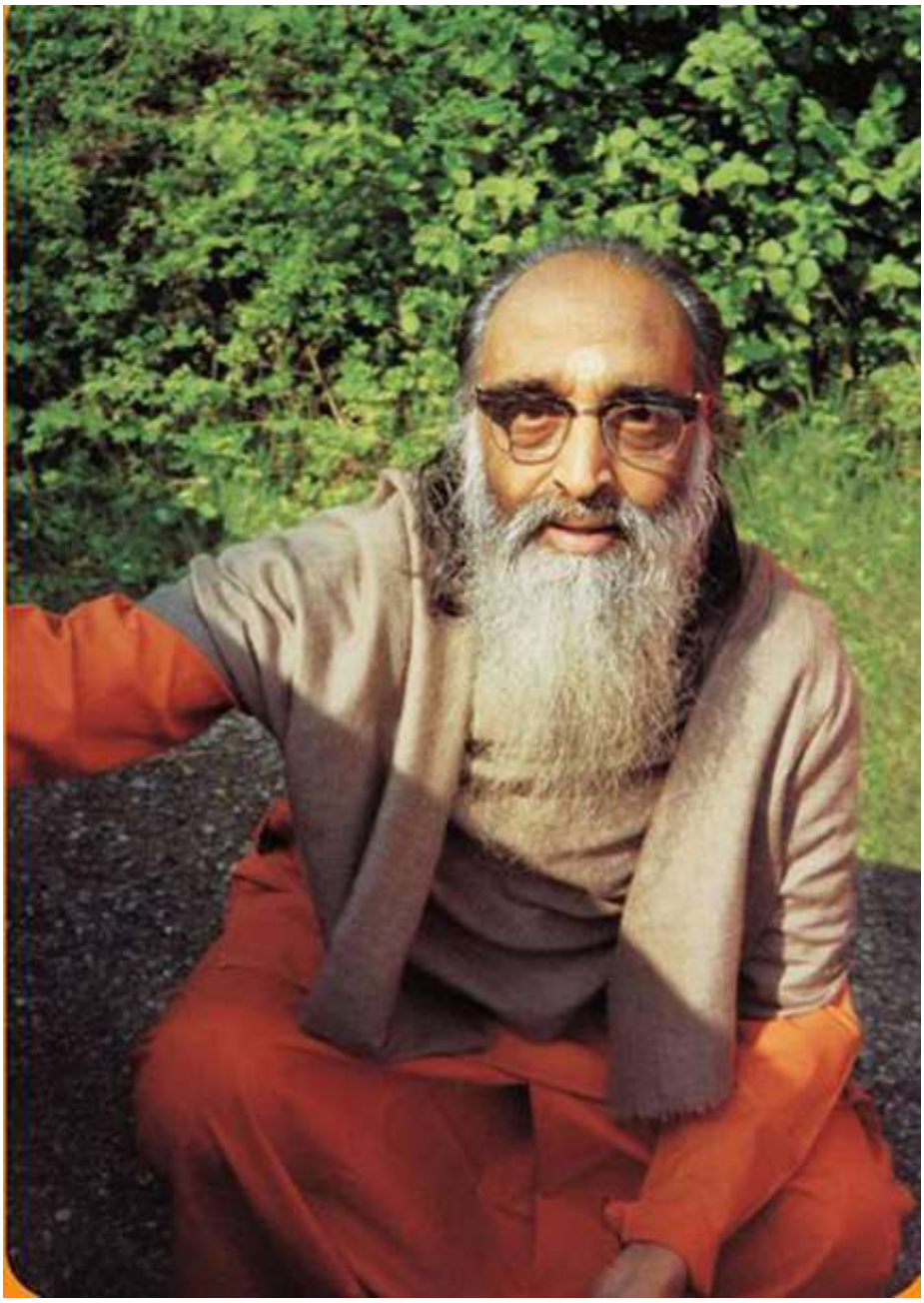
Gurudev, a master manager, understood human nature and brought out the full potential of every individual in both worldly affairs and spiritual unfoldment. He created the vast field of Chinmaya Mission where people who may be heart oriented or hand oriented or head oriented or a combination of these too had ample field to work and bring out their potential while being on the spiritual path. He made leaders, administrators, teachers, workers etc out of ordinary people to carry on the mission, training them in mind management and the attitude with which work is to

be offered.

In the Bhagavad Gita, lord Krishna states that ‘a wise person, one who has realized his true self, acts with as much zest and commitment as a person who is attached to worldly things and beings; the only difference is that such a person acts solely for the welfare of the world.’ Gurudev is a complete master of the art of living. He was continuously aware of the unity of life. Without any thought of personal gain, with complete detachment, he lived in harmony with every being. Jnana yagna, Balavihar, Devi group, Study Group, Chinmaya Yuva Kendra, VanaprasthaSansthan, Sandeepanys, Ashrams, Temples, Vidyalayas, Colleges, CORD, CIF, Camps ..... continuously increased in leaps and bounds with His presence and guidance ... all for Universal well-being. This is the Highest Intelligence brought into living. ‘In such an accomplished man we watch God and His play’. Om Medhavine Namaha.

Gurudev’s memory is remarkable and there are many instances that corroborate it.

He could remember names of people with finer details of matters associated with them. He enquired about everyone in the family on meeting just a member of the same. His Mind - Quiet, Alert and Vigilant would capture finer details too as if being recorded through a photograph.



A mind quiet, alert, vigilant....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Around 1951, Swamiji went on a pilgrimage. One day, during a train trip, a gentleman sitting across from Swamiji offered him some boiled peanuts. Later, the man forgot all about the incident. Thirty years later, this same person (now aged 70) was organizing a yagna in Bangalore. At the yagna the man kept looking at Swamiji because he thought he might have met him earlier, but could not remember where. Swamiji looked at him and said, 'peanuts'. Thirty years after such a brief encounter,

he still remembered! Om Medhavine Namaha.

OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

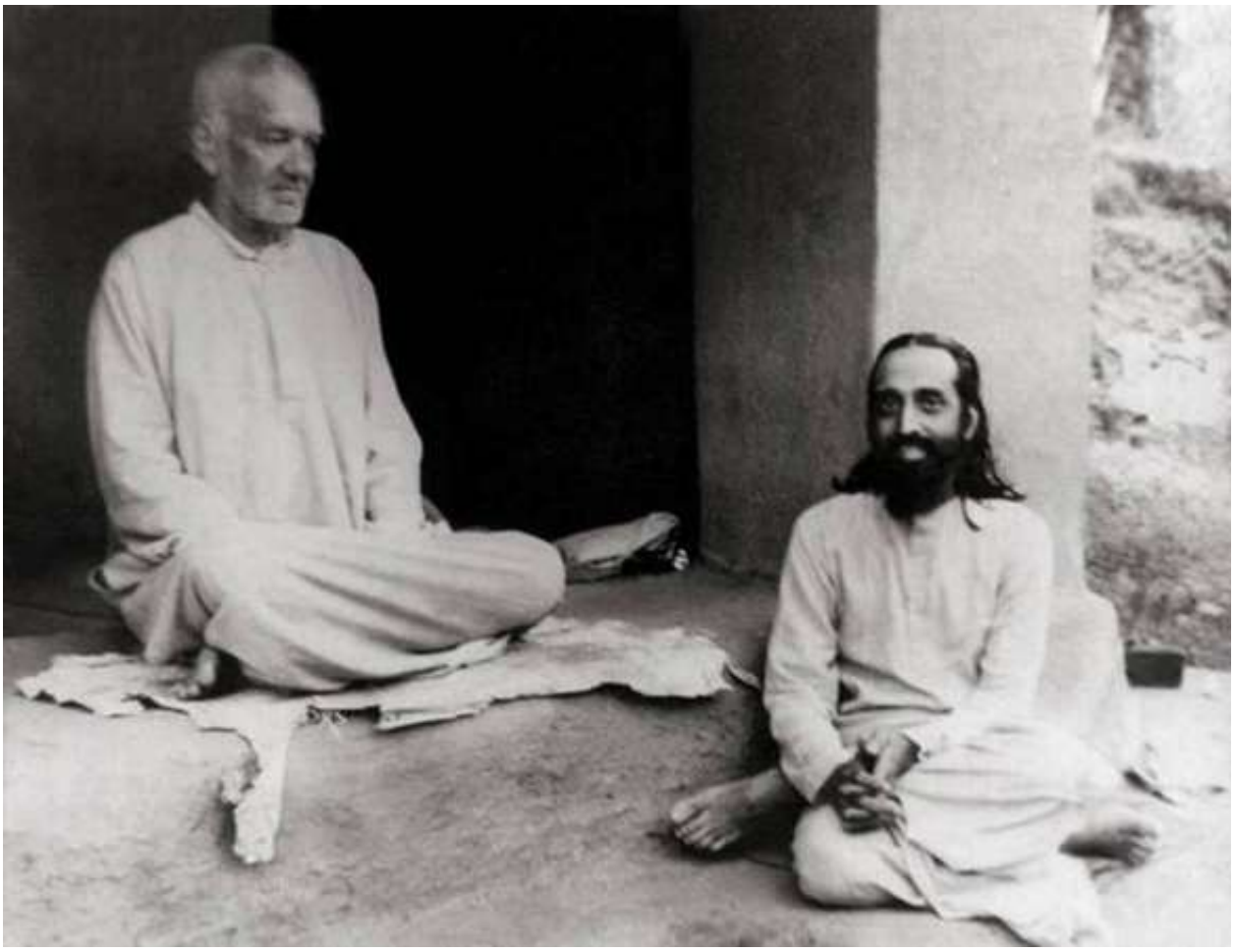
OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the One who is a scholar

Medhavi is one whose memory is good. Though this is the meaning, by implication it is also used for an intelligent person.
In spiritual path, memory plays an important role. Infact we have fallen from our Godhood out of sheer Self forgetfulness. This Self forgetfulness comes out of inadvertence, which in Sanskrit is called Pramada. In Sānatsujātiya [a portion in the Udyog Parva of the Mahabharata on which Sri Sankara also commented], Sanathkumara says what we call death is Pramada. Gurudev quotes this in a footnote to v 322 of the Vivekachudamani :

Memory is also important for a spiritual seeker because Vedanta is full of well-knit themes therefore we have to remember the links. In fact we have been told our Parama Guru, Swami Tapovan Maharaj, would not repeat anything a second time, and if someone is inadvertent that student cannot continue.



Under a teacher who would not permit any inadvertence....

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

As a missionary dealing with thousands of people in more than 300 centres and equal number of Acharyas, also needs memory.
At the very beginning of Vivekachudamani verse 16 this is the quality enumerated for a sadhak. It says medhAvi puruSho vidvAn UhApohavichakShaNaH

He who has keen memory with enough knowledge of the world outside and understanding world within, who can argue for the scriptures and refute against them, is fit for receiving Atma-Vidya.

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Him page 97

Smt.Vimala Krishnadas, Trichy.

In 1983 I first met Gurudev at Shri Palaniappan's house in Trichy. It was His Darshan that attracted me the most. In Him I saw my father. Gurudev's MEMORY IS

TERRIFIC. He recognises His devotees whenever and wherever He sees them.

Every breath a teaching page 117

His attributes

Remembering Means Loving

Uncle Mani (Anant Narayan), Mumbai,India.

In 1970,Swamiji took a rudrakshamala from His own neck and put it on uncle Mani's, after Uncle Mani had given a Vedanta talk.

"Wear this always" said Swamiji to him.
One year later Swamiji ran into Uncle Mani in an airport. Swamiji touched uncle Mani's chest and said: "Is it there?"
Uncle Mani says today, "Gurudev had such love for us--and love means that you remember. "

The other meaning of Medhavi, 'intelligent' in the case of Gurudev, is too well known. We have seen that in Dheemate Namah.

OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Medha is the power of the intellect to grasp or to understand. Everyone undoubtedly possesses an intellect, but each one’s capacity to understand is different. Sometimes certain things go over our heads. Everyone may not be able to grasp what is said at the same level or intensity. The power to grasp is called medha shakti. One part of medha is to grasp, and the other part is to retain what has been grasped. One of the names for the Goddess Saraswati is Medha. Chanting of the MedhaSuktam increases our grasping power.
Kalidasa, the story goes, was once young and foolish. When his wife discovered the level of his foolishness, she berated him. Kalidasa was hurt and determined to change. He worshipped the Goddess Kali and she blessed him with this medhashakti. His mind became calm, quiet and powerful. As a result of this sharpened intellect he was able to give the world his memorable and renowned poetry. Gurudev used to say that through upasana we can develop the power to grasp. Through upasana the mind becomes serene, silent and peaceful. This power then surfaces within us. It acts like a radio set. Sometimes it doesn’t pick up the stations properly, but if we

add condensers or other such parts, the power is enhanced and we hear the stations. The reception on the cell phone is affected in a basement, but with additional antennas it gains more power and clarity.

Similarly when our mind has too many attachments or is impure, it loses its power of grasping. The memory we have is already occupied so we lack the power to grasp. But when we drop our attachments and make the mind calm, quiet and peaceful, we develop medha. This is intelligence, not smartness or mere book knowledge. It is the power to take in the whole situation at a glance, not withstanding the spoken word. The ability to take quick decisions is in-born and if developed can be a great asset. So a medhavi is one who is highly intelligent and blessed with a tremendous grasping power.

This name is very apt for Pujya Gurudev. Before accepting him as a student Tapovanji Maharaj told him, “I will teach you only once. You have to remember whatever I teach you and be able repeat it as well. Otherwise we will be wasting our time. You will waste my time. I will waste your time.” Gurudev took up the challenge and remembered all he was taught.



He took up the challenge ……

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

He had the tremendous ability to grasp a situation and come to an accurate decision in an instant. His memory was razor sharp. He remembered thousands of people, their names and even decisions he had taken in different situations. He used this great gift to the advantage of mankind.

OM MEDHAVINE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

337. OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

08-04-2016

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

Excerpts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda – with his permission

*Salutations to the one who has self-restrain, self-control. Never allowed lethargy to take over, at any point of time he remained alert in whatever he was doing.

*Swamiji must have written a minimum of 750000 letters across 40 years since 1950. We can only infer this number based on the average of 40-50 letters at least that he wrote everyday. I know days where I have seen Swamiji responding to 80-90 letters. Probably we have not got even 1/10th of his letters, for our growth and reference. What we have is very very minimum. These are situations where lethargy can beg to take over. 'This need not be replied, because it is extremely difficult,' and so on. Sometimes you say oh he is asking such a question now how to answer this. You know the answer but to sit on the computer and type, and you are 2 finger typing …

You will understand this when you are in the field. From day one you must have this discipline that whoever writes to me, I will reply.

*That's the kind of control he had over himself. Never allowed anything to take over. Never gave that liberty to the mind to play around. Stay there, focused. This has to be done, this has to be done. More than the body the mind gets tired. And there we need to have that kind of a control.

*Certain disciplines which Swamiji had were so brilliant. When we were in Yuva Kendra Swamiji used to waive off the camp fees. He used to say forget it. You guys have spent too much money on the train, on the travel etc. forget it, no need to pay for the camp. But as brahmacharis when we have to attend the camp, yellow clothes and all, he would say pay the camp fees. How do you understand this behaviour?!

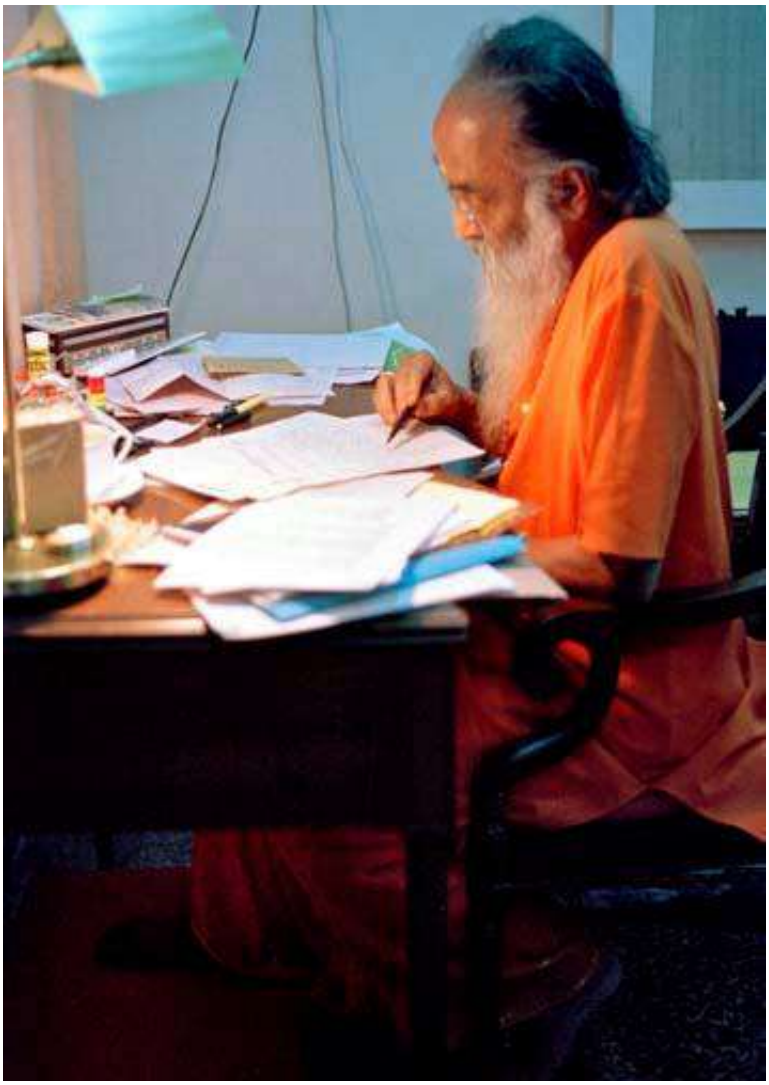
*Gurudev was doing Mandukya Upanishad, Sidhbari. It was a one-month long camp. So we wrote a letter, 'Swamiji can we attend Mandukya Upanishad?'

He replied, "Ok, you may come. You can attend, ask your center to pay the camp fees." I was in the field. This camp was sometime in May. I had been working Feb, March, April. Now within 3 months I have to go and say please pay Rs.1500? That was big money in 1991! If they like you, if you have behaved well, your relationship

with the centre was good, they will say – ofcourse Swamiji, you should go. If they don't like you, if we have not been prasannatmanenamah, or madhurasvabhavayanamah, then it would be, 'Swamiji, there is lot of work. I think you should stay here.' Very decently people will tell you, 'Why do you want to go? Stay here...'

But if you are good, effective, they see you sincere, they will be willing to come forward. Now see the discipline there. See the man's vision. As CHYKs you go free. But now as full-time worker -- you are his child now, committed your life to him – he would say, 'Let the centre pay.'

It's not the money, it's the discipline. If suddenly 200 acharyas come, they want to attend, who is going to take care of their needs? The whole thing would fall on the Sidhabari ashram! That cost each centre needs to bear for its acharyas. This discipline he laid down and ensured. He brought in regulations and he was himself following it.



Replying to every letter in the long hand.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*He imposed discipline, he had the discipline, that self-restraint and control Swamiji had. That is why I made reference to the 750,000 letters he wrote. He replied to each and every mail that was addressed to him. Sometimes a Center may write and ask about something. It is very easy for us to say – I am coming to your centre, I will speak to you when we meet. One line, that's the easiest way of escaping. But you are going after 2 weeks! You will keep that sevak in the Center waiting, isn't it? But Gurudev? He will reply – you have asked, this is what I say. If there are more doubts –when I come we can talk.

If there is an easy way out, Swamiji would not do it. He will stick to what is right. That is the self-control.

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Yatatma one who has controlled senses through striving. This state a sadhaka strives for, being the basic requirement for contemplation. Gurudev having transcended the senses and mind had the same value that the waker has for the waking and dream riches.
This state of Yatatma is explained by Gurudev in His commentary to BG 6:18 and 6:19.

Let us read Sri Gurudev's commentary on this.
6-18
The limited and the finite sense objects agitate the mind, while the Unlimited and the Infinite Self brings peace and joy to it. This condition of sense withdrawal and entry of the mind into the Self is called its condition of steadfastness (yukthah). Such an individual has fully integrated personality.

6-19
As an efficient complement to the previous verse, this stanza explains the mind of the Yogi of collected thoughts, who is absorbed in Yoga. This explanation is given through the help of a famous simile: "as a lamp in a spot sheltered from the wind does not flicker." The example is quite appropriate in as much as the mind is fickle and steady as the tip of a flame.
Every breath a teaching page 124
His attributes
Making do what is offered
By Swami Brahmananda as retold by Prafulla, Bangalore India

Soon after Gurudev had stayed at someone's home during His yagna in a local town, Swami Brahmananda was hosted by the same people. He was given the room where Gurudev had previously stayed.
After a night in the room, Swami Brahmananda asked the hosts if the bed on which he slept has been the one that Gurudev also had slept in.
The hosts said "yes". The Swami then told them that length of the cot was just sufficient for his own height, and wondered how Gurudev, with His tall frame, might have managed to sleep on it.
During Gurudev's next visit, the hosts apologised and asked Gurudev how He managed to sleep on such a small cot.
"I slept along the diagonal," was Gurudev's reply.



Strict discipline on the path.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

He did it page 62
In fact, Swamiji did not waste any precious minutes. Swami Govindagiri recalls, "Chinmaya practiced an intense sadhana (spiritual Discipline) all during His period of study with Swami Tapovanam. I often saw Him sitting all night in meditation in a quiet corner of the forest or sometimes on a boulder beside the Ganga."
To that breathtaking yogi, our prostrations,

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Yatatma means one who has conquered or mastered his self, including the body, the mind, and the senses. He is the master of his whole personality. An objective look shows that we are slave to our desires, habits, objects and the people to whom we are attached. We are even enslaved by our books and pillows! Slavery can be of many different types. It is a condition in which, one is no longer the master. Like the TV is the slave of the remote control. The many channels and features on the TV are completely controlled by the small remote. The changing of channels, volume, or brightness is controlled by a click of the remote.

One mahatma and his disciples saw a man leading a bull by a rope. The mahatma asked the disciples, “Who is bound and who is the master in this situation?” The disciples said, “It’s obvious, the man is the master and the bull being bound, is the slave.” The mahatma asked them, “What if the bull is untied— who will follow whom?” The person will follow the bull. The bull would be at ease since it is not interested in the man. Who then is the master? We claim, “Oh I am the master of my wealth!” On closer examination we find that wealth doesn’t care for us. It doesn’t care for anyone. We run after wealth, wealth does not chase us! We are constantly running after objects, people and places. They are not interested in us. So we must have mastery not only over the body, mind and intellect but also over one’s personality and life.

Swami Vivekananda used to say, “If you want to really understand the secret of the Bhagavad-gita, play football.” The principle is simple. To kick the football, the ball first must be under your control. I remember as small children we rarely got the opportunity to kick the ball. The older boys controlled the ball and consequently also the game. The younger ones spent their time in running and kicking the air! Similarly, life should be under our control, only then can we lead it the way we want to. We talk of grand goals, when we are not even in control of our lives. Under these circumstances, how can one take one’s life anywhere?

Yatatma is one whose personality and life are totally under his control. He is the master of his mind, of his desires, of his will. He is the master of his concepts and philosophy. He is the master of all emotions, anger, jealousy, greed, passion, love, compassion, friendship. He is the master of everything.

The mind must know the master. This doesn’t mean one should torture it. It only means that the mind should be disciplined enough to obey instructions. In the deep state of meditation we have to be in command of the mind. Pujya Gurudev said that in the state of meditation, just one command should be enough to stop the mind.

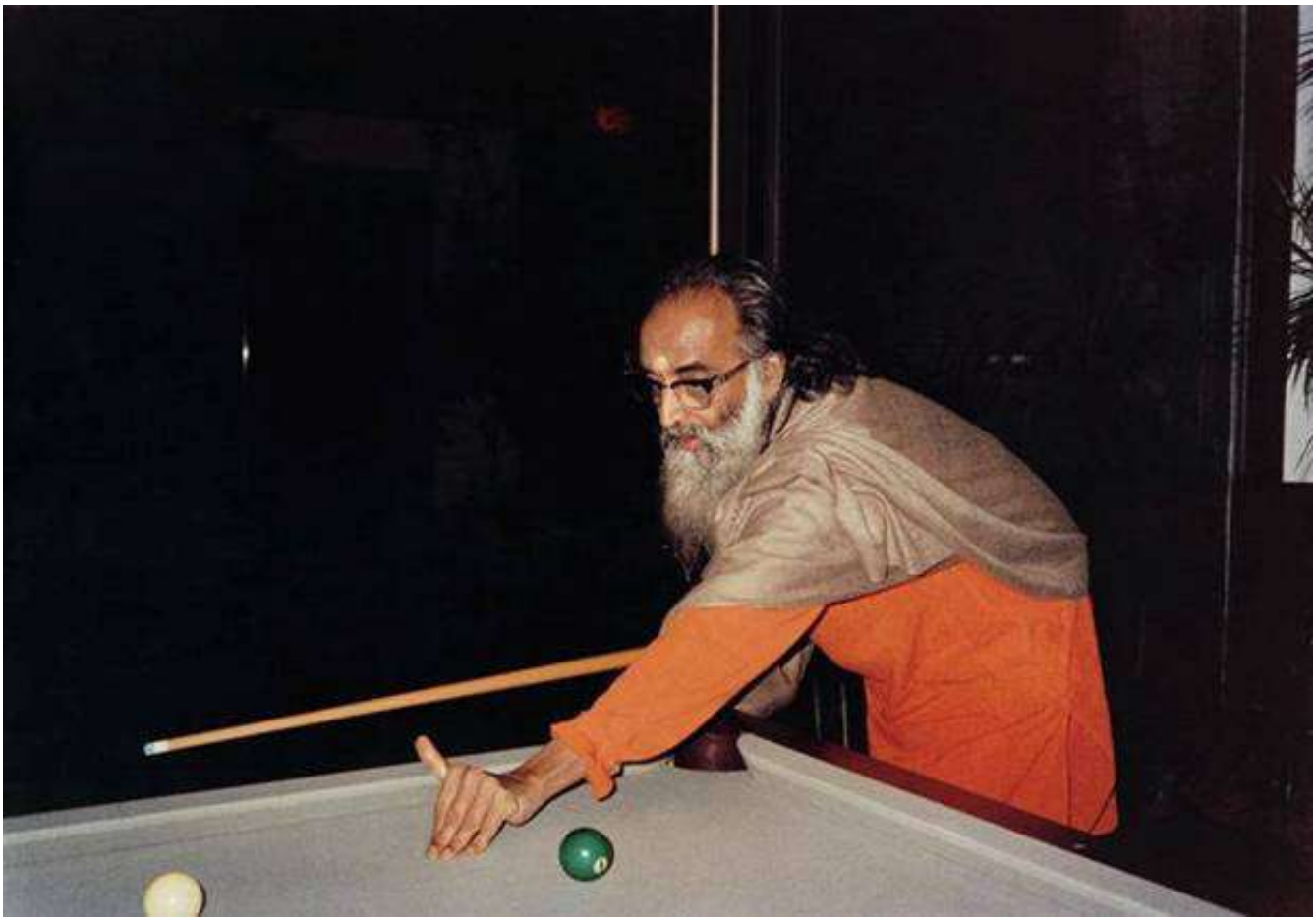
The mind that doesn't listen is of little use. A person may be in a position to command the whole world or be a commander-in-chief, commanding an entire army, but when he commands his own mind it doesn't listen! Of what use is all the outer pomp and show? A person may be a great commander outside, but when he commands his own son, the son doesn't listen.

Once a father asked his son, "Have you done your homework properly? Do you study properly in school or not?" The son turned around and said, "Why are you asking me this? Do I ask you whether you are working properly or not?" So it is very important that the mind knows we are in command.

Ultimately in the deep state of meditation, the mind has to stop thinking. In the Gita Bhagavan says, --

"atmasansthammanahkritvanakinchidapichintayet (VI.25)—

Once the mind is deeply established in the Self, it follows instructions implicitly."



Complete mastery .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

If with just one command the mind, stops thinking, then we know we have mastered the mind. A person with complete mastery over his mind is a mahätmä. Generallywe are not complete masters. At best, we may be shareholders or part masters of our self. A yatatma has complete mastery over the self.

To that One who showed us His mastery over the Self, our salutations.

OM YATAATMANE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

338. OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

09-04-2016

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

Excerpt from the talks of Sw. Mitrananda, with his permission

*Salutations to the one who has performed yajnas.

* It is said if you perform 100 yajnas, you rise up to the level of Indra. Swamiji has done 525 plus yajnas. Some of them were of the duration of 100 days. Gurudev held yajnas of varying durations -- 21 days, 15 days. During the last 7-8 years of his life his yagnas were 7 days. Why? The demand from the Mission centres was increasing rapidly, as were the number of centers too! Hence Swamiji had to reduce the time of some yajnas.



His life was a yajna ..... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*This 525+ yajnas does not include the camps done across the country. It does not include the camps. In Sidhbari alone Gurudev must have done 20-30 camps

– and this 525 does not include that. It does not include camps outside Sidhbari, it does not include that. It does not include the talks which Gurudev has given outside India. Almost 2 months a year he was outside India. So calculate: 20 yrs, 2 months a year = 40 months outside India. So if you consider all these, 525 is a very small number. It is just that somebody in India was recording his yajnas that recorded 525.

*Jnana yajna. Teaching a text verse by verse. That is the strength of Chinmaya Mission. You must understand. Our systematic method of teaching ... every satsang in Chinmaya Mission is very systematic, structured. Why? The teaching is taught to us that way. Book after book, verse after verse, and the text is complete. So we also follow just that method. At no time will you find confused logic of thought in the teachings, be it a camp, a yajna, a lecture. Thus the revival of Hindu culture, this part of knowledge, systematic study started here in the Chinmaya Mission. It was trained here. He taught us that. And workers who came out from this place, applied what he taught them and continue that style and approach.

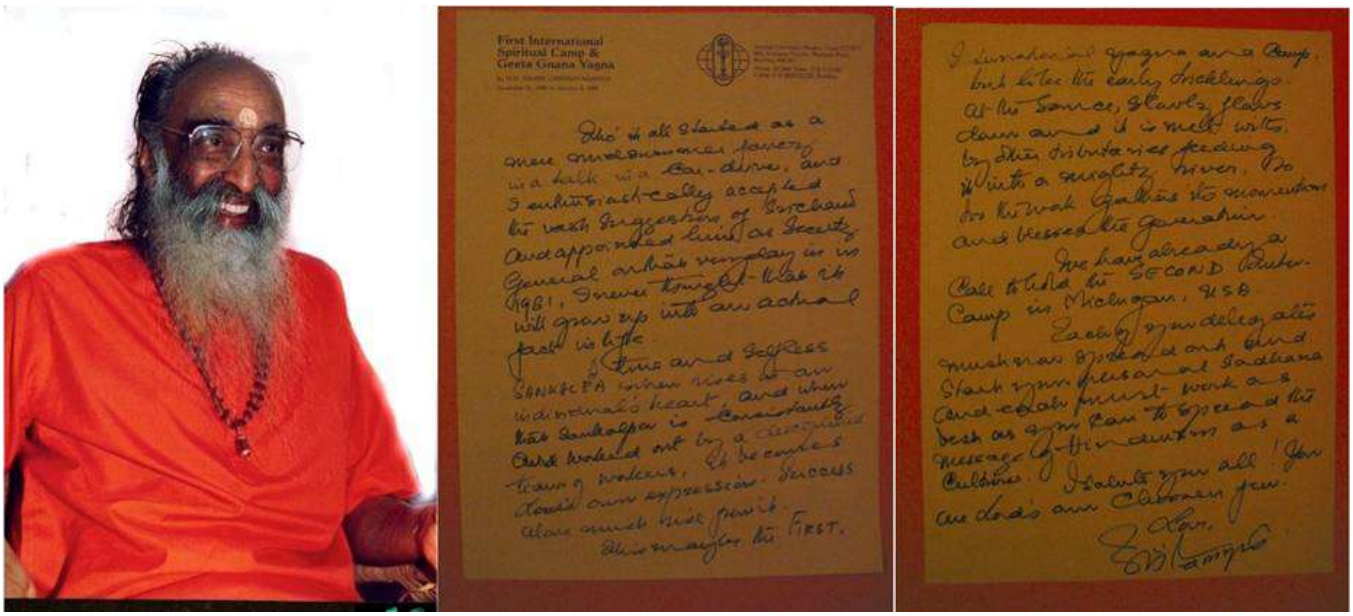
*So that is why one of the most beautiful expression on Gurudev, came from one of the senior-most devotees. I heard her saying – 'not that he was doing yajnas. His life was a yajna.' That is one of the most beautiful tributes you can say for Gurudev!

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

Offered by Shri. N.M. Sundar, CIF. Sundar ji began as a BalVihar child in Mumbai, followed by volunteering as a CHYK in the late 70s. He continued his association with the Mission in the US and Singapore before returning to India where he is today a Trustee on the Board of CIF.

In this recollection, Sundar ji shows how attention to other dimensions of a yagna - such as firing the yagna spirit in the young sevaks, respecting and valuing their desire to contribute -- are as important and how Gurudev gave it the same 100% that he did to everything else. Once again Gurudev has exemplified a true yagna with His leadership ; He has shown that the success of a yagna is not just in the doing but also in carrying everyone along with you, in valuing very offering, in keeping the fires burning bright, and finally and most importantly in expressing appreciation and gratitude to the workers from your height of leadership. How often this tail end is compromised! But not He. Gurudev has shown us through so many many examples, His attention to every detail, especially encouraging the young worker.



How can I forget a letter when Pujya Gurudev writes in a message, “I salute you all! You are Lord's own chosen few.”

It was the 1st International Camp in Mumbai that was held at the end of December 1983 and culminated on Jan 1st, 1984.

At the time, I was active in the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) and I volunteered at the camp. Close to one thousand delegates from round the world arrived and the camp kicked off in grand style. A few of us in CHYK had the idea to produce a camp newsletter. Gopinath, Arundhati and I formed the editorial team and the committee appointed Dr. Madhuriben Sheth as our guide and mentor for this initiative.

The concept of a camp newsletter was a novel idea at the time. Everyday, we had to find interesting topics to write about. When we revealed our plan to Pujya Gurudev, He himself recommended we talk to the senior Swamis at the time. – “Talk to Tejomayananda, Purushottamananda, and Sharadapriyananda”. He made it easy for us. In those days, besides Pujya Gurudev, not all the Swamis were widely known. Given the size of the camp, we knew the delegates would be eager to know who the Swamis were. Remember, no Internet and cell phones?

So, while one of us did a quick summary of the different events of the day including

Pujya Gurudev's classes, another spoke to the Swamis. We always ended up working late into the night to organize and type the matter on a manual typewriter, get it reviewed by each other and by Madhuriben. In those days the cheapest way was to "cyclostyle" these at a shop. When the shop opened at 9 am, we were the first in line to order 600 copies so that we could distribute them by lunchtime.

Incidentally, on one of the days, two senior Chinmaya Mission office bearers got into a heated argument that spiraled out of control. Quickly and calmly, Madhuriben took them by the hand back inside the room. Calmly, she reminded them that they were in the midst of a historic camp. The two of them made up and all were happy.



Sundar ji and wife Arundhati with Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji .... Inspired by His yagna spirit

As with all camps, time flew and this one, too, quickly drew to a close. On the evening of the 30th, I merely whispered “message” into his ear. I didn’t have to ask twice. Gurudev nodded immediately. Before lunch on the 31st, someone handed me the letter. My heart jumped – this was the first time I had received such a letter. It was written in his trademark bold, flamboyant style.

That is the letter that you see on this page. I saw the line, “I salute you all! You are Lord's own chosen few.” I couldn’t believe my eyes. Surely, Gurudev knew that it wasn’t all smooth sailing during the Camp. Those of us who organized and volunteered were aware of numerous issues. Yet, here He was congratulating us.

It is only later that I realized that for Pujya Gurudev, Geeta 3-10, was vividly true at a massive event like the International camp.

In Geeta 3-10, ŚrīKṛṣṇa states:

“At the beginning (of creation) having created mankind, together with sacrifices, the Prajāpati (the Creator), said, ‘by this shall you prosper; let this be the milch-cow of your desire – ‘Kāmadhuk’’ (also known as Kāmadhenu, the cow which yields all desired objects).”

Simply through his personal example, he made us implicitly believe that everything will work despite our differences and the petty issues that afflict every organization. Everything works, because He lifted us above and beyond our limitations to see how much we could accomplish when working in the Yagna spirit.

Pujya Gurudev was emphatic that a dedicated work team of workers "becomes (the) Lord's own expression. Success alone must rise from it."

As I think of the message in that letter, I am filled with love for Param Pujya Gurudev and the Mission that is his manifest Vibhooti.

Transcript of the letter:

Though it all started as a mere midsummer fancy in a car-drive, and I enthusiastically accepted the rash suggestion of Srichand and appointed him as Secretary General on that very day in 1981, I never thought that it would grow up into an actual fact in life.

A true and selfless SANKALPA when rises in an individual's heart, and when that sankalpa is consistently worked out by a disciplined team of workers, it becomes Lord's own expression. Success alone must rise from it.

This maybe the FIRST International Yagna and camp, but like the early tricklings at the source slowly flows down and it is met with by other tributaries feeding it into a mighty river, so too the work gathers its momentum and blesses the generation.

We have already a call to hold the SECOND Inter(national) Camp in Michigan, USA.

Each of you delegates must now spread out and start your own personal sadhana and each must work as best as you can to spread the message of Hinduism as a culture.

I salute you all! You are Lord's own chosen few.

Love

OM Chinmayananda

To that greatest One with the perfect yagna spirit, who inspired us all to work in the spirit of yagna no matter what we did, my prostrations!

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the one who has performed jnāna yajnas (given vedantic talks)

Gurudev explains ‘yagna’ in BG 3:9 --
Yagna means "any self-sacrificing work,undertaken in a spirit of self- dedication,for the blessings of all."'

We understand Yagna as 'any social,communal,national,or personal activity into which the individual is ready to pour himself forth entirely in a spirit of service and dedication.'
Read thus, Gurudev's whole life has been a Yagna.
Though Gnana Yagna is used in the context of the spread of knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita, it is Gurudev who created this word and made it acceptable to most if not all spiritual exponents. His talks are called Gnana Yagnas wherein, we offer our ignorance into the fire of knowledge.
Yagnanam Japayagnosmi says Bhagavan in BG 10:25. Sri Gurudev popularised likhita japa (the writing of japa) for some occasions. One such was when Sri Rama Temple was built in Sidhabari. Gurudev made devotees write a few hundred thousand Rama Nama and placed them below the Deities!

In the early years, Gurudev used to conduct Havans during Gnana Yagnas.

Here are a few extracts on this topic all from Vedanta – from the Celebration Series of the Mananam Publications:



Into that fire of Knowledge ..... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Page 95
After I had attended his lectures for a few years, I felt compelled to do some research about Gurudev's early Yagnas. I discovered that when Gurudev first began the Jnana Yagna approach, it was a revolutionary concept in the history of Hinduism. The elaborate rituals surrounding religious Yagnas,at which offerings were cast into the fire to evoke divine blessings, underwent a transformation by Gurudev.
In a Gnana Yagna the spirit of sacrifice and cooperation was retained,but instead of sacrificing grains in a physical fire,we sacrifice ignorance in the fire of Vedantika knowledge, and we surrender our ego at the alter of the Lord.

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, Chinmaya Mission Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who has performed many yajnas

The word, 'yajna,' is frequently used in the Bhagavad-gita. It can be literally translated as sacrifice. One meaning of yajna is 'yajnavaheVishnuh, the Ultimate Reality or Goal of Vishnu is also called yajna.' The offering, the sacrifice and also the attitude of offering are all known as yajïa. It is work done with devotion as an offering of worship. Pujya Gurudev used to say, "When a team or group of people come together, without ego and ego-centric desires to work for the common good of the community or the nation, it is called yajïa." 'Yajnatbhavanti parjanyaù - through a yajna there is a rain of prosperity and development.' Yajna is like worship. Yajnakåte is one who performs all work as worship. Gurudev's entire life was a yajna. His discourses were called Gita jnanayajnas in which, ignorance and delusion were thrown as sacrifice into the fire of knowledge.

He was a performer of yajnas. Bringing people together and making them work in a spirit of sacrifice was also one of his many great abilities. Not only did he himself follow this path, he inspired thousands, lakhs and millions of people to follow this path of sacrifice. Quoting from the scriptures Gurudev used to say, that if a person performs a hundred yajnas he gains the Indrapada – the status of Indra. During his life he conducted more than five hundred yajïas. He used to joke, "See I have gained the pada of Indra five times." The secret of karma yoga is to work with dedication, without a personal agenda. We should work for the common welfare of the world. 'lokasangraham evartham, for the welfare of the whole loka.' Pujya Gurudev worked for the welfare of the world till his last moment. He continued to travel from place to place, almost till he left his body. Yajnakrite is one who has performed yajna in an attitude of dedication, surrender and worship.

To that tireless performer of innumerable yajnas, who also showed us the value of the yagna spirit, our salutations!

OM YAGNAKRITE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

339. OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

11-04-2016

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

Swamiji takes Lokaprasiddha to a different dimension by showing us what leads to fame among people, love of the people: thoughtful approach to people. How Gurudev gave to each according to his need and not necessarily a camp or a yagna, shows his thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the needs of a people. To those who needed food, he taught them to cultivate; to those who needed education he brought schools; to those who needed medical help He set up dispensaries and hospitals. To those in doubt, he brought understanding and clarity (the intellectuals); to those who were broken in spirit he led them to the Truth.

*Salutations to him who is very famous all over the world. Well-known all over the world.
* Swamiji started on the last day of 1951. So basically 1952.
- 1953 the organization started coming.
-1954, then President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad came to inaugurate the yajna! You understand? In 2 years His work had gained so much prominence and renown that the President of the country came to inaugurate his yagna.
*Gurudev had the largest following of intellectuals. No one else had that. The largest crowd for Upanishads. The largest crowd on topics like Gita. No doubt others followed after him and took up teaching like he did. Some people were very good and had large following but limited to their region, limited to a particular subject. But his fame spread across, India and abroad. Intellectuals are very important to a society because they lead opinions. Opinion leaders. They can make a difference in the world, and have to be inspired and Swamiji was reaching out to that crowd.
*Sometimes when you are working in the field one of the questions very often some people will why are you not going to the interiors. They mean, with our spiritual work. But we reached the interiors with development work first. You can't reach the interiors with intellectual knowledge. We took to them rural development programmes. Chinmayaranyam in Andhra Pradesh, now some parts of Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh being the top of these programmes. Attempts are being made in Kerala, Maharashtra, Kolhapur etc. where we reach the villages with our rural development programmes. Giving them confidence, savings plans, self-help groups, primary health. It's a different kind of work via CORD.
* What does a villager look up to? He looks up to the lifestyle of the city. Isn't it? His aspiration is the city lifestyle. What culture the city has, slowly spreads to the neighbouring small towns, moffusil areas. From there it slowly spreads to the village.

The city’s style is what he considers as aspirational, progress. A guy living in small town wants to go to the city nearby. The guys living in small cities want to go to major cities. The people living in major cities want to go abroad. This is the ladder of aspiration. So if the people who are in the cities develop the spiritual vision and values, these guys who are going to follow them or imitate them or be inspired by them will also have this.

Just a few of the amazing projects supported by CORD: micro-lending, artisan skills, training young professionals and disabled artists, training volunteer rehabilitation workers, working with physically disabled house to house, providing training to improve farmers' crops, speech/language therapy, PT/OT, health for migrant workers in slums, improving public schools, adolescent women's leadership groups.
Source of images and list of work:http://stritchimmersion.blogspot.in/2012_05_01_archive.html











Gurudev's thinking has been greater good. Everybody knows what contribution Gurudev has done. Very famous across the world.

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

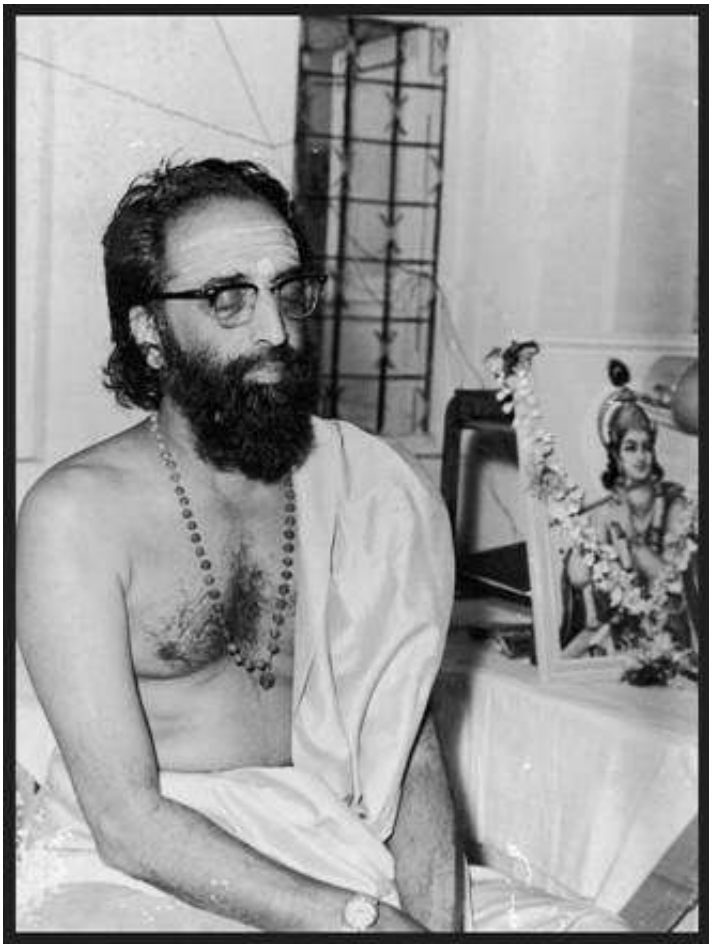
salutations to the one who is world-renowned

Well known all over the world. His centresare to be found worldwide. His devotees are to be found worldwide His trips spread all ove the world. His teaching institutes, His temples, are worldwide -- all speak of this to us.
But He is not merely known; He is also loved with gratitude by people all over the world, people of all religions andall age groups.
Gurudev Himself had said 'people will come to know who I am' – meaning, His Real Dimension in 20-30-40-50 years. Yet some of us feel that LOVE wanted a body and It became Swami Chinmayananda.

Swamiji we love you.



Love needed a body....



..... so it became Swami Chinmayananda...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

What is more, He has also addressed the United Nations. He was called by several world renowned universities like Harvard etc to address its alumni. He was also invited to address the centenary year of the famous Chicago World Parliament Of Religions, commemorating another pride of India,another giant of a personality, Swami Vivekananda. Before this our dear Gurudev attained Mahasamadhi in a hurry to embrace the world!

Here is a story that was mentioned earlier too, but in the context of this naam, it begs to be reproduced. View expressed by late N. Karthikeyan ex chief secretary of Tamilnadu Government:
Swami Chinmayananda as I know page 7

“I consider Him the greatest Hindu of the current century. SwamiVivekananda raised the flag of Hinduism in the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago,a hundred years ago. He [Gurudev] was to address the same Parliament a hundred years later in 1993-- but it was not meant to be! This [invitation] shows the universal acceptance and recognition of Swamiji's teachings.”

In the Mananam Publication’s celebration series, He Did It ,there is a section called "World Is Not Enough" covering all His global conquest. We request readers to go through that since it is large to reproduce here. In spirituality the conquest is of hearts not geographical.

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to One who is famous in the world.

Loka is the world and prasiddha is famous. Lokaprasiddha is one who is famous in the world.
The Scriptures say that when we serve the world, or work for the welfare of others, we become famous. We shouldn’t work to become famous, but one of the ways of becoming famous is by doing something good. For example, some people are always ready to lend a hand, whenever there is any need in the society or community. It could be even something small like taking someone to hospital or working in the common par. Such a person works for the welfare of the society, and so becomes famous. He gains a place in the hearts of people. He is famous in a positive way.

Hanumanji is the very embodiment of service and actually even more famous than Ramchandraji. More temples are dedicated to Hanumanji than to Lord Rama in our country or in the world. Why? “kauna so sankata mora garibako jo tumasonahinjatahai taro - What is that work that you cannot perform O Hanumanji? You have done work for even Ramachandraji.” Another song extolling Hanuman says, ‘jagatanacaleramabina aura ramanachale hanuman bina - the world cannot function without Rama and Rama cannot function without Hanuman.’

Gurudev touched the hearts of all, even simple village folk. They did not know what he was saying, despite this they knew him and had great love and affinity for him in their hearts. Not only did he touch the lives of those who came to him to learn the Bhagavad-gita and the Upanishads, he touched the lives of poor villagers, orphans and innumerable others and in a variety of ways. He found a place in their hearts. He was Lokprasiddha, famous in the world. He loved people and people loved him.



He loved all and they loved Him in turn.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

In the Ramayana Tulsidasji talks about the type of fame or keerti we should have. He says, ‘kirtibhanatibhutibhalisoi, sura sari samasaba kai hit hoi - fame, writing or wealth is good if like Gangaji, it flows for the welfare of all.’ The fame which includes the fame of others is good. Similarly, writing is good when it is for the

good of all. Fame and prosperity, for the welfare of others is good. When fame includes the welfare of everyone, no one feels jealous.

Before departing for Lanka, Hanuman said to Jambavana, “I want to go to Lanka, kill Ravana, lift the whole of Lanka and bring it back.” He was very excited, but Jambavana advised and cautioned him, “Don’t do all that. Just deliver Ramchandraji’s message and bring Sitaji’s message back to Lord Rama. We will then all go with Ramchandraji and He will kill Ravana. His fame will spread around the world and it will bless everyone. Your doing it alone will not be proper.”

In AshokaVatika Hanuman was moved by Sita’s condition and said, “You just sit on my back and I will take you directly to Lord Rama.” She gently declined saying, “No, I want Rama to come and fight properly with Ravana, defeat him and then take me home with glory. I don’t want to go quietly, in hiding. I want His name and fame to spread in the world.” The greatness of the Lord is beneficial for all. Jambavana says,

“kapisenasangasangharenisichararamusitahianihai,
trailokapavanasujasusura muni naradadibakhanihai.
jo sunatagavatakahatasamuzataparamapadanarapavié…”
“People along with Narada and the rishi munis will sing the Lord’s glories and just listening to them, people will cross over this bhavasagara.”

Bhagavan’s fame has great power. Gurudev’s fame and recognition is powerful and has spread far and wide. There is a great difference between personal fame and the eminence of a mahatma. A mahatma’s prasiddhi is such that merely by reading about it others gain liberation from this world. After reading all the scriptures we should read about the life and glory of the Lord and his saints. Just reading a mahatma’s charitra is beneficial and helps us to cross over this samsara. When Krishna suddenly disappeared, for the gopis totally immersed in the sorrow of separation, His charitra became their only support. They kept thinking about Krishna and all His lilas and that itself was their support.

To that One who is likewise famous in the world, our salutations.

OM LOKAPRASIDDHAAYA NAMAH

Sorry was unable to post on Sunday.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

340. OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

11-04-2016

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

Compiled by a long standing devotee.

When Gurudev spoke, it was an experience par excellence for the devotees. Learning was effortless. As Swamiji's sonorous voice rang out the eternal truths of life in a straightforward manner and in a modern language, a quiet hush settled over the listeners. He invited the questioning mind to protest against tradition, to challenge ancient dogma, and to accept neither the words of the scriptures nor the interpretation of the sages with blind faith.
Swamiji often said, "Longer the beard, greater the suspicion". He never encouraged blind acceptance to the thoughts He shared in His lectures. He emphatically stated "I don't want students who have khaalisthaan (empty space) between their ears!!" He insisted that the ideas must be tested by individual contemplation, integration and experience. His vivacity and animated explanations erased the misgivings of even those who came to scoff. He roused His listeners with thundering declarations and then gently coaxed them into blissful silence with subtle profundities. As a one-man army, with no organization to back Him in the early years, with Lord as the sole guide and an inspiration to serve the suffering humanity just like Mother Ganga, and with eloquence (Vaagmi), Mastery over the English language (anglabhashavidhuttama) and ready wit (Vinodapriya) as His tools, He launched the Chinmaya Movement in 1951. The entire Chinmaya Mission was sustained by His 1 square inch of silver tongue as He called it on which danced Mother Saraswati.



Those early years, His assets were eloquence, inspiration, readywit and conviction...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

To that most venerable, delightful, stimulating, wit-filled orator, my prostrations!

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Mahadevan Parameswaran, CM Rameshwaram, Los Angeles

ॐवाग्मनिनमः To Him who is the Embodiment of Eloquence

No one who has heard Pujya Gurudev can contradict this statement. Gurudev truly delivered the message of Vedanta in the most effective way. He had a way of bringing the complicated message of Vedanta to the layman's level.

In a talk at one of the camps, he saw that everyone was not as attentive to his important message as he discussed some concepts in Gita Ch.2.

"An artist paints on a canvas in two dimensions and depending on the artist, you are able to visualize what he is trying to convey; a sculptor chisels his marble or granite and sculpts, perhaps a horse and a rider on top, in three dimensions, where you are able to visualize the gallop of the horse and the riding action of the driver.

I am painting on the canvas of your mind!! ; a canvas that is unpredictably moving around. Do you realize how difficult it must be for me to convey my thoughts to your fluctuating mind?"

No one could have put this in a better way. Everyone was certainly more attentive after that comment.

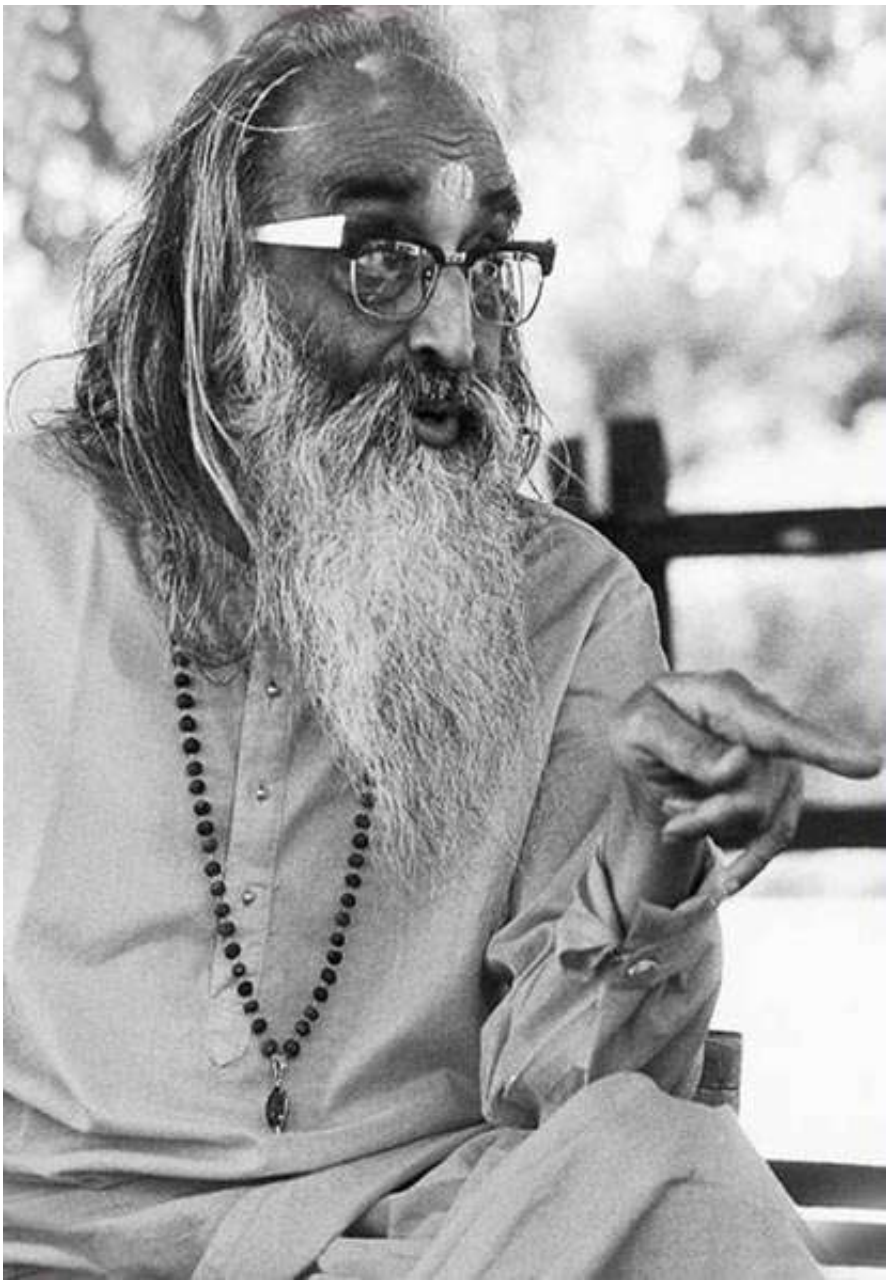
To convey the idea and importance of PRESENCE, Gurudev's famous comment on "when the last though has been thought-ted out and the next one is just thought-ting"

In my own case when I heard the BMI chart and how it explained the most complex concepts I was literally "hooked" to the great Master. In Gurudev's mention of the "PERCEIV-ERR, FEEL-ERR AND THINK-ERR"---what a beautiful and unique way to describe the EGO.

The moment I remove the ERR from each of the above, there is no one behind the act of Perceiving, Feeling or Thinking. The FANGS of the EGO serpent have been removed!!

Gurudev's commentaries in every Vedanta book could not have been expressed with greater clarity.

Once again a very appropriate name for Pujya Gurudev. The way He talks with conviction, fills you with inspiration, awe, love and reverence.



The way He talks .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Naturally that's what happens when a Brahmanishtaa /Shrotriyaa talks to you!

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri. N.M. Sundar, CIF. Sundar ji began as a Balavihar child in Mumbai, followed by volunteering as a CHYK in the late 70s. He continued his association with the Mission in the US and Singapore before returning to India where he is today a Trustee of CIF.

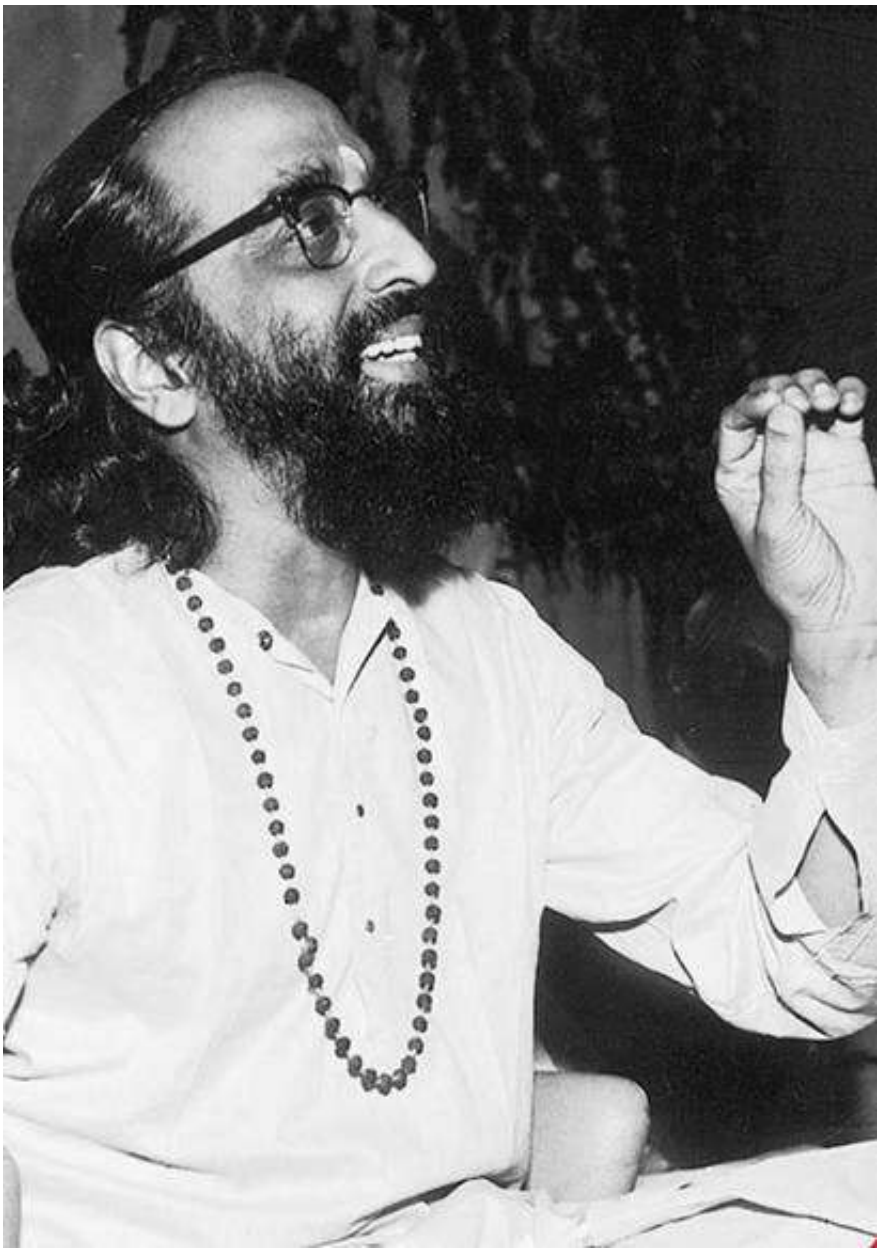
Salutations to the eloquent one

It was October of 1979. It was the beginning of the 1st Chinmaya Yuva Kendra National Camp at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai. I was fortunate to be in the first row, seated on the floor in the SaraswatiNilayam, waiting for Pujya Gurudev to begin.

Pujya Gurudev had been suffering heart trouble for many years. He was driven to the SaraswatiNilayam from his kutia because of his health. He walked maybe 10 steps to where he was to sit. When he sat, it was obvious that it was a strain. He was breathing heavily. Given that this was Sandeepany, the preliminaries were minimal. When He started speaking, it was only a minute or two to realize that this is an entirely different person speaking; this was not the person with heart ailment.

I remember only a little of what he spoke. But I was His in those few minutes. The words I use below are based on my memory and are not exact quotes. Gurudev talked about the teaching of a Buddha or a Jesus or Krishna in the early days. 'That was a time', He reminded the audience, ' [when] there were no newspapers, no TV channels.' Yet here we are in this day and age, their teaching is spread worldwide and people still try to understand what they said and how they lived. What was it, what was the X-factor (yes, that was the first time I heard the phrase X-factor) in them that makes their teaching relevant so many years later?

Pujya Gurudev didn't wait long to reveal the answer. "It was the courage of their convictions. They were yukta-purushas. Theirs was an integrated personality – their thoughts, words and deeds were integrated." He went to exhort the Yuva Kendra members to study and achieve this integrated personality.



The courage of His conviction, an integrated personality .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

For a young man on the threshold of life, Pujya Gurudev opened my mind to the possibilities of the mind when applied rightly. I have no doubt that my lifelong association with the Chinmaya Mission can be traced back to that day in SandeepanySadhanalaya when the power of His words took over my head and heart.

To that eloquent One who drew our hearts out with the power of His words, my prostrations!

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

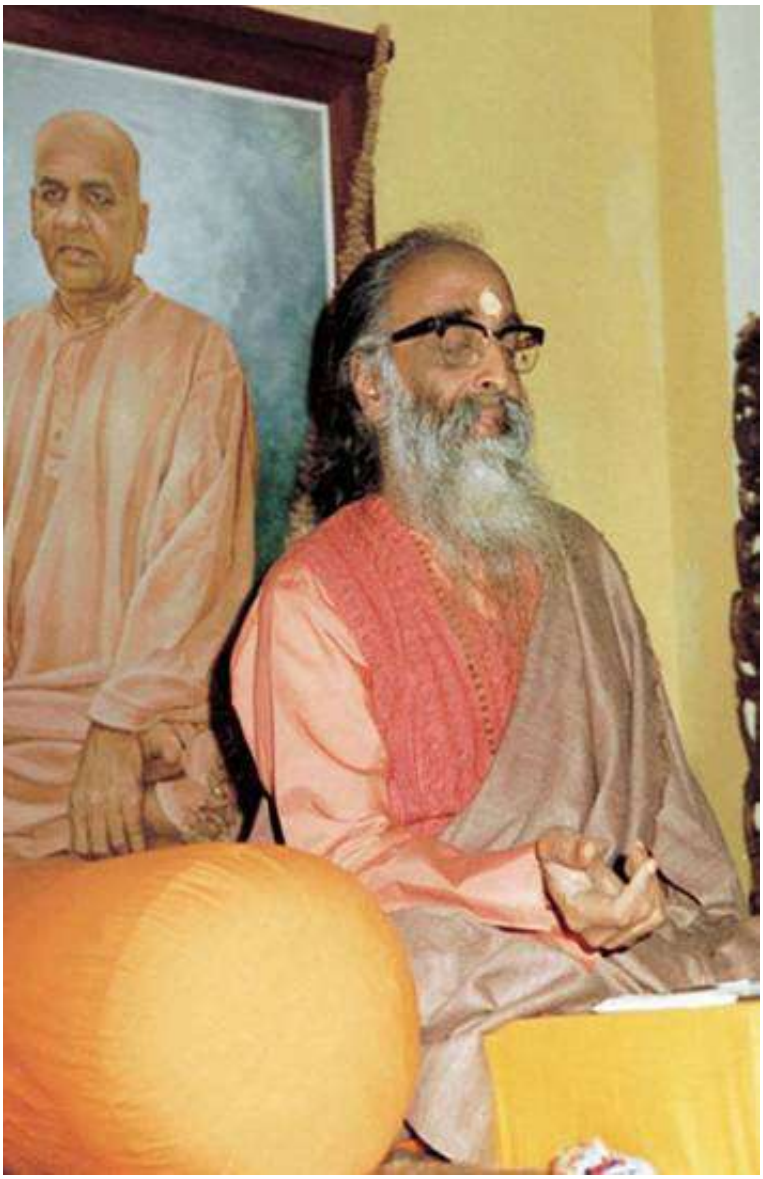
OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the eloquent one

Vagmi, Orator.
Gurudev's oratorical skills do not need elucidation. He is known for that. But what is important is though He had It in Him, what brought about that superlative eloquence is His urgency, His conviction that this knowledge must reach all. Necessity is the mother of invention. This ‘need’ to Bless the world, made Him invoke this power of eloquence from within Himself. He had said if you have the subject eloquence will follow. Also the famous verse mukamkaroti vachalam….. says: it is the Lord'sgrace that makes even the dumb speak with eloquence and the lame cross mountains.
This being the case, He having dedicated Himself to the work of the Lord (Himself) invokes maximum grace!
There is a very interesting occasion where I was lucky to be present where His silence was extremely eloquent.

It was Sri Ramana Jayanthi at Chennai. Gurudev drove straight from the airport to the venue where all Bhagavan Sri Ramana's devotees along with Gurudev's devotees were eagerly waiting. Gurudev sat silent for five or more minutes and there was pin drop silence expecting Gurudev to talk and then Gurudev said, "This Is Ramana" meaning the silence.



An eloquent silence .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The impact need not be over emphasised for those who have heard about Sri Ramana's silence. He twisted the words the pronunciation etc to effectively convey His message unmindful of grammar or others opinion etc.

On another occasion it was a Rotary Conference where Gurudev spoke on the topic "what next". It was a very inspiring purposeful topic to Rotarians,who seek to serve society, yet He evoked non-stop laughter for the entire session. Even today people remember this Conference.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know him page 3
Mr.Narendra Singh Jhabua

When I heard Swamiji,the first thing that struck me was that He was quite different. His personality,His way of speaking,His power of oratory, the way He spoke in English about the Gita and Upanishads greatly impressed me.

Page 6 Shri N.Karthikeyan Madras
Communication skills at their best

His missionary zeal,His command over the language, His power of expression and the ability to sustain the audience's interest for one hour or more continued to be as good and as effective as in the late 1950s. There was no distortion in His communication.His lectures on Gita and scriptures are in beautifully flowing simple English and this makes it is to understand and assimilate. By mixing mild humour and some reference to current events and personalities, Swamiji brings to life tough philosophical concepts.

Page 64 K.B.Shroff Bombay
Unique style in talk

You can find something new in His talk every time. He is an excellent and unique orator. I heard Swamiji's talk on Kathopanishad twice and it seemed quite new the second time I heard it.

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the great orator

buddhirbalamyashodhairyamnirbhayatvamarogata
ajadyamvakpatutatvam cha hanumatsmaranatbhavet

Vagmi, is the power of oratory or speech, The pen is mightier than the sword. Speech is very powerful it can instigate, motivate or inspire people. An inflammatory speech can bring out all the negative qualities in a person and even make him a terrorist. Terrorist training camps brainwash new recruits with rabble-rousing talk and then instigate them to do acts of terrorism.

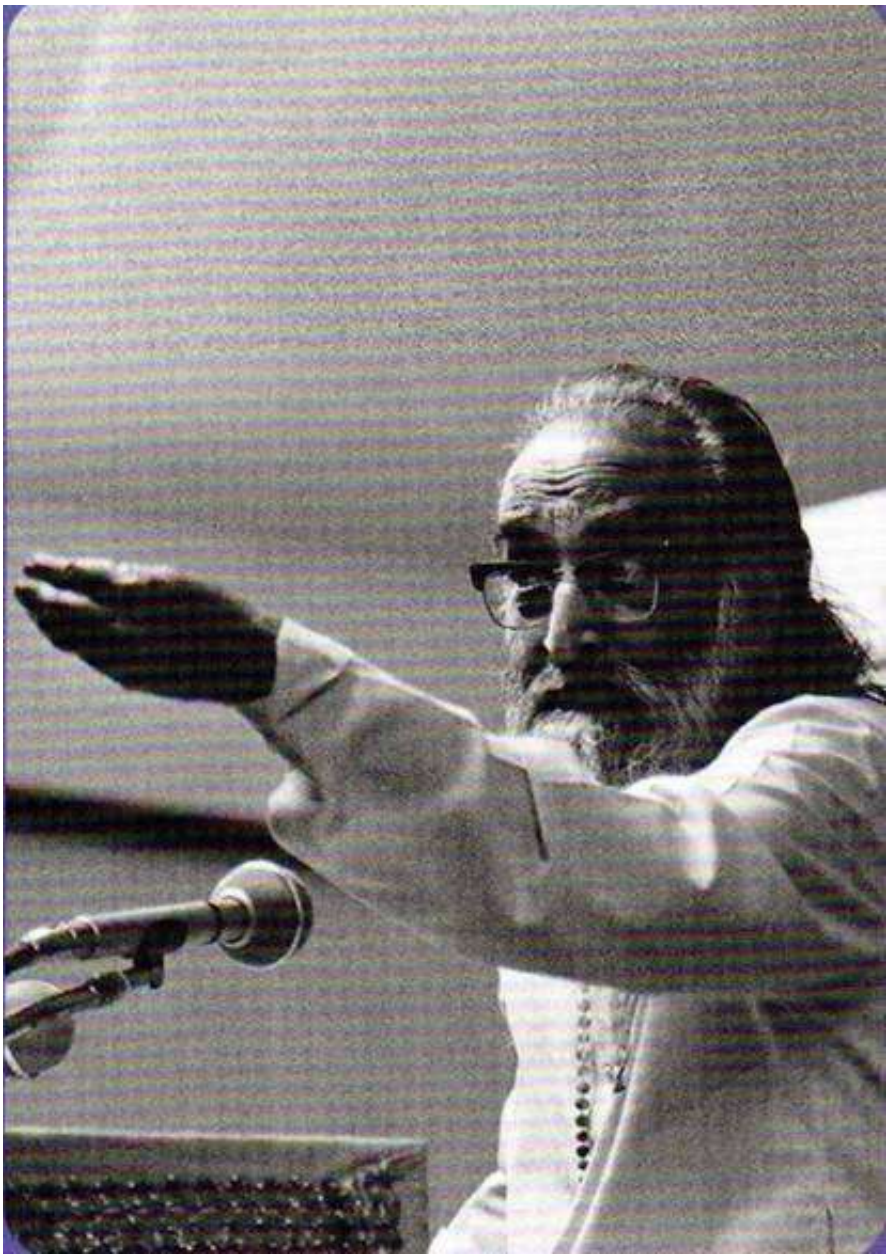
Speech has the power to raise a person to great heights and also lead to a person’s downfall. Ravana was comfortably seated in his darbär and everything was

going fine. His rakshasas were doing their work of disturbing sadhus and mahatmas, while he led a comfortable life. When Shurpanakha came in shrieking, suddenly everything changed, “What are you doing sitting here and doing nothing? Look what has happened to me! Those two young men in the forest have cut off my nose and ears. They don’t care for you and they have a very beautiful lady with them. I had gone there only to get her for you. She is fit to become your queen.” Ravana heard her raving and ranting became very angry and decided to kidnap Sita. Words can be used to instigate people and bring out the worst in them. Conversely they can be used to inspire one to rise to one’s full potential.

Words have the strength and power to motivate. The term now being used is ‘motivational therapy’. To motivate is to push someone forward, and to instigate is to push them down. Inspiration can raise us to a higher level. It is the positive aspect of using speech. Through speech one can inspire, create enthusiasm, motivate, give knowledge, remove ignorance and confusion, and develop self-confidence and self-esteem. On the battlefield when Arjuna was totally dejected and absolutely demoralized, Krishna used the power of words to motivate and inspire him.

He said, ‘klaibyam ma sma gamah partha naitat tvayy upapdyate (II.3) - you are behaving in such a foolish way. This does not behove you.’ Beginning with this whip lashing slowly and steadily He built his case. He used the logic and magic of words to inspire Arjuna, until finally Arjuna said, ‘karishyevachanamtava (XVIII.73) - Yes, I will do what you say.’ Words have tremendous power. Words can liberate a person. The greatest thing words can do is wake us up from our sleep of ignorance. For many lifetimes we have been sleeping in this nidra of maya. We need the words of a mahatma to awaken us from our slumber. That is the power of oratory.

Many are the uninspiring orators in this world, but Pujya Gurudev did not belong to that category. Some orators just repeat words they have learnt by heart. Nowadays institutes run special courses in public speaking, to groom people in the art. Students are taught how to speak, how to use their hands and how to create a rapport with the audience. They use different techniques such as looking into the eyes of the people, voice modulation and the right choice of words. One way of involving everyone immediately is to begin one’s speech with some story or incident. Gurudev required none of this. He was a born orator and a powerful speaker with much to convey.



Born orator ... much to convey....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The hallmark of a Guru is not mere oratory. He must have something vital to convey. His words should have power and the strength of authority. Once Akbar asked Birbal, “I have heard that one should get the mantra from the Teacher. Why can’t we just read the scriptures and get the mantra from there?” Birbal replied, “No! No! When it comes from the Teacher it has the power of the Teacher.” Akbar didn’t understand him and remained unconvinced.

As they were walking they came across two soldiers. Birbal was quick to make his

point. He ordered the soldiers, “Capture this king! Arrest him and put him in jail.” Akbar was really enraged and told the same soldiers to put Birbal behind bars. Immediately they arrested Birbal. A satisfied Birbal then said, “See this is what I meant, I used the same words, as you, but the soldiers listened to you, not to me. It is not the words but the source they come from that is important. When you speak, you speak with authority and power. Similarly when a Teacher uses words they have a different power, a different strength in them.”

A vagmi is, not an ordinary orator but a great orator, someone who can inspire people through his oratory and make them follow the path of good. Actually it is very difficult to inspire even one’s self. To take anyone on the path of good is not very easy. Only a great orator can do this effortlessly. This is the powerful attribute of a great Guru.

OM VAAGMINE NAMAH

341. OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

12-04-2016

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

Salutations to him who is all-pervasive, well-known, seen everywhere.

Vaibhava – glorious. When we are delivering a talk or lecture and the power goes off, what do we do? We ask someone to chant or we wait. If it is a large crowd, and we have time, we can always make up for it the next day, as it is a long camp, we have time.

But during Gurudev's time, there was no access to alternative power systems as we have today – generator, battery and so on. In the 70s all this was not even available, or if it was, then very few institutions had access to such technology.

So in one particular place when Gurudev went to speak, a section of crowd made up of students belonging to a specific ideology, were determined to disturb the talks. Their only opponent was Hinduism. Not Christianity, not Islam. And no specific God; only Hinduism.

So here was a Hindu sannyasi trying to talk and these students were causing a variety of disturbances. Suddenly the power went off, failed. So there was little more noise from that section. And one of them who was instrumental in causing all that commotion, is a staunch devotee today …. from Cannanore, Kerala.

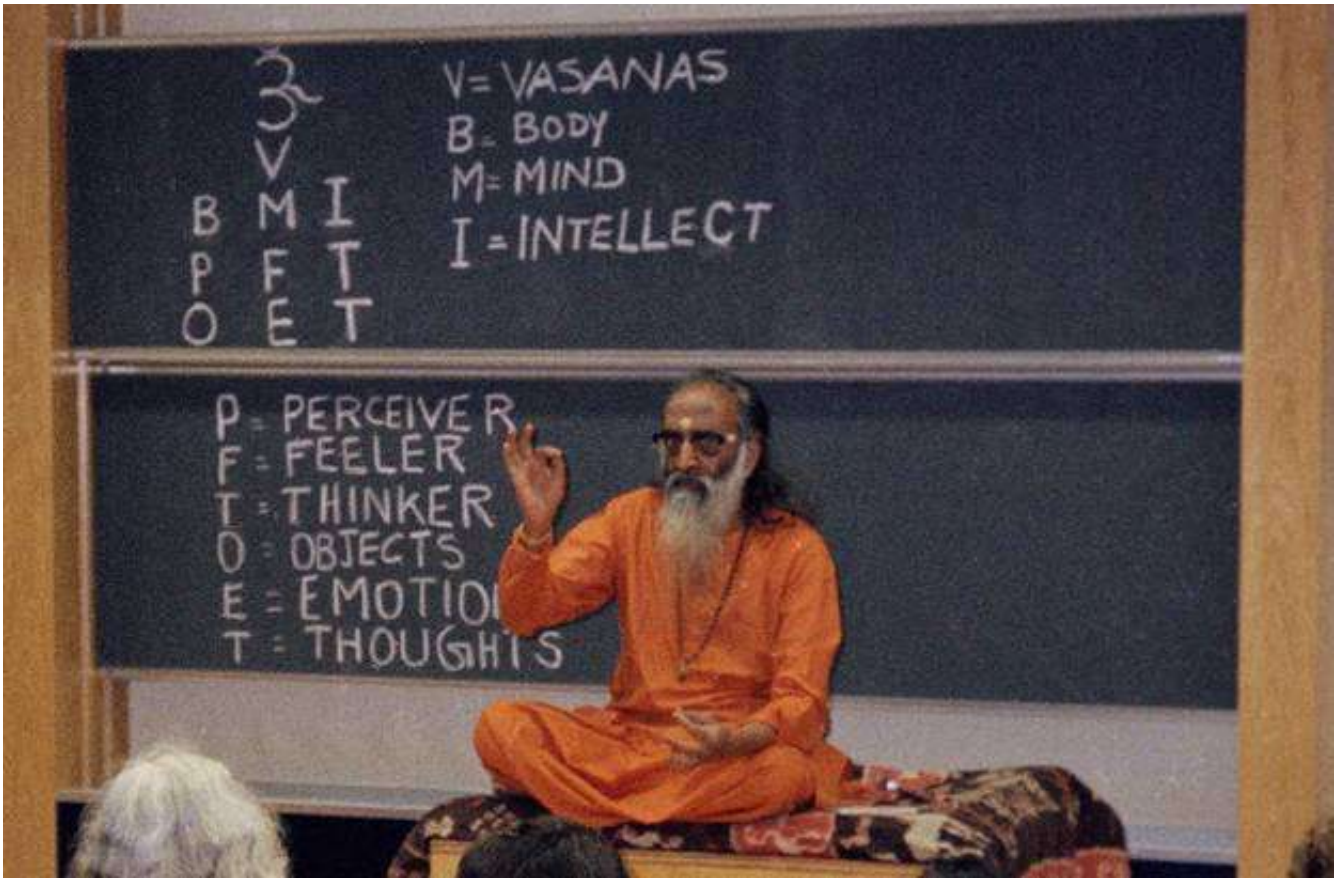
So the power went off and when these guys grew noisier, Swamiji said, "What if the outer lights are off? The inner light is still on."

Hear…Listen. Even those noisy people couldn't help but hear him. That was one of the most brilliant responses. If the outer light is out, so what. It is the inner light which is on. The clarity with which he speaks of that light inside, that power inside! People are convinced.

PritishNandy, then the editor of a large newspaper, described Gurudev in most beautiful manner. Hindu Missionary. (It was published in the Sunday magazine. It is on our website too.) He describes how busy Swamiji is. How he travels from one place to another. And then he says – "this is the best thing that has happened to

Hinduism.” Who? Swami Chinmayananda. Why? ‘He is not a quack healer. He is not a mysterious person who gives nirvana or anything for a fee. And he does not claim he is an avatar, except for argument's sake, and in the end he says you are also God. Not that he claims he alone is God. Everyone is God that way. So this is the best thing that could happen to Hinduism. Nothing mystical around him. He has denied it!’

And PritishNandy says – ‘he is one of those rare people who has hardly given any information about himself as information about him (Gurudev) is only hearsay. The Swami has no official biography. No information about him, of his past. And what does he do? He simply teaches.’ This is the most beautiful part – ‘He simply teaches. That’s reality, he simply teaches.’



He simply teaches.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

When people came to Gurudev and said – Swamiji, people want to meet you. What time can we ask them to come and have your darshan? This is how organisers treat

saints -- what time they can have your darshan? He said – I will meet them between 3 and 4 p.m (or whatever time).
Meet them. he would insist. Darshan time? I will meet people. And when he meets people he treats them all the same, breaking all ranks. He will be with them like any ordinary person. Like how you sit and talk to your friend or to somebody, in the same manner. He never kept himself apart that way. He knew. Everyone is Reality. He treated people that way.

So a simple teacher who understood the Truth, who taught without any reservations, without distancing himself from the audience, sitting there with them like any common person.
And the Truth in which he is rooted, it is this light which is on.

This is the light which is important. No doubt if time was available then he would revisit the talk the next day. But he was not wasting time. What has to be ignited, has to be ignited. He was not wasting time on it.
And he knew the power with which he could ignite people....

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

Offered by Shri Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

'Vibhu' is all pervading.
Gurudev as Brahman is all pervading. This is felt by all His devotees. They are able to see Him working through various people at various centres and phenomenal results happening. Many devotees are blessed to feel His presence all the time. His work is spread all over the world. The seeds that He has sown for cultural and spiritual revival will stay forever, influencing the lives of all. His presence is felt not merely subjectively, but also through His teachings, His institutions – the Chinmaya Mission, CORD, CIF – His books, and so on.

Gurudev comments in the Vivekachudamani, verse 435:

The man of Perfection sees his own Self in the consciousness which is playing

through all bodies.



That same Consciousness pervading all bodies .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Gurudev also makes eloquent reference to 'Vibhu' in His commentary upon Naam 880 of the Vishnusahasranama:

"All 'pervading' Lord Narayana the Self is unconditioned by time or space. He is the Eternal and Omnipresent. In His absolute nature He is all pervading as He is unlimited by any conditionings."

At Every Breath A Teaching page 292

The last good byes

Veronica Hausman, Fremont, California

At the end of a camp in Canada, Veronica Hausman was in a sad mood since it was the first time she saw Swamiji sitting in a chair, not cross-legged on a platform, as had been His style for so many years. No doubt it was a sign that the pain in His legs had become severe for them to be crossed now. Thoughts of her Guru's mortality overcame her and her eyes filled with tears.
Swamiji looked at her and said what does a Tree care if one leaf were to fall?

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the All pervading.
Vibhu means one who is in all, alternatively one who has become all. That Supreme Reality itself has become this whole world, like the one gold, becomes the different ornaments. The one clay itself is shaped to become all the different clay pots. Similarly this whole world, which we see, is the expression of only that One Supreme Reality expressing as many beings. This reality has the most amazing power. It plays the role of so many beings at the same time. We are playing so many different roles. In each one we support a distinct individuality or an image of our self as separate from others. Knowing this the one who identifies with the total is Vibhu, the Lord, who understands his own identity with everyone - with the sinner as well as the saint, with human beings, animals birds and plants.



Samadarshi.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

In the Bhagavad-gitaBhagavan says,
"vidyavinayasampannebrahmanegavihastini,
shunicahivashvapake ca panditahsamadarshinah." (V.18)
A pandita is one who is samadarshi or one who sees equality everywhere. Whether in a brahmin, an elephant, a horse or chandala, he sees the same tattva everywhere. One who has identified with everyone, who knows that I myself havebecome all, is Vibhu, the Supreme Reality.

OM VIBHAVE NAMAH

342. OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

13-04-2016

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swamini Supreetananda, erstwhile Head of Chinmaya Mission Mangalore, currently residing at CM Bangalore.

Significance of Nada Bindu and Kala
Articulatory processes of speech produce Nada which represents the vibrancy of enthusiasm in life. It is some divine humming. Prana or Consciousness is called Kalaa. Bindu is the life-process. When Bindu and Kalaa merge together Nada merges within. This stage is called 'Nishabda',the stage of self-awareness, of Absolute Brahman.

'Bindu' is actually Parasakthi. Mother Nature is Parashakthi, also called Moola Prakriti. This is the origin of Manas, intellect, Mind and Ego. From Parashakti four types of speech arise. They are called para pasyanthi madhyama and vaikhari. Para is at the stage of sankalpa, where idea is generated. Pashyanthi is the stage where the idea gets verbal. Madhyama is the stage of articulation when jaws, toungue, teeth and other parts start moving. Vaikhari is the final expression when one talks aloud. As these variants dissolve one by one leading towards the total silencing of Sankalpa, there arises Brahma Ananda, the Divine Bliss.

Nada Bindu and Kala are the various terms signifying the divine sport of the evolution of the world of speech and sound. Like White colour is the combination of seven colours, the manifest universe is a combination of several forces.



Swamini Supreetananda with Swami Brahmananda ji

Navarasas give rise to vinoda. There is no sound in color. There is no color in sound. Nada is sound. Bindu is silence. End of nada is bindu. Bindu is origin of sound. Mixture of these two is kalaa. This world is a sort of a mesh or a puzzle of kalas.Waves of kalaas constitute life or jiva.Relation amongst the different forms of jivas is the essence of this world. One who knows this secret encounters no fear or danger. One who is ignorant of this can never hope to triumph over tragedies in life. God is beyond nada bindu & kala. The Omnicient Overlord is described as nadabidukalamaya.

Pujya Swami Chinma yananda was a wise sage and a simple fun-loving Swamiji, one amongst us. He is revered and respected as Vinodapriyaya. Vinodapriyaya Namahis one of the chants through which we worship him. Swamiji was fond of jokes. He remained ever-jovial. He used to start his speech in a lighter vein. He used to roar like a lion. He was gracefullike apeacock. He was charming

and pleasing like a parrot. As Pujya Swami Chinmayananda used to enter the Lecture hall gracefully, the whole gathering of listeners used to welcome him eagerly looking forward to his fun filled illuminating speech. He was so grave in the depth of his messages, but so simple in the manner of his expressions. He used to camouflage the most serious thoughts of deep philosophy in terms of simple similes and humorous comparisons. While explaining the truths of Vedanta he exhibited rare histrionic skills. He was unique and unparalleled. Thousands of people used to remain in pin-drop silence for hours together. He used to cut jokes making people burst in laugh all of a sudden. While explaining the concepts like avidya, ajnana, moha and bhrama etc. he used to make his audience realize their follies. Some of the members in the audience used to bow down their head in shame. Some used to cry and some used to sigh. Swamiji used to be watchful and concerned. He used to cite suitable examples to bring home the intended meaning of scriptural passages. He used to demonstrate the reality of nava rasas in his discourses. He enjoyed the nava rasas. All through he used to humour his devotees. At the dinner table or while relaxing, he cracked jokes. He used to participate in various cultural activities. He used to take part in programmes personally and he used to enjoy them whole-heartedly. He used to mix with ordinary workers and volunteers. He used to entertain them. Just like that he used to walk into the kitchen and make fun of the people around there. He used to mix with the ladies and artists and deal with them with utmost tenderness. He remained light and modest with the children as well as the aged. Though he used to shout at the office bearers in meetings, he always guided them on the right track. He remained straight forward, truthful and upright. He showered love on one and all. Those who want to know more can see jivanmuktananda lahari and enjoy. Scholars and great savants who have observed so closely all these traits in Gurudev have declared him as Vinodapriya. Let us also chant Om Sri Vinodapriyaya Namah. Jai Vinodapriyaya Namah.Sri Sadgurubhyo Namah. Swami Chinmayasadgurave Namah.

Swamini ji wrote her reflections in chaste Kannada. We are most grateful to Dr. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Head of Department, Philosophy Arts and Culture, and Spiritual Studies at Amrita Vidyapeetham University, for translating Swamini ji’s text. Dr. Iyengar was thefirst Director of CIF [1998-2003] appointed by Pujya Guruji.

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Gurudev's humour was inescapable. He could through the medium of humour subtly inject difficult Vedantic concepts into us. He once said even if I joke, it has a

purpose. Infact this trait is seen in many Mahatmas.



Playful like Krishna .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Sri Rama whose life is full of seriousness in contrast to Sri Krishna's life of fun and playfulness. Even then there two main instances in Sri Rama’s life, and that too at most crucial situations, which are full of humour. When Sri Rama was leaving for the forest, He was giving away a lot in charities (daana). In the last minute a Brahmin comes. Sri Rama wanted to have some fun. Sri Rama asked the old man to throw a stick with all his might and take all the cows within that area. Sri Rama enjoyed the vigour with which the old man swirled and hurled the stick! Again, when Surpanakha propositions Sri Rama, He cheekily points Lakshmana to her and asks her to court Lakshmana instead (likely because Lakshmana's wife is not present). The whole episode was humourous.

Gurudev once was giving talks at Neyveli Lignite Corporation. The CEO was showing Gurudev the lignite mines and said, “Swamiji this is ‘mine’.

Gurudev immediately responded, “Is it yours?”
That was His impromptu sense of humour.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know him pg 49

His humour
Smt. Rama.W.Naidu
At Sidhabari in 1989,I was told to stay behind at dinner and serve Him.
He takes only fruits at night. He didn't take much. On one side there was a bowl of medicines. I asked Swamiji, "You take so much of medicines?”
Immediately Swamiji said, “That (medicine) is my food and this (food) is my medicine."

Page 51 Shri Radha Krishna, Allahabad

In His old age and failing health, His mental faculties,intellectual acumen and sense of humour were as sharp as ever.

Vedanta pg 82
Swami Chidananda
August 30 1993 Chicago Chinmaya Mission Swamiji memorial lecture.

He was a man of great humour. He liked to laugh and make others laugh also.
He endeared Himself to everyone because He cherished affectionate love for everyone.



With Swami Chidananda at Kasargode....

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P. Easwar, CM Mumbai



“Is your vehicle running on steam?” asks Gurudev sitting on the left side of the car that I was driving. I was taking Him for the inaugural ceremony of a yagna of another mahatma, at Cross Maidan, Bombay from the Powai Ashram which is at the other end of the city.
And Eswar ji leaves it to your imagination and knowledge of Gurudev to decode the humour!

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from a collection of anecdotes with Gurudev, sent by Acharya Vilasini, Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Salutations to the One who loved humour

In every new city that Swamiji visited, new doctors would arrive to meet him and be his personal physician for the next ten days of the yajna. Each doctor would offer new advice which Swamiji would graciously listen to and then promptly forget. But even though doctor after doctor told him he should travel less and rest more, he would smile and nod benevolently. Then he would not change a single thing on his schedule! He would say, “My children are calling me, I must go.” He also joked, “Why, I never travel at all. I merely go up on the plane, then the world turns under me, and then the plane comes down! I am not moving anywhere!” Our Gurudev was truly achala--the motionless!

When Swamiji was told that he had an enlarged heart, weakened by the earlier heart attack, he seemed quite amused and announced to everyone for weeks that his love for us all was so vast and his heart was so great that it became enlarged!

Before his bypass surgery, he told the doctors that when they opened him up, they would be surprised at how large-hearted he is. If he had high sugar levels due to his diabetes, he would tell people that he was just too sweet.

Once his speaking schedule resumed, Swamiji rarely made time for exercise. It was very hard for his doctor to get angry with him about this. When one doctor questioned him about exercising, Swamiji got a very wide-eyed, innocent look, nodded his head up and down, and replied seriously, “Oh yes, I exercise often..... “ After a pregnant pause, he added, “... in my mind!” Of course the doctors would have to laugh and forget to scold him for not exercising.

Aside from the Equal sweetener, Swamiji was prescribed several medications for his heart disease and diabetes, and these had to be given a few times a day. He was least bothered about taking them, and it was soon realized that someone would have to give him his pills and insulin injections or he would not take them. After evening dinner, he held out his hand to take the pills, and I would give them to him as he swallowed them one by one. One evening, a young boy from the bhiksha host family was looking wide-eyed at him. Swamiji said, “See these pills? They are keeping me alive!”



They are keeping me alive .....!

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Swamiji commented in front of a doctor once, “See, doctor, my life depends on these tiny pills!” He was quite humored by the thought that such tiny pills were supposedly giving the gift of life.
Swamiji never seemed to take his serious, life-threatening illness very seriously. Doctors would all the time try to convince him to rest more, travel less, follow a strict diet, and tell him dire consequences of not following them. Swamiji just smiled and laughed and said, “This is your duty, doctor, and God’s will. My duty is to spread His glories in glorious service!”

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SwamiNikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

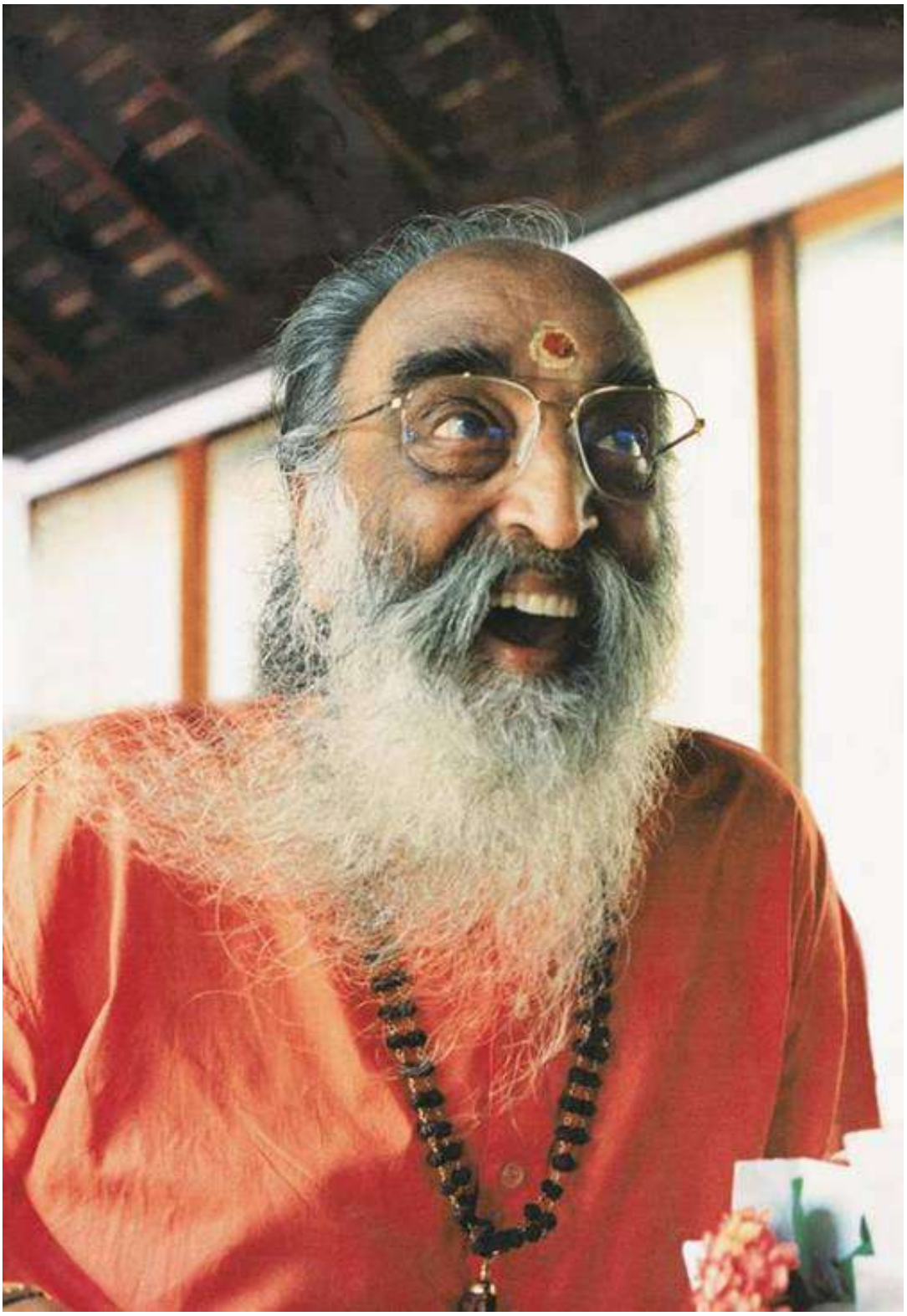
Salutations to One who loves humour.
Vinoda is humour, fun and laughter. Priya is the lover of. So vinodapriya is one who loves fun, humour and laughter.
Humour is a strange phenomenon. Fun is difficult to articulate. It is that which gives happiness, makes us laugh, or relaxes us. Only human beings have this wondrous ability to laugh and to make others laugh. Animals also make us laugh but they don’t know that they are making us laugh. A joke or a funny sight can bring a

smile on the face or laughter to our lips. There is humour in every little thing and when we discover it, we laugh spontaneously. Gurudev had this great ability. Suddenly he would notice something and laugh a deep belly laugh. He could relate incidents in the most humourous way. Normally we would never believe that those incidents could evoke laughter. He found laughter even in the ordinary and mundane things of life.

He knew how to tell a story to perfection. He would give the hero a name, say Mr. Iyer and then proceed to describe him in great detail. He would give a graphic description of how he comes home angry because of the dressing down from his boss. He is very upset. He wants someone on whom he can pour out all that annoyance. He is all set to vent this pent up venom on his wife. His wife is smart. She knows that the late evening meeting may contribute to his ill humour. She makes sure everything is neat and tidy, leaving no room for complaint. He on his part has convinced himself that the house will be dirty with things scattered all over, so he can use that as an excuse.

Mr Iyer reaches home and finds everything spic and span. He looks up and down. Gurudev would then look around like the fictitious Mr. Iyer, looking for an excuse to complain or shout. Unfortunately for him everything is in order and he doesn't get a chance to give vent to his anger. This minute observation of human nature and behaviour would evoke much joy and hilarity.

Only those who are totally free have this ability to laugh and joke. We are generally preoccupied with the past or future. If one is concerned about the future, one is not available for any jokes. That person himself becomes a joke! If we are occupied with the past we are not available in the present. We miss opportunities to see the humour around us. Every incident can evoke joy, excitement and laughter in us. It is not laughing at someone else. One could be laughing at one's own self or just laughing for the very fun of it!



Free to laugh.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Ashtavakra was a great sage whose body was bent in eight places. He presented a very crooked and strange sight. Once he entered Raja Janak's court and everyone laughed. Though he was a wise person, his appearance made everyone laugh. So he asked them, "Whom are you laughing at? Are you laughing at the pot or are you laughing at the pot maker? If you are laughing at the pot then I will also laugh because my body is quite funny. But if you are laughing at the pot maker then you are making a mistake." He could see humour even in his own body.

Likwise Gurudev too could find humour in everything.

OM VINODAPRIYAAYA NAMAH

343. OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

14-04-2016

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH



OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda

* Salutations to the humble one. Vinayasheelaya Namah.

* In all his talks, most of the time he would say - you and I have to do it. There was

no hint at all of ‘where I have reached, you have not.’

He would always say you and I. Krishna tells you and me to follow. Krishna tells us to follow. Us, you and I. The talk was always in that tone. He places himself as a part of the audience who he is addressing.

* Gurudev used to say ‘we’. So you also need to become cautious when this word 'You, You 'is being used often. "You do it" ? No... "WE will do it." It’s for us.

* Most of the time he would say it is Narayana’s work. He did it, it is Lord’s will. Not taking credit for what is being achieved.

* Gurudev’s last yajna in India was in Hyderabad. After that it was a camp in Sidhbari. One day he went and asked the hosts Dr. Ramesh & Suhasini -- that time Swamiji’s secretary was one Balan, he was also there -- Gurudev went and asked, ‘how was the talk?’ Very rare, how was the talk! Very, very, rare. They were quite taken aback! What does Gurudev mean by asking that question? Naturally, the talk was very very good so they said – Swamiji the talk was very good. Gurudev says, ‘Tapovan Swami spoke completely.’ He spoke completely? Where? Tapovan Maharaj attained Samadhi in 1957! And this is Gurudev’s last yajna.

* These are the areas where we can see his humility. Looking at Gurudev, very few people know his humbleness. His idea of humbleness was so different. Humbleness is not being meek. Many people mistake that if you are meek, you are humble. For him identifying with the audience saying you and I that is being humble. Every time attributing saying it is Lord’s work which is happening. His work. That is being humble. The temple priest who goes to do Kumbhabhishekam on the kalasha on the temple tower, Swamiji touches his feet. That is being humble. When people dress up like Tapovan Maharaj and walk in front of him he touches their feet. Bal-vihar children and all that.... he will do that. That is being humble. For him at that moment, in that person he could remember so many things. Probably that emotion was evoked.

* ...whether it is Lord Krishna, whether it is someone dressed like Adi Shankara or someone dressed like Tapovan Maharaj. At that point of time those who were instrumental in invoking that mood in his mind, that bhaava, he offers his gratitude to them. So Gurudev’s humbleness if you see, you have to observe closely, understand.

* Respecting every person who has corresponded with him. Respecting everyone who has asked question to him. Replying it. Respecting every person who has donated some funds to him. That is being humble. He doesn’t need it. To all those people, being grateful to them. Receiving it with such a gratitude.

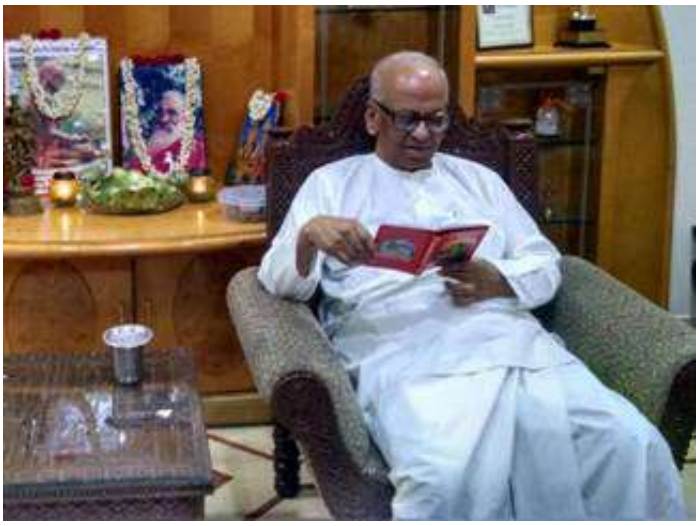
* M.S.Subbalakshmi once came to sing the invocation for a yajna. She was unable to sit on the ground as she normally does – owing to age, back problem etc. And Swamiji is asking – sit on the chair. She was saying ‘No, no, no.... I will sit down.’ His empathy, he says – one old man can understand the problems of another old person. I know what is the problem. I know. I can understand that. Please sit.

Empathy.....

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH



OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Vinaya ... humility, is always associated with vidya. "Vidya Vinaya sa panne". This is true in all cases of knowledge since even in emperical knowledge the more one knows, the more one discovers how much more he has to know. In spirituality this is even more so, since spiritual knowledge takes over the ego. Therefore, it is no wonder Sri Gurudev was humble.
Once, I wrote a letter to Gurudev and being Gurupurnima day I sought Gurudev's blessings. Sri Swamiji replied, ‘may my Gurudev's blessings be on both of us’. Any worship offered to him He closes His eyes passes on to God or His Guru sometimes saying "Narayana,Narayana!"
Here is a write up by Swami Sidhananda in Every Breath A Teaching

His attributes

A Humble Mahatma page 122

When we were studying in Sandeepany Sadhanalaya from 1972 to 1974, one day Swamiji said another Swami is coming to visit our Asrama. His name was Swami Gangeshananda. He was very old and completely blind. On the previous day Gurudev had come to supervise the preparations to make sure everything was alright. We arranged flowers and other details on the speaker's podium.
Gurudev saw two chairs on the stage and asked what is this other chair for?
We replied "It is for you Swamiji."
He said, “For me, on the stage? A great mahatma is coming when He was a Swami I was nobody! I was nothing at that time. When He comes I won't sit on the stage.

Vedanta page 282
At another instance when I was behind Gurudev's wheel chair, taking Him after His talk to the car outside, I was anxious to make people give right of way to Gurudev. So I shouted to the dispersing crowd "Move, give way to Gurudev to go through."
Gurudev turned to me and asked, ‘but why should they move? Am I so important? I am just like all of them.’
Even today if I think I am important somewhere, I remember that lesson in humility.

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH



Vinaya is humility and one endowed with humility is vinayashila. The scriptures say, 'Vidya dadati vinayam – the one with the right understanding becomes humble.' This Sanskrit saying means that with right knowledge, we gain humility. With humility we become fit recipients for both internal and external wealth. With wealth we can follow the path of dharma and through dharma, we gain peace.

Vinaya is a very important and peculiar quality. Gurudev used to say that the moment we become aware of it, it disappears. True humility is a by-product of a deep understanding of life and the Self. Through experience and knowledge, a person becomes humble. When we are ignorant about the world and ourselves, and have no knowledge of the higher, we tend to be proud of our little achievements. When the realisation dawns that there is a much greater power, we automatically become humble.

Einstein was once asked what he thought about science and the knowledge acquired by the world. He said that first he thought he knew a great deal but after learning and discovering the beauty of this world, he felt that he knew precious little. The more we come to know the world, the more we understand the enormity of what we do not know. The world is a great mystery. The more we learn about life and the scriptures, the more we understand our ignorance. One way to develop this quality of humility is by serving someone wiser and higher.

Hanumanji was powerful, knowledgeable and wise. He had the strength to fight and vanquish even devatas. Such achievements can go to anyone's head. A lesser being than him would have become proud. Fortunately, he was endowed with great humility and became a servant of the Lord. Even after having performed the impossible task of burning and laying waste the whole of Lanka, he had no pride. He

gave the entire credit to the Lord, who he said was functioning through him.

One old lady living in a village had a cock, who would crow at the crack of dawn. The poor lady in her ignorance thought that the sun rose because of the cock. She became very proud of her cock. The villagers would tease her, so one day to teach them a lesson; she decided to leave the village with her cock. The sun rose in the new village and she thought that it was due to her cock!

Pride is the opposite of humility. This emotion arises when we become full of ourselves and develop a holier than thou attitude. We than begin to think of ourselves as being almost worshipful and greater than the rest. But when the understanding dawns, we see ourselves for what we are and automatically become simple and humble.

Louis Pasteur is world renowned for his discovery of penicillin. Though counted among the medical greats, he was at heart a man with humility. One day he was travelling by train. His companion in the train was going to join the Louis Pasteur Institute. During the course of the journey, Pasteur sat down to pray. The young man arrogantly told him there was now no need for God. Louis Pasteur, he said had developed this wonder drug, which could take care of everything. The older man continued with what he was doing. When they detrained, the young man asked for his name. He was completely taken aback, when he found that the man was none other than Louis Pasteur himself! Even Albert Einstein said, “God does not play dice!” After studying science in such detail, we understand that there is a higher power.

Humility is not something that we can practice or learn in a personality development course. It is a by-product of deep understanding and knowledge and comes easily when we serve and develop love for the Lord.

Pujya Gurudev had the the ability to understand and speak on the deepest significances of the scriptures. Despite having this greatest knowledge, he was totally humble. Once in America, a gentleman came early to attend Gurudev’s talk. It was the first time that he had come to such an event. Sitting in the audience, he struck up a conversation with his neighbour. They talked for a while about the swami, who the man had heard great things about. Soon it was time for the discourse to begin. Gurudev got up, introduced himself, walked upto the stage and delivered his lecture for the evening. Just like that! He was completely down to earth and simple.

Again, once in the US, some devotees wanted to take Gurudev to a restaurant for bhiksha. They were in doubt because most restaurants serve non-vegetarian food. With hesitation they asked Gurudev if he had any objection. He said he was ready to go, so long as he was given vegetarian food. He had total humility, born out of understanding and the ability to adjust to different situations and conditions.

OM VINAYASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

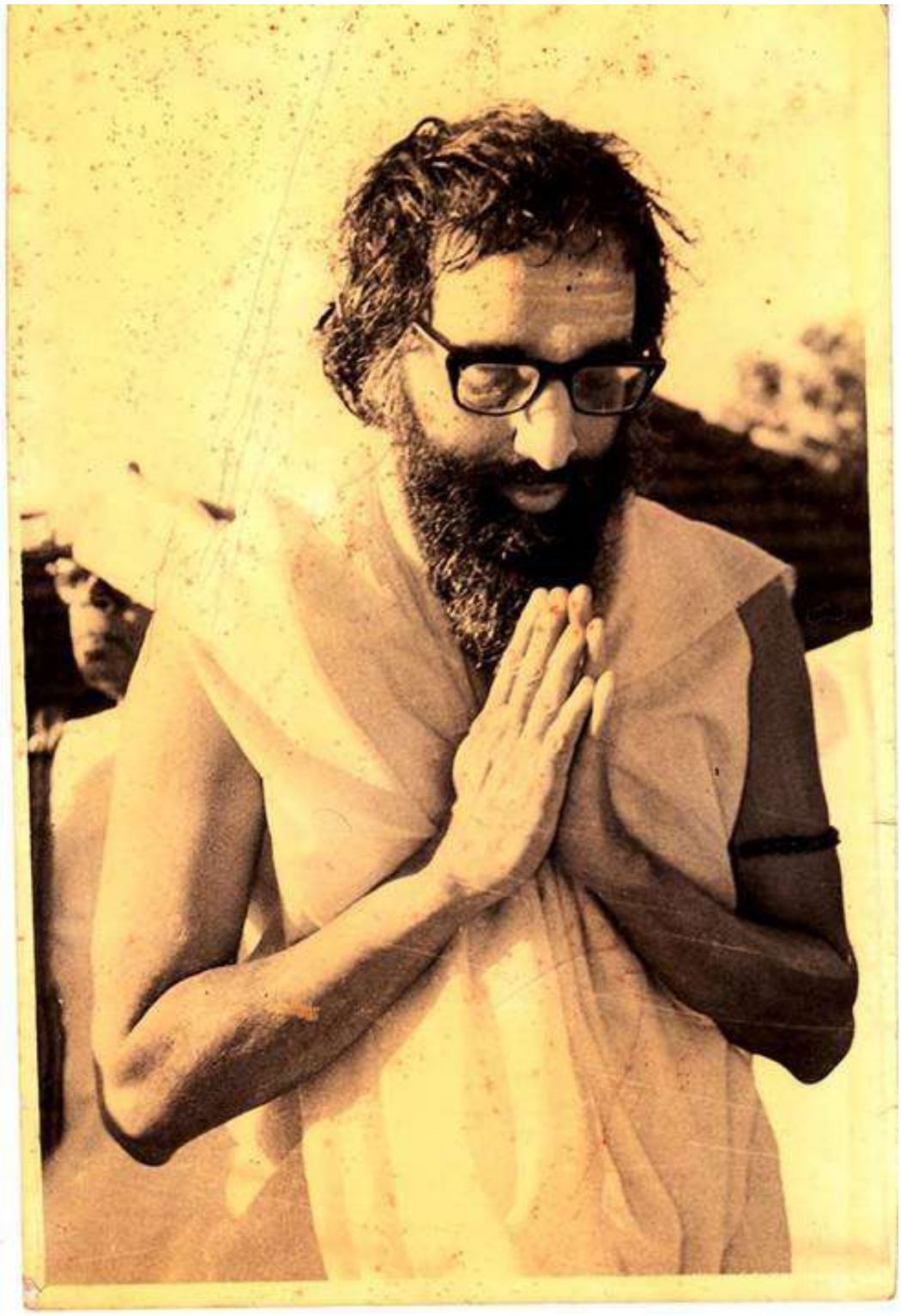
344. OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

15-04-2016

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

Extracts from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to Him who is free from all attachments.
* One of his mannerism of detachment was a visible dusting his hands off. If he does that, it means it is over, he has nothing more to do with that moment or transaction. People would come and give donations. Gurudev would call the Trustees and say – here, this is for this (purpose), this is for this (purpose). That was it. That meant that was the last word on that transaction. I have nothing left now. It doesn't matter what is the amount. He kept himself completely detached, throughout.
*Any amount of funds, any programme, any place, any amount of property … He walked around and past it. Never attached to it. Never attached to people either, though the love was complete. This is a very powerful lesson to be learnt. When you love someone completely, you don't miss them. Because it is complete, it is fulfilled. When it is not complete we demand more.



Fulfilled……

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

*Once we are fulfilled we won't demand it again. Most of the things we want to repeat again and again. Why? Because it is not fulfilled. Be it relationships or things, we are not fulfilled. And to be fulfilled, you must involve yourself completely, fully. That's how he was doing. When he loved us, He loved us completely.
* Many things that happened to him during the freedom struggle, he did not talk about to anyone. Some details he never told us. Not necessary. Because as a missionary he didn't want to say a few things. Chose to leave it be. Detached, keep moving, drop what is not needed. Move on, to the next. In that way he was completely free. This name definitely suits Swamiji 100%. Salutations to the one who is free from all attachments.

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the one who is free from all attachments (likes and dislikes)

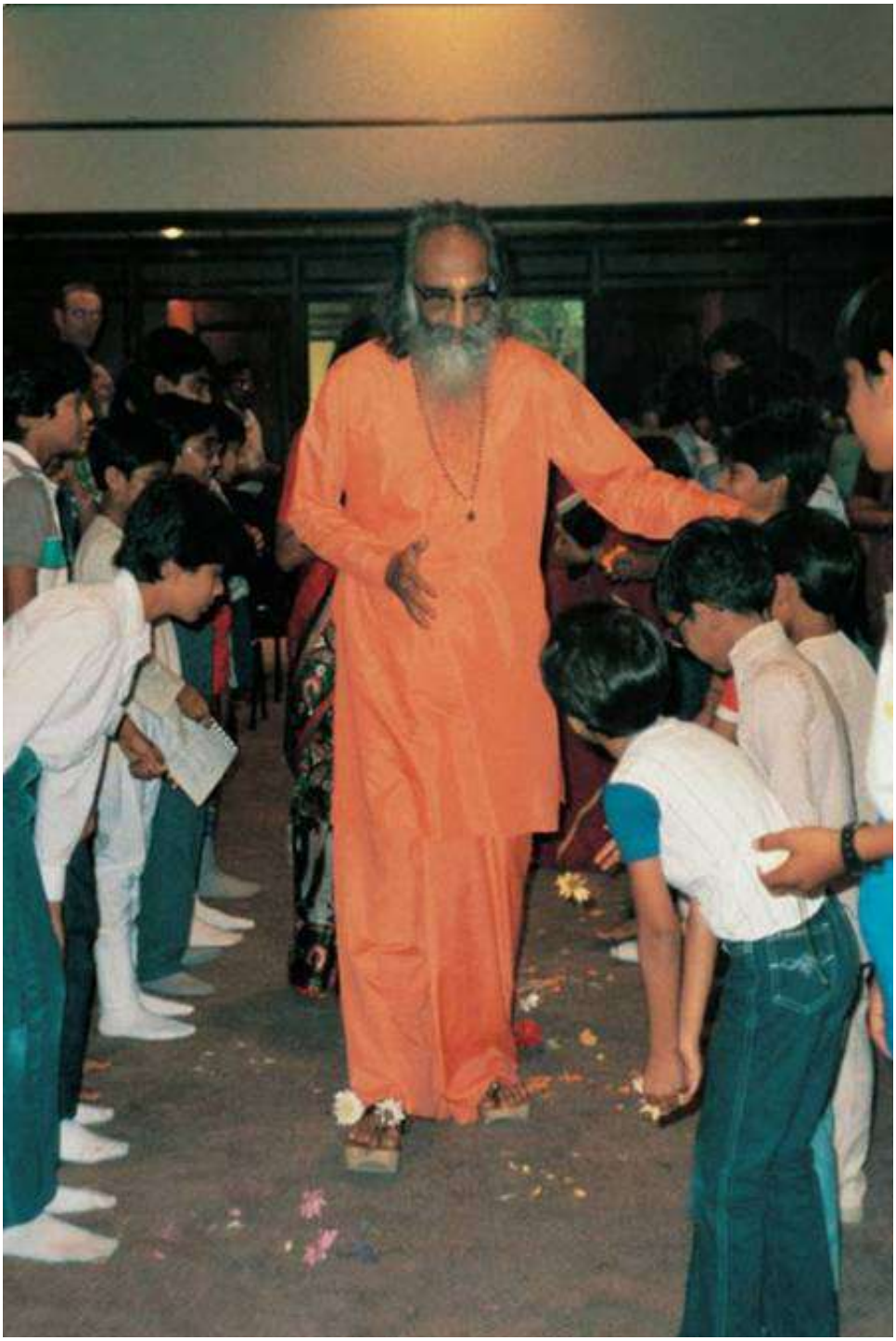
Kama Snehaprema raga Bhakthi are all essentially love. The difference lies in what Love associates with.
Love for external objects, for what one does not have, makes it Kama -desire. The same love for what one has becomes raga -attachment. The same love when directed towards a higher alter becomes Bhakthi, devotion. As Gurudev says, one loves spouse or children. One is devoted to parents, nation, guru, or God. A Brahma Gnani is an Āpta-kāma , who is self satisfied, whose desires are fulfilled. Therefore, no desires or attachments. They see themselves in all, they have unconditional love for all. Gurudev says attachment (raga) is: 'I plus I want' or 'ego plus ego centric desires'. A Gnani has transcended ego.

So Gurudev is Veetaraga, one who is free from attachment. Kama is to see many in the one and Bhakthi is to see the one in the many. Sri Gurudev always insists Gnana is complete only when you see yourself in all. When you see yourself in all you will love all equally and not have preferences which is basic character of Raga.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him pages 55 & 56
One in many

When I see His love for all of us, so spontaneous and perfect, I begin to understand a little, the meaning of the saying: "THE ONE IN THE MANY". When I see Him

work through His body (that is medically so ill) I begin to understand a little meaning of I being the controller of my body, and what it means to serve others is not different from serving oneself.



The One in Many.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

When I see His perfection, in looking after all His various organisations, I begin to understand a little about perfect management without tensions and pressures. I begin to understand a little of what complete detachment in the midst of intensive activities mean.

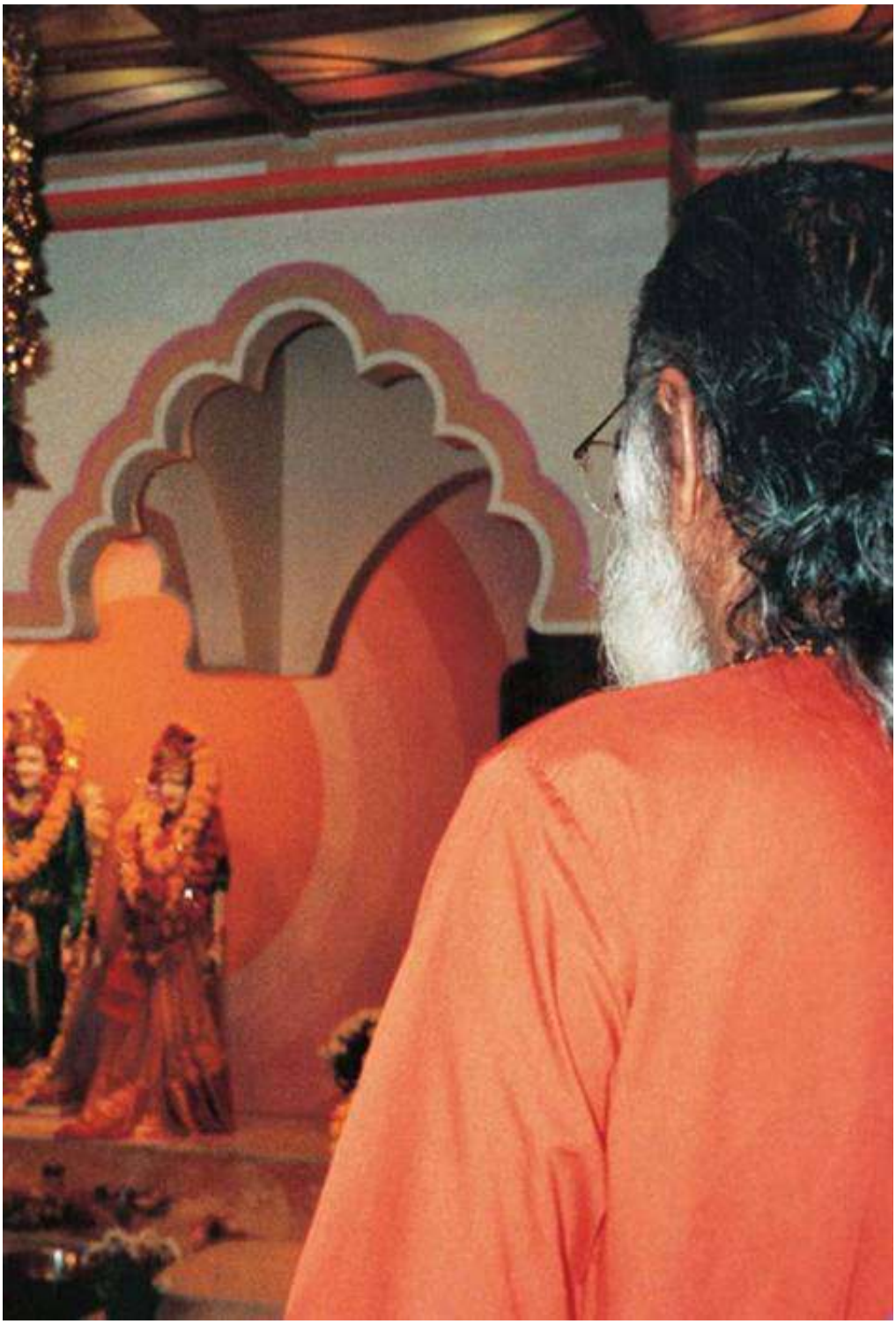
Every breath a teachingpg 135
Miracles - Reading about a stranger's death.
Anonymous
"Every day we read in news papers: 'So and so has passed away.....an accident took place on such and such road....' and we pay no attention, or give the news only scant attention. Then someone we know dies, and tears flow because of our attachment. After that, reading even about a stranger's death touches us."

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Raga is attachment and véta is freedom. Vétaraga is freedom from attachment. We are attached to body, mind, people, things, beings, wealth, position, name and fame. Another meaning for attachment is dependence. We are dependent, when we start expecting something from the object. For example, if we are attached to wealth, we become fully dependent on it. We feel that without wealth we are incomplete. We then identify completely and consider it as our very own self. The identification is so complete, that it becomes a part of us and without it we feel totally lost and helpless.



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The opposite of raga is dvesha. Raga and dvesha go together because each one of us is seeking happiness and trying to avoid unhappiness. We develop raga and

attachment to all that we feel gives happiness or pleasure. Conversely, we develop dvesha towards all those situations, people and conditions which give us pain or sorrow. In our mind the world is divided into two parts – one which we like and the other which we don't like. But when one gains the right understanding one becomes free from all likes and dislikes. There is total love for all beings, neither too much attachment nor too much dislike.

The scriptures give the example of air, which moves without getting attached to anything. Gurudev was like the air or water which moves freely in the world, without getting attached to a place or thing. The Mahatma has neither revulsion nor attachment. This does not mean that there is no love in the heart. The difference between love and attachment is that in love there are no expectations, no clinging sense of possession. Love frees one, whereas attachment binds.

In attachment we hold on because we expect happiness from the thing or being. We become selfish and only think of our happiness. Narada Bhakti Sutra says that in love we want to give happiness to the beloved but in attachment we want to take happiness from the other. We like to take happiness from wealth, people, places, food and the things around us. In attachment we are receivers but in love we are givers.

In attachment there is pain, sorrow and the stunting of growth. It stunts both our growth and also that of the other. In attachment we try and mould, change or modify the other. In love, we accept people as they are. With this acceptance, we may transform them, but even that is with acceptance.

When children come home sweaty and dirty, the father immediately sends them off to change. The mother on the other hand greets them with a hug, gives them a bath and changes their clothes. After which she again hugs them. This does not mean that the mother likes the dirt. No, she only accepts them as they are and then cleans them up. Similarly the teacher does not appreciate our negative qualities but neither does he abandon us because of them. The teacher tries to help us to remove these negativities. Swami Vivekananda said, 'Hate the sin, not the sinner!'

Generally, we say, 'I hate that person.' There may be some qualities in the other which we may not like. We identify with those qualities and superimpose dislike on the person. To take an extreme example, a person is holding something which we do not like. Does it mean that we dislike the person? One may not like something but with understanding those things can easily be eliminated. Mahätmäs have this immense love. They accept everyone as they are and then help them become free of their negativities. Gurudev went from place to place with total non-attachment. He would meet people in one place and then move to the next. This did not mean that he had forgotten the people in the first place, there was no clinging attachment.

The Gita says, 'vétarägabhayakrodha – one who is free from attachment also becomes free from fear, because both these qualities go together. The greater the attachment to things, people and the body, the greater is the fear. Vairagya or detachment gives fearlessness. It also gives freedom from anger and irritation.

Sometimes situations arise that make us sad. Often we find that our sadness is selfish. When Vishvamitra came to take Lord Rama and Lakshmana, Raja Dasharatha was sad. He did not want them to go. But when VashishthaMaharaj explained that this was for their benefit, he let them go. We are sad when our children leave home, but because we know it is for their welfare, we allow them the freedom to leave.

If and when we find we are sad, we should ask, "Am I sad because of them or myself? Am I sad because I am losing something or am I sad because the other person is losing something?" When Raja Dasharatha died, Vasistha Åñi told Bharat

not to grieve because his father had led a very good life and fulfilled all his duties. He had left for a higher calling. One should only be sad, if a person has not lived life properly. Only in such a case is it proper to grieve. Even in sadness, one should be aware whether it is for selfish or unselfish reasons.

Suppose we have a pet bird living in a cage and are attached to it. Suppose one day the realisation dawns that the bird is feeling congested. In such a case, what should we do? If there is real love for the bird, then we will let it free. In attachment there is selfishness and in love there is freedom.

OM VEETARAAGAAYA NAMAH

345. OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

16-04-2016

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SwaminiDivyananda, Chinmaya Siruveni, Coimbatore

salutations to the one who is to be known through (the study of) vedanta



With Him who kindled her interest in the scriptures....SwaminiDivyananda

We are Bharateeyasi.e people who revel on the Spiritual knowledge of our scriptures, comprising Vedas, Ithihasas, puranas etc. This knowledge we got from the Rishis. Rishi is a person who moves from place to place to impart this knowledge. As such swami Chinmayanandaji was a Rishi of the 20th century. Through the Yagnas, He spread the knowledge of the BhagvadGeeta and Upanishads to hundreds of thousand people. He carried this Knowledge Himself to every corner of India, and then to many many corners in the world. He was able to spread this Knowledge because He

knew this Knowledge and He lived this Knowledge. Through this Knowledge He pointed the Self to us. OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH.
Some excellent experiences with Him that shone upon His Vedic perfection. The most important and interesting were the explanation given on Lord Krishna – his 16008 wives, his love - Radha. So too the explanation given by him on Draupadi and her five husbands (yet she was a pativrata). During my college days, I was made fun of by students of other religion who chose to interpret Draupadi's marriage. I then requested my Guru Swami Chinmayanandji to explain the meaning. He said, Panchali represents an individual Jeeva and her five husbands are the five Kosas – Annamaya, Pranamaya etc. Panchali was always remembering Lord Krishna – The Parmatama; Jeeva is always dedicated to God – Brahman.
Krishna is the life force pulsating through each and every atom of our body. We are in search of God in us. Radha represents Jeeva and Krishna represents Brahman. Their union is the Jeeva merging into Brahman.
Thus Gurudev kindled my interest in the Scriptures as he was Vedanta-paaraga – beyond Vedanta!

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

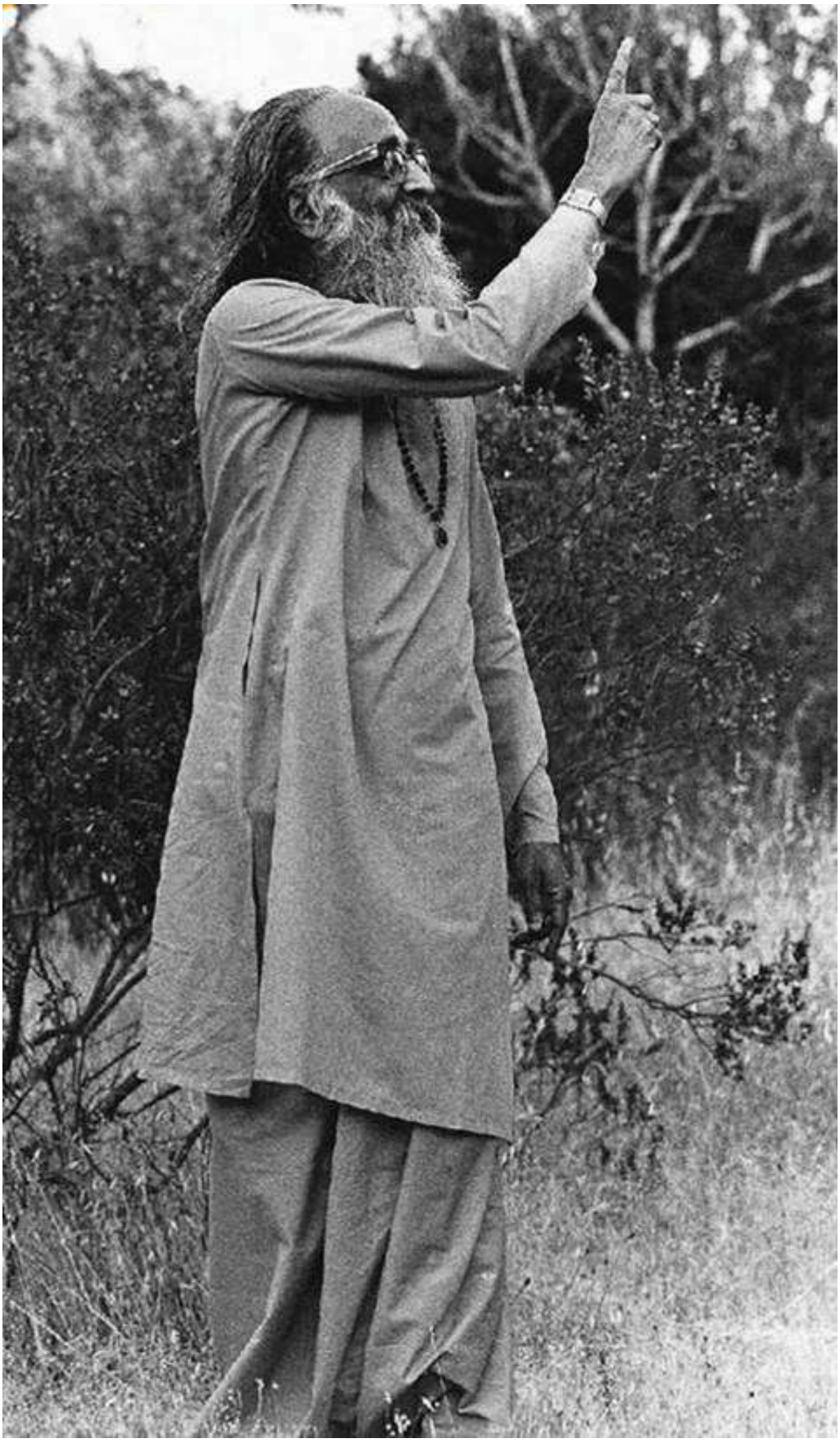
OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*Salutations to the one who is to be known through the study of scriptures that teach Self-knowledge. Vedanta vedyayanamah
*So what is the theme of Vedanta?Through study of scriptures, what is that we have to know? That experience what he has got, that divinity.Self Knowledge.
*Sometimes Gurudev used to have talks out, in the open air. And classes do get extended, particularly in a camp.
*If the mood if build up and the theme, subject is being delivered he would extend the class. In Coimbatore we witnessed this. Swamiji was discoursing on Sri Rama Gita from Adhyatma Ramayana. Veda Vyasa who has written Sri Rama Gita, which is focused on knowledge, speaks about Lakshmana as the right student. And Swamiji points out the difference. For Arjuna the knowledge which Krishna gave is – go act in the world. Because Arjuna has not purified himself well. On the other hand, he says Lakshmana has purified himself very well and Rama tells Lakshmana – drop all action. Two different levels of students. This was the subject and Swamiji was explaining this, the class got extended beyond the closing time.
It was getting hot. It was getting hot. He was seated under the tree and the speakers would be kept outside. lot of people sitting and listening. Gradually the sun

started falling on him. One of our devotees Mrs. ThangamWarrier, (they used to host Gurudev in Coimbatore), took an umbrella. At first she hesitated. The Sun was directly on the face, half of it on the face. Great devotee that she was, she could not bear that he was probably inconvenienced. Because that is their attitude – devotion. Not all people who came to Gurudev were Vedantins, intellectuals. Some of them were just pure devotees. How can he be scorched in the sun – they cannot bear that. But here, Swamiji was explaining; in that situation you should never go near him or disturb while he is talking. But she came with the umbrella. We were watching. Yuva Kendra members. We each thought, ah! Now gone, finished. She should not be going near but she is.... We knew. As Yuva Kendra members we had got enough of that situation and even scalded ourselves with wrong moves. This was 1988.

Swamiji took the umbrella, threw it, saying – sit down. Next statement – it is This light which makes that shine. Statement of authority. What sun are you talking about? Sun scorching? It is This Light which makes that shine.



It is This Light.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

You should have seen the place --- everything became still. And just as he said that -- it is This light that makes the sun shine -- a piece of cloud covered the sun. At that very moment. He looks up. Then, ‘ Hanh.. you see now?’ Jokingly. ‘You see? Where is he? Covered.’ But that statement he spoke – ‘it is This light that makes that shine’ – it was spoken with authority. The theme of Vedanta is to know that – it is the Self which illumines everything. It is this which gives light to all. And these are the words of not borrowed wisdom, but words of authority, experience.
That which the subject of Vedanta points out, it was his experience. So what do we have to know through Vedanta, was actually made known.

Prostrations to Him who is the Knowledge to be known through the scriptures.

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri. L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavathi. Brahman can only be known through sruthi vakyas- Sabda Pramana. Since He is Anirdesyam (which cannot be defined)
Achintyam (which cannot be thought of) ,Aprameyam (which cannot be sized or measured), Avyaktham (unmanifest) etc.
We know through the scriptures the nature of Brahman to be Sthithapragna (man of steady wisdom), Jivanmuktha (liberated while embodied),Guru etc. With these guidelines we understand our own Gurudev. Hence Vedantavedyameans: to be known through Vedanta.

Vivekachudamani verse 37says a guru is (Shantha)peaceful, (Mahanta)magnanimous, (Sant) Saintly, (lokahitam)for the sake of the world, (vasantavat)like the spring season, (charantaha)mobile, (BhimaBhavarnavam)dreadful ocean of finitude, (swayam)by themselves, (tirthva)having crossed, (ahetunanyanapi) even without any expectations, (Janan)other people, (tharayantah)they enable on to cross.

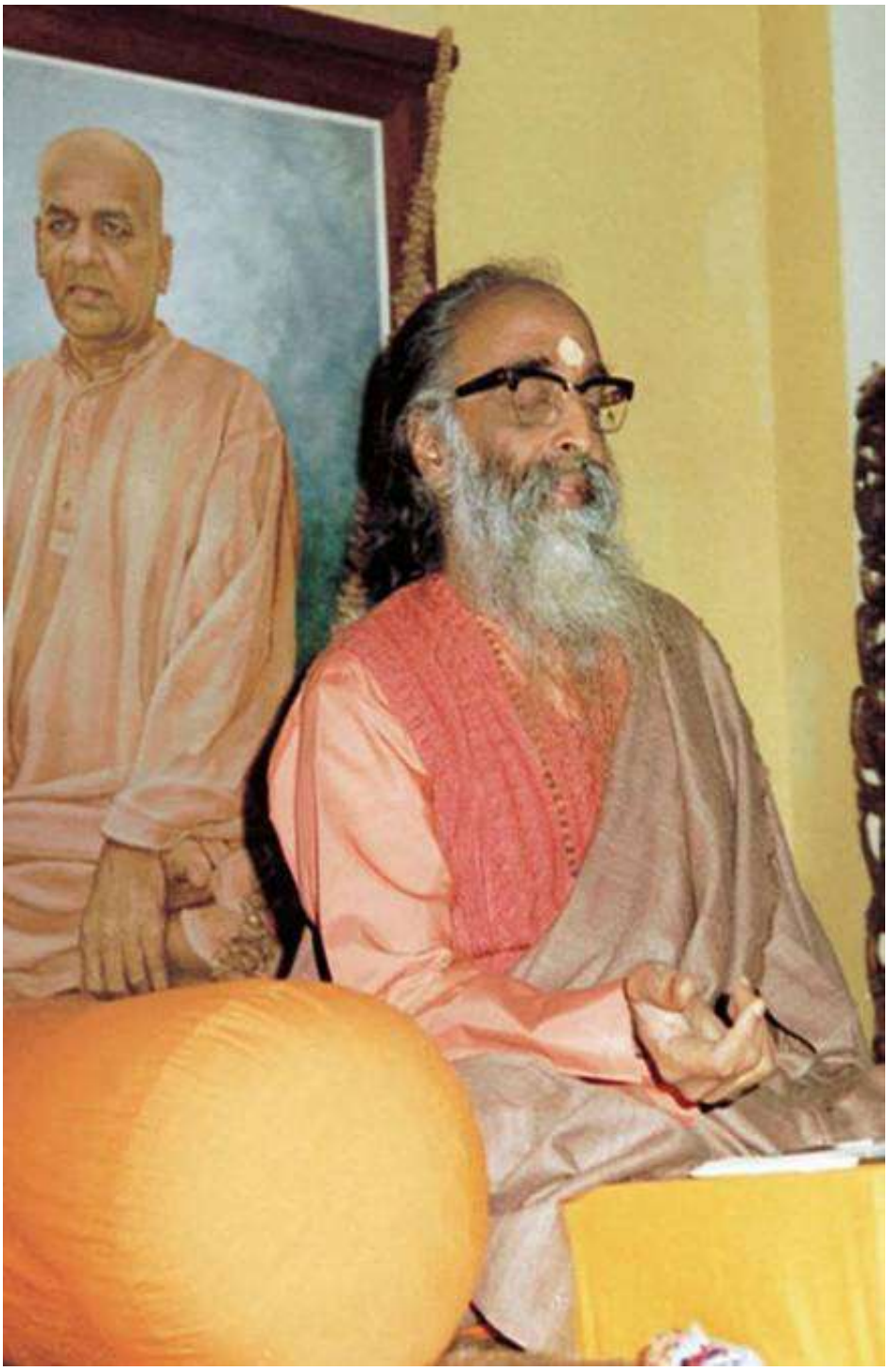
This describes Gurudev perfectly. The perfect description. Hence to be known

through scriptures. Also a guru, scriptures say, is a srotriya and a Brahma Nishta --well versed in scriptures and established in Brahman. Again we saw how Gurudev was a Brahma Nishta earlier. We will also be seeing Him as srotriya and srutiparaga in the later mantras. We have also seen He was a Jivanmukta.
Thus Gurudev could be known through the guidelines of scriptures and Vedanta.

Guruji Kritajnatastotram 8
Ye gunaahsarvasaastresuvarnyante Brahma Gnaaninam
Tiarayamsarvadaapurnoraajatesarvayoginaam

Fully endowed with the virtues of the knowers of Brahman as described in all the scriptures, he ever shines among all yogis.

Every Breath a Teaching
Introduction: Swami Chinmayananda: A Living Upanishad
Swami Tejomayanandaji the man who inherited Swami Chinmayananda's mantle as the head of Chinmaya mission worldwide,says of his Guru:
I saw Him as a perfect Jivanmuktapurusha-- a person liberated while living. Many a time I have felt that it is easier to describe Brahman (The Supreme Reality) than to describe a Jivanmukta. We find many verses in our scriptures in praise of such an enlightened soul. Pujya Gurudev was indeed a Jivanmukta(to be known through Scriptures)



Not easy to describe.....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know him page 55
R.B.SinghRewa

"I cannot know Him. But He is Himself not different from the Lord. He is the revelation of the Vedas. He is our Sastras lived."

Vivekachudamani 33describes A Guru --all the qualities there in could be found in Gurudev.
He who is well versed in the scriptures,sinless, not-afflicted by desires,a full knower of the Supreme,who has retired into the Supreme,who is as calm as the fire that has burnt up the fuel,who is boundless ocean of mercy that needs no cause for its expression, and who is an intimate friend of those who have surrendered unto Him.

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



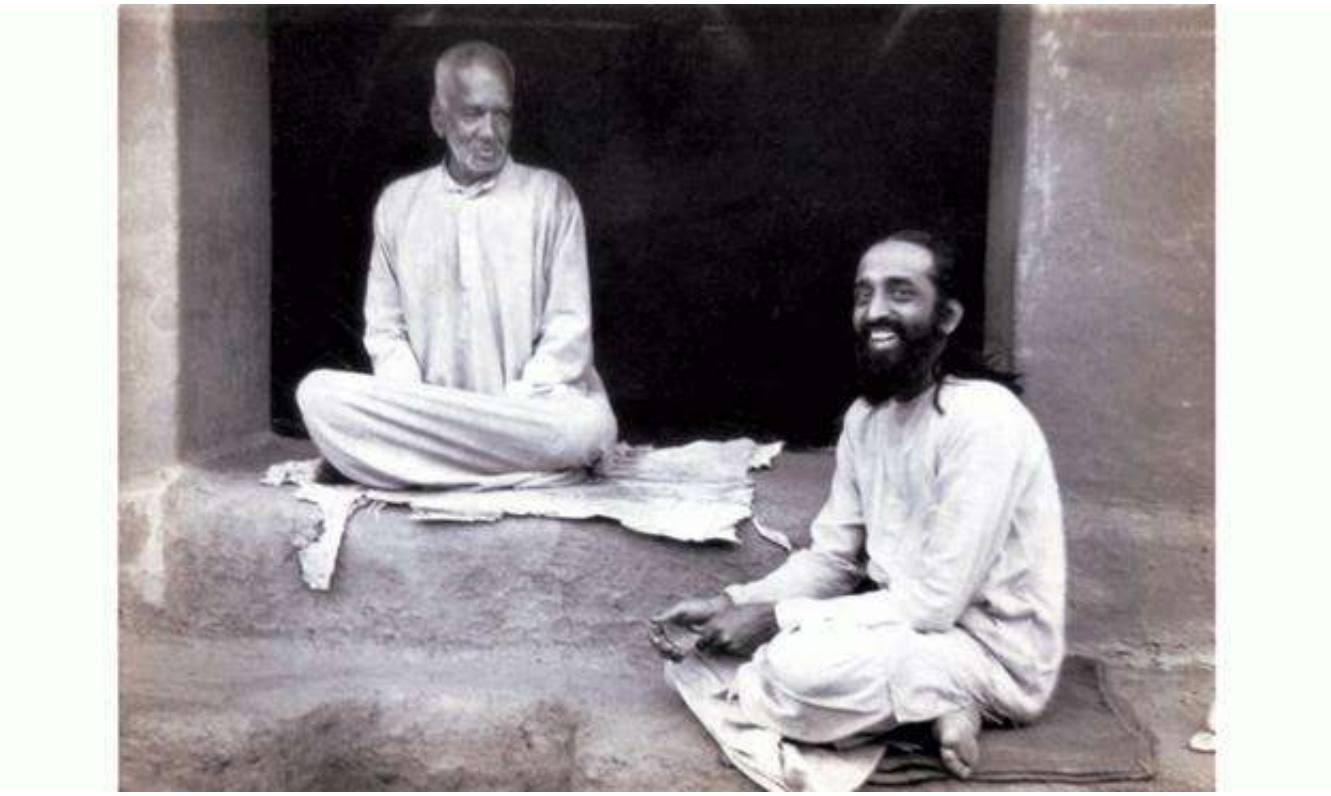
Vedantavedya has two meanings. One meaning is knower of Vedanta. Another meaning is one who is known through Vedanta.

The Upanishads are also called Vedanta because they are found in the end portion of the Vedas. This section of the Vedas conveys the truth of the Supreme Reality. Herein lies the essence or the crux of the Vedas. Vedanta is the pramana or the means of knowledge to know the highest. To gain any knowledge we require a valid means of knowledge. Suppose, we want to see a flower, we require eyes and the proper light with which to see it. The eyes are the means of knowledge required to see the flower. Sometimes inference is the means. When we see smoke, we infer that there is fire.

How can we gain knowledge of our own Self? This knowledge is subjective and so can be only gained from someone who knows the Self. The words of these knowers of the Self are the words of the scriptures. They convey the experience of Masters who have realised and experienced the Self. Their words become the means for others to know the Self. In the absence of the scriptures and mahatmas, we would not know the Supreme Reality. Their words and meditation on their words become

the means of gaining this knowledge, which is nothing other than the Guru or the Supreme Reality.

Gurudev was once asked to speak about his Teacher. For a while he was silent and then said that if you really want to know about my Teacher, read the Upanishads. They talk about Him. Similarly, to know oneself or the other person, one must study the scriptures. It is strange that though we live with ourselves for such a long time, we do not know ourselves fully. If we are asked about ourselves, we are at a loss for words. We either say, “I am friendly”, or “I am ambitious.” Some people would describe themselves with the help of the profession they follow. They may say, “I am a lawyer or engineer.”



If you want to know about my teacher ....

We do not know who is the one who says that I am a lawyer or engineer. Who is the one behind the knowledge of law? We do not even know anything about our bodies or how they function. We do not know how the body came into existence. We only know that there is a body and we function through it. We know very little about the functioning of the mind, brain or other organs of the body. This is the greatest of all mysteries.

OM VEDANTAVEDYAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

346. OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

17-04-2016

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission



Salutations to the one who is ever peaceful. Shaantaaya namah.

Gurudev was always calm and peaceful. Deep down he was always quiet. This is again a quality which we must consciously attempt through steady sadhana. Consciously. That I should not be agitated; my mind has to become calm.

We carry a storm inside. How is the mind? Violent, wild, restless, disturbed. We

need to be peaceful. At the drop of a hat people get disturbed. As seekers we need to bear this in mind.

Swamiji was ever peaceful, deep within. Greatest of losses or anything of that kind, he just smiled. People admired him? He was calm. People were talking bad of him? He was calm. People were with him – he was calm. They betrayed him? He stayed calm. He lived and moved around that way.

Right here, in our ashram, in the kutia, Swamiji was writing, engrossed in his work. Somebody entered the room to say something and while going the person turns back and asks – Swamiji, did I disturb you? You walked into his room, he is writing. You go there and then you say Swamiji did I disturb you, while going. He looks at that person and says – you did. But I am not disturbed.

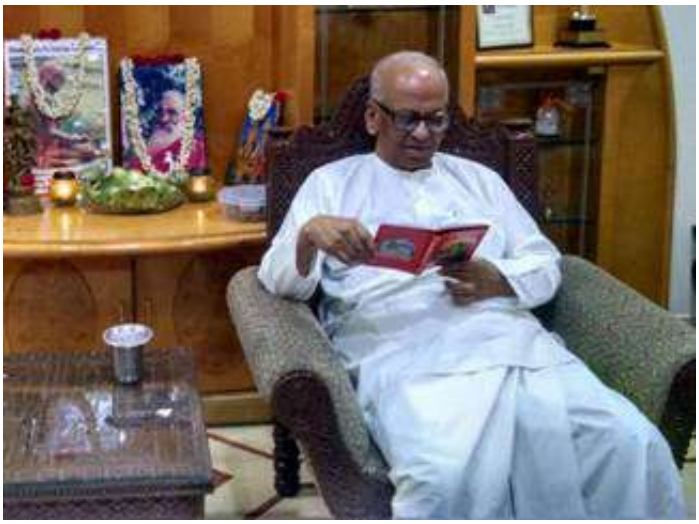
You did disturb. What did you disturb? Probably you disturbed my work. I was writing. You stopped it for a moment. Did I disturb you – you did. But I am not disturbed.

There could be various situations, people, different things coming. But I am not disturbed. That we should practice. And that's worth achieving. What did you gain through study of Vedanta? Develop the mind to not get disturbed. These qualities are very very important.

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai



Salutations to the one who is peace (peaceful)

Santhi is peace which is fundamental and not much different from Ananda the happiness. No one can be happy without peace. In fact this gaining peace and Happiness is the primary goal of seekers who study Vedanta.
We approach the guru for this. He naturally has this in abundance rather this is His nature. It is spiritual ignorance and consequent identification with BMI, that brings inadequacy, resulting in desires, producing agitations, and eventually robs our essential peace.

Therefore, Sri Guru alone can remove this ignorance, Himself established in this peace. Vivekachudamani in verses 33 and 37, refers to this Santhi as the nature of the Guru. Brahman, Guru has been referred as Santam Sivam Sundaram. Love and agitations cannot coexist simultaneously. Gurudev being epitome of unconditional love, is Santha murti.
Every Breath A Teaching introduction page Xiv

Vilasini Balakrishnan
But there is one strong quality of Swamiji that was not so apparent on stage--and that was His deep, penetrating, soul stirring silence.

Kathopanishad 6-11 Gurudev's commentary
Santhi is the product of contentment and not the ghastly child born of sensuous flirtations with sense objects.

Gurudev during His chardham yatra [The pilgrimage to the 4 holy and most sacred places in India in the Garhwal region -- Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. These four ancient temples also mark the spiritual source of four sacred rivers: River Yamuna (Yamunotri), River Ganga (Gangotri), River Mandakini (Kedarnath) and River Alaknanda (Badrinath), narrates in His Journal the experience that He felt during these four months:

He Did It pg 48

Wonderful no words to describe the inner peace I enjoyed, the concentration I achieved, the entire world forgotten. Forgotten are all worldly contacts, for I have come to live in myself. For the first time, I tasted a bliss in meditation, which I know is but an iota of what one can have from deep, long, steady, and powerful meditation. My only prayer to my divine Guru and to the divine Lord is that by their grace I may never fall and that I may drink deeper at the fountain of the ETERNAL DIVINE NECTAR.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Him pg 7

N. Karthikeyan Madras.
He spread peace everywhere because He is peace and truth itself.

Every Breath a Teaching pg 246

Nature Beauty His Expression

Neeru Mehta
Thus, deep in reflection, the small group sitting with Swamiji in Nairobi became quite still.
Swamiji said, "In moments like this you see things very clearly, but you cannot stay there. You return, because the customs officers there are very strict."
"This natural beauty " added Swamiji,"also gives Santhi (peace). It is Santam, sivam(auspiciousness), Sundaram (beauty). If beauty is seen as His expression, it gives Santhi and is Sivam."

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH



Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Shanta means peace. It is freedom from all agitation.

A person may be outwardly peaceful, but the mind could be in turmoil. Complete peace is when one is totally at ease with oneself and the world. There is no complaint, no fight, no strife, and no conflict; there is total harmony with the world and oneself. Such a person moves about in the world completely at peace. The Desiderator, found in an old church advices: Be at peace with yourself and the world around.

Peace and happiness go together. The Gita says, “tyagat shantih anantaram (B.G. XII.12)……through tyaga we get immediate peace.” The Lord also says that the one who realizes the Self attains that parama shanti.

Water reaches the ocean from various sources, but the ocean is undisturbed and at ease with itself. Similarly a Mahatama is unaffected by the objects that pour in through the senses. He is totally at ease and at peace. No object unnecessarily either attracts or repels such a person. It is the ahankara or the sense of individuality which creates the disturbance. There being no ego in the Mahatama, there is no agitation.

Looking for solutions to marital discord a lady sought the advice of a spiritual Master. He gave her some Gangajal and a special mantra. He then advised to put this into her mouth as soon as her husband came home and keep it there for an hour. Suddenly, she found complete peace. When the mind is free from wants, the sense of doership or individuality, there is a deep understanding and there are no

complaints against the world, oneself or God, then one is at peace. The heart of such a person is pure. It is free from any malice, hatred or jealousy.

Everything must be accepted as a gift or prasada from the Lord. We must accept and act without any contempt in the heart. When we act with such an attitude, peace comes to reside in the heart. Shanti is most wonderful and our prayers always include the shanti mantras, which end with – Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti! Pujya Gurudev was always at peace and hence this name.

OM SHAANTAAYA NAMAH

347. OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

18-04-2016

OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SuhasiniKambhan, CM Hyderabad

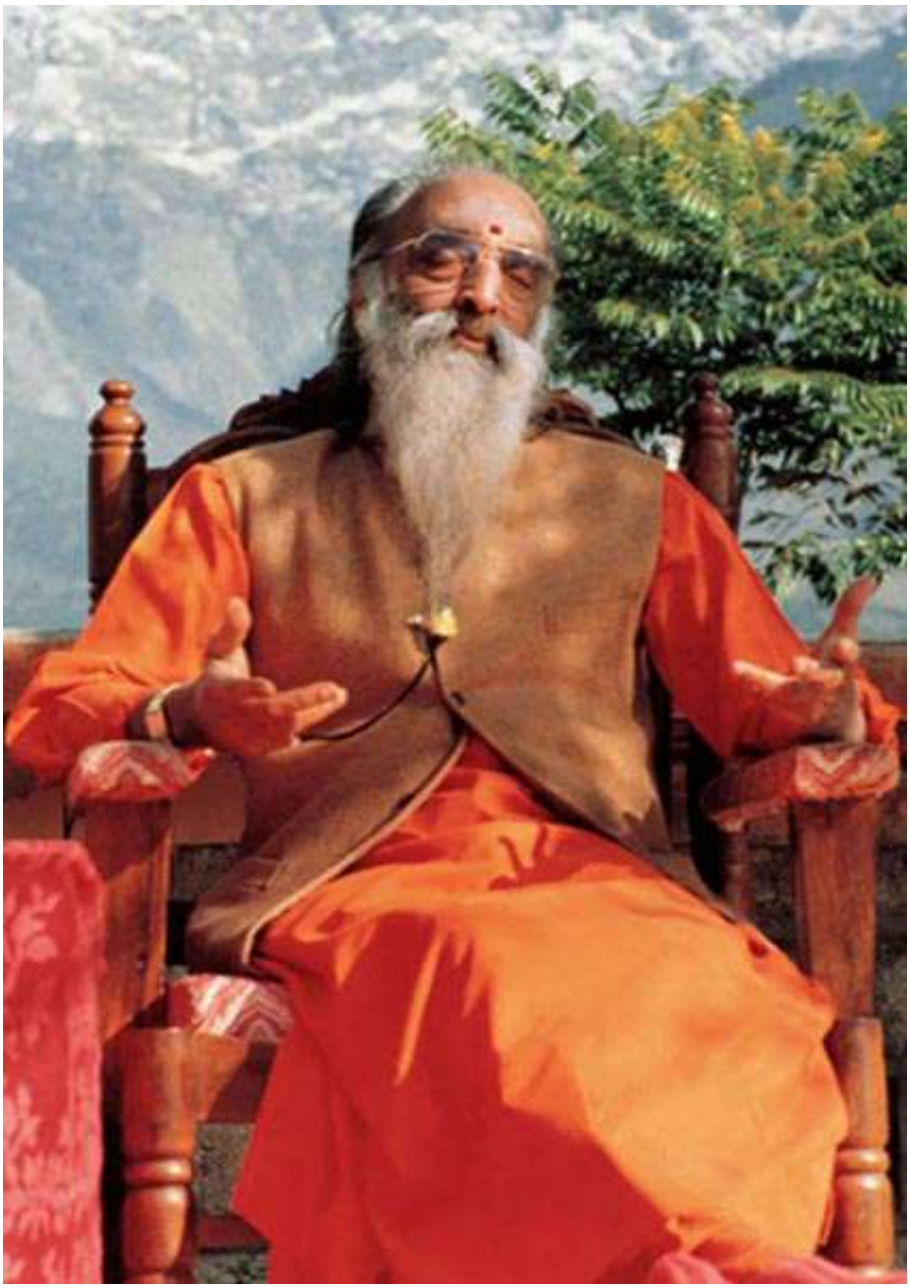
salutations to the one who gives peace (to all)

This happened during a Yagna which Gurudev was conducting in Vijayawada 30 years back.I was staying in Guntur which is a neighboring district to Vijayawada.I had already known Gurudev for many years and it was common experience that the sight of him would elevate our minds to immense JOY!! But I was still taken unawares by a different type of experience that year.

I went to the house of a devotee family in Guntur, who accepted to give me a ride to Vijayawada to attend Gurudev's yagna. But they cautioned me that I had to get there 2 hours early that day.

I reached their place and was sitting in the drawing room, waiting for them to start and wondered why they wanted to start so early that day.

As I waited, a palpable Calm and Peace gently engulfed my mind and it filled mewith uninterrupted JOY!! My mind was previously rushing with so many thoughts as I had come in a hurry. Now,I sat enjoying this unexplained CALM and BLISS!!



The spread of inexplicable Calm and Peace .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

After some time, I saw the hostess walking in. I spontaneously commented 'how peaceful and calm your house is. It is as if Gurudev is still here.....although he stayed with you long back when you hosted him during a yagna here in Guntur!!" She put her finger to her lips signaling to me to be silent and softly said,"Swamiji is sleeping in the next room .....He unexpectedly agreed to stop and rest here on his way back from Kotappakonda to Vijayawada ."

That explained everything.....

OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the one who gives peace (to all)

One who is an embodiment of peace as we saw in the last Nama (Om ShaantaayaNamah) cannot but emit the same wherever He is and pass it on to those who seek this peace, Santhi, through His life,through His teachings.

Guruji sings in Arathi song CharanomeunkiSanthiPradayi. One experiences peace holding on to His feet, the Truth He stands for.

Again Guruji sings in Kritajnatastotram 10

yasyaprasaadenamanahprasa tam babhoova me tam shirasanamaami

I bow down to Him by whose grace my mind became peaceful.

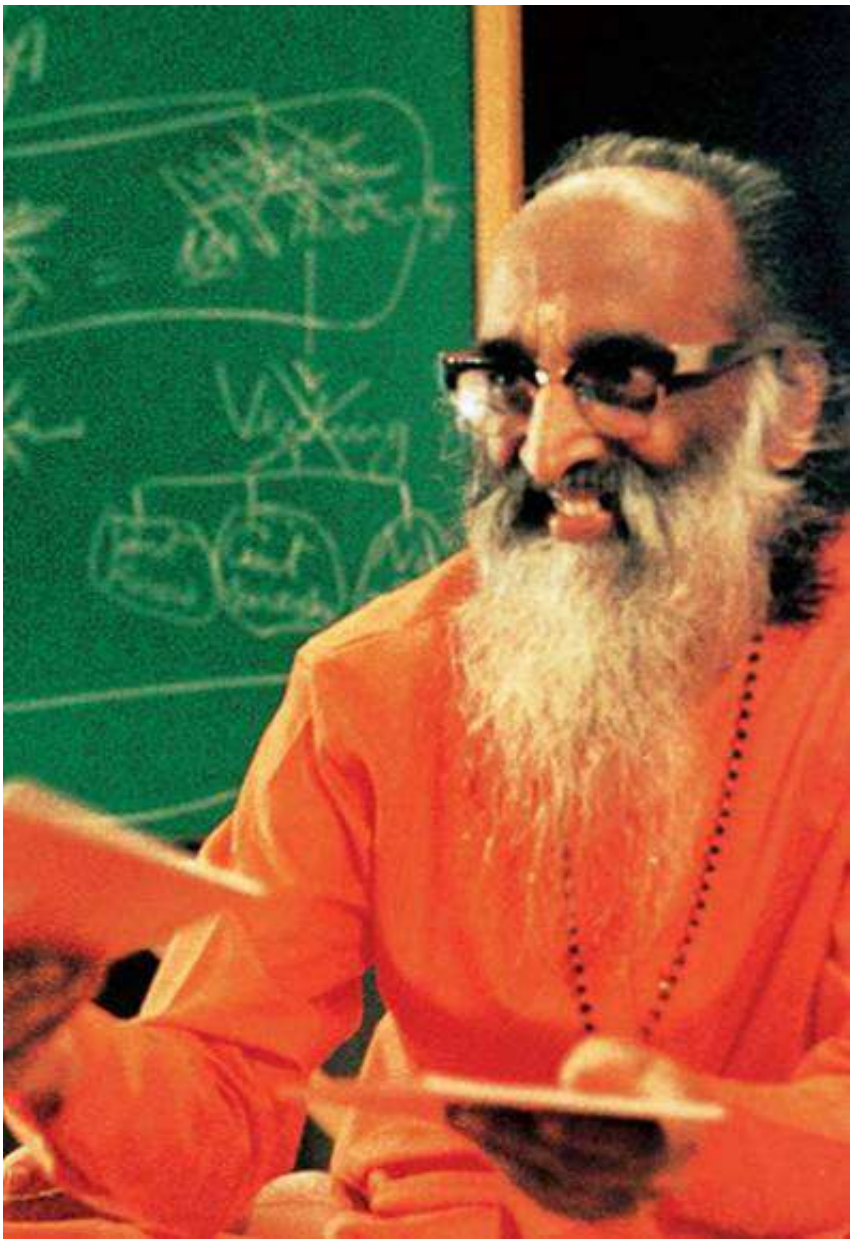
In His presence everyone experienced inexplicable peace irrespective of their personal situations. Their doubts have been put to rest. In the Yagnasalas each one feels His problems have been answered.

Once in Chennai Sri Gurudev was discoursing on the Bhagvad Gita Chapter 9. On the first day of the yagna, Sri Gurudev said, This is a chapter on meditation.You do not have to do anything. I will take you there.

During the Yagna one day there was a total black out declared. After waiting 40 minutes, the time He usually closes presented, and He asked the students to disperse. The way in which there was pin drop silence during this period. In darkness the way in which devotees took their vehicles and left, was a surprise to the traffic police on duty. He took them to that state of peace as promised on the first day and demonstrated it too.

Vedanta 80-81
VilasiniBalakrishnan
Gurudev showed us how to live as the Sakshi, in His life and teachings. No matter

what was going on, only a tiny part of Him was acting. The rest was abiding in Brahman,witnessing consciousness.
The total peace,wisdom,security,magnanimity that He emanated took us there with Him and we got to sit there, basking in this presence for a little while.
He would say He can give us tourist visa, but we need to earn the green card and citizenship!
He was such a master at pointing out areas where we needed to grow. He was always with Sakthi and Presence.
Page 128
Gurudev
Cultivate a store of joy unending--and bring out in perpetual smiles. The world needs,as never before,smiles. Be a Light house of Joy and Peace, spreading hope and shelter to the weary pilgrims everywhere. Smile on --casting away all sorrows and fears into the Jamuna--make life an afternoon's play with the Blue Boy of Smiles (Krishna).



The lighthouse for the hopeless ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Shanti is peace and pradaya is the giver of peace. Shantipradaya is one who gives peace to others.

All of us in the world are connected to each other. Even an occurrence in the deep jungles of South Africa will affect us in some way or the other. 'You cannot pluck a flower without disturbing the distant star' – is a famous quote explaining this phenomenon. Even if we pluck a single hair from the body, the whole system is disturbed. Though the hair is so minute, still it affects the whole body because each and every cell is connected. Acupuncture works on this principle. The whole body is affected by inserting just one small needle.

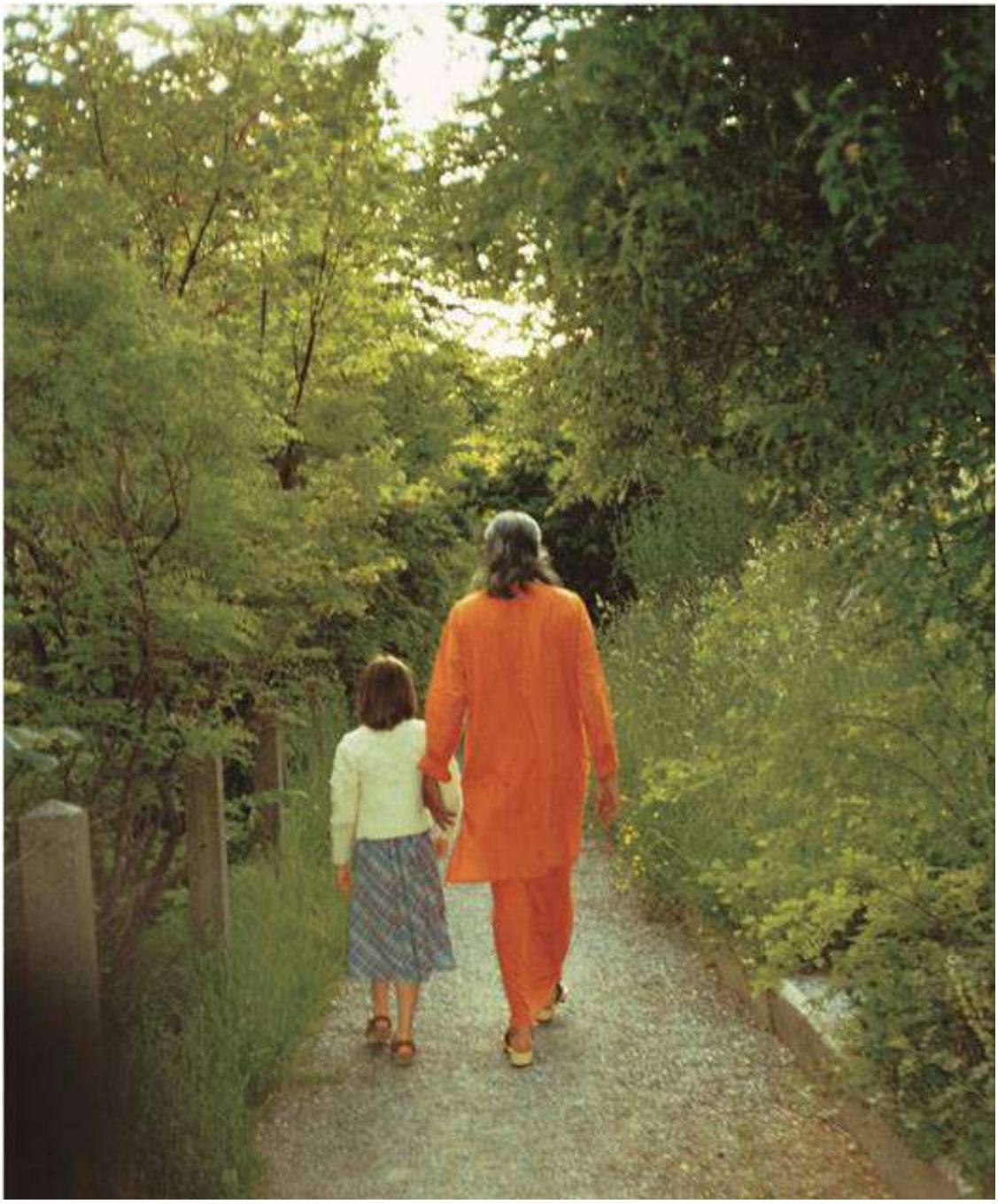
In the same way we are connected to others. We share our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Each one of us is both a receiving and transmitting station. We are affected by each other's thoughts. The thoughts of one mind impact the other and vice versa. This is a dynamic situation. A restless or agitated person creates restlessness and agitation in all situations and places. In the same way some people exude peace, even without saying or doing anything. Call it vibrations or something else; there is a definite, palpable connection.

One mentally disturbed man, given to drinking, would fight in the house and beat his wife. His brother was a Buddhist monk. One day having come to the end of her tether, the wife approached his brother for help. The monk listened to her but said nothing. He simply came to their house and stayed for the night. He partook of food and in the morning and after his prayers quietly left, without saying anything. His visit had the desired effect. The brother was transformed; peace and calm returned to the household. Just the mere presence of a spiritual personality is enough to effect change.

Dandakaranya was a cursed place. Nobody went there. But by the mere presence of Lord Rama, there was instant transformation. The forest suddenly became peaceful, pleasant and beautiful. The land, the rivers, the mountains were all touched by His presence.

Gautama Buddha along with his disciples once stopped at a house, to ask for alms. The man of the house came out and was very rude. The Buddha never said a word. After the man had gone in, one of his robust disciples asked permission to give him a taste of what he had given. Unperturbed, Buddha replied that you can only give back if you have taken something. It was the man's prerogative to give, but it is our choice to take what is being offered. If we do not take something the other person is offering it goes back to the giver. If we do not accept anger, then the anger returns to its source. The peace and quiet in our hearts can be exported to others.

The peace and quietude that a person of Realisation exudes reaches out to those fortunate to be in their company. This intense peace and calm is also experienced in some sacred places. People experienced joy and peace in the presence of BhagavanRamana Maharishi and Gurudev.



Peace in His presence....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Mahatmas are in total peace or harmony with their surroundings. The world is neither afraid of nor agitated by such a person. Also such a person is fearless and does not cause any agitation. SantJnaneshwar gives the example of a fish in water. The fish is neither afraid of water, nor is the water afraid of the fish. They live in total harmony with each other.

Similarly, the world has nothing to fear from a person who is in tune with the world. If we are selfish, angry or jealous, the world has something to fear. Even fearful people become dangerous for other people. Fear makes people aggressive and violent. Commonly fear is combated with 'fight or flight'. Animals also can sense the fear, aggression and violence. Some cats even have the sense to intuit thoughts. Pets are affected by the vibrations of thoughts. They are also docile and calm when the owners are peaceful. We may not be aware of deep seated anger, but animals are even aware of those deeper levels. In horse jumping, to get the best out of the horse, the rider has to be in complete harmony. The horse only jumps properly if he senses confidence in the rider.

OM SHANTIPRADAAYA NAMAH

Kindly see story 325 OM BANDHAMOCHAKAAYA NAMAH . Just received a most pleasing photograph of Mr. Bill & Nalini Browning with Gurudev.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

348. OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

19-04-2016

OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Krishnatmananda, Acharya, CM, Salem

salutations to the one who uplifts the scriptures (scriptural teachings)

Shaastram –samyaksthiramitishastram, means, that which is firm and clear.
On what? In its declarations.
Shastram gives all guidelines in the form of rules to all varnas and ashrams, like Brahmacharya, Grihastha, VanaprasthaandSanyasa. In short, to all human beings.
Can we understand such shastra?
Yes, of course, such a shastra can be understood only if a person lives like a Shastra - firm in conviction, and clear in thinking. Those who have these qualities can establish shastra (Udharanam) and keep it alive for ever.
And how does one do this? By the sheer conviction of sharing with all.
If you take Sri AdiSankara, He has all these qualities with Mission of Vision.
If you take Sri Ramanuja, He also has these qualities, So also Madhavacharya, and such other greats.
Now in last few centuries, Swami Sivananda, Swami TapovanMaharaj and Our Gurudev,.....all had these qualities of firm self-conviction, clear thinking (shastrodharaka).
If Swami TapovanMaharaj is moolavar(main deity) in the temple of shastra, our Gurudev is Utsavar of that temple, who moves around everywhere and blessed with this knowledge (shastra) to establish shastra wherever he goes- Sashastrodharaka.
Note: (every temple has a deity in the sanctum sanctorum (moolavar) as well as an utsavamurti, one that is worshipped and taken around the town or village as some customs require. Both the moolavar or main deity and the utsavamurti are equal in importance and considered as non-different)
We can see this play out in the work and life of so many of our great mahatmas --

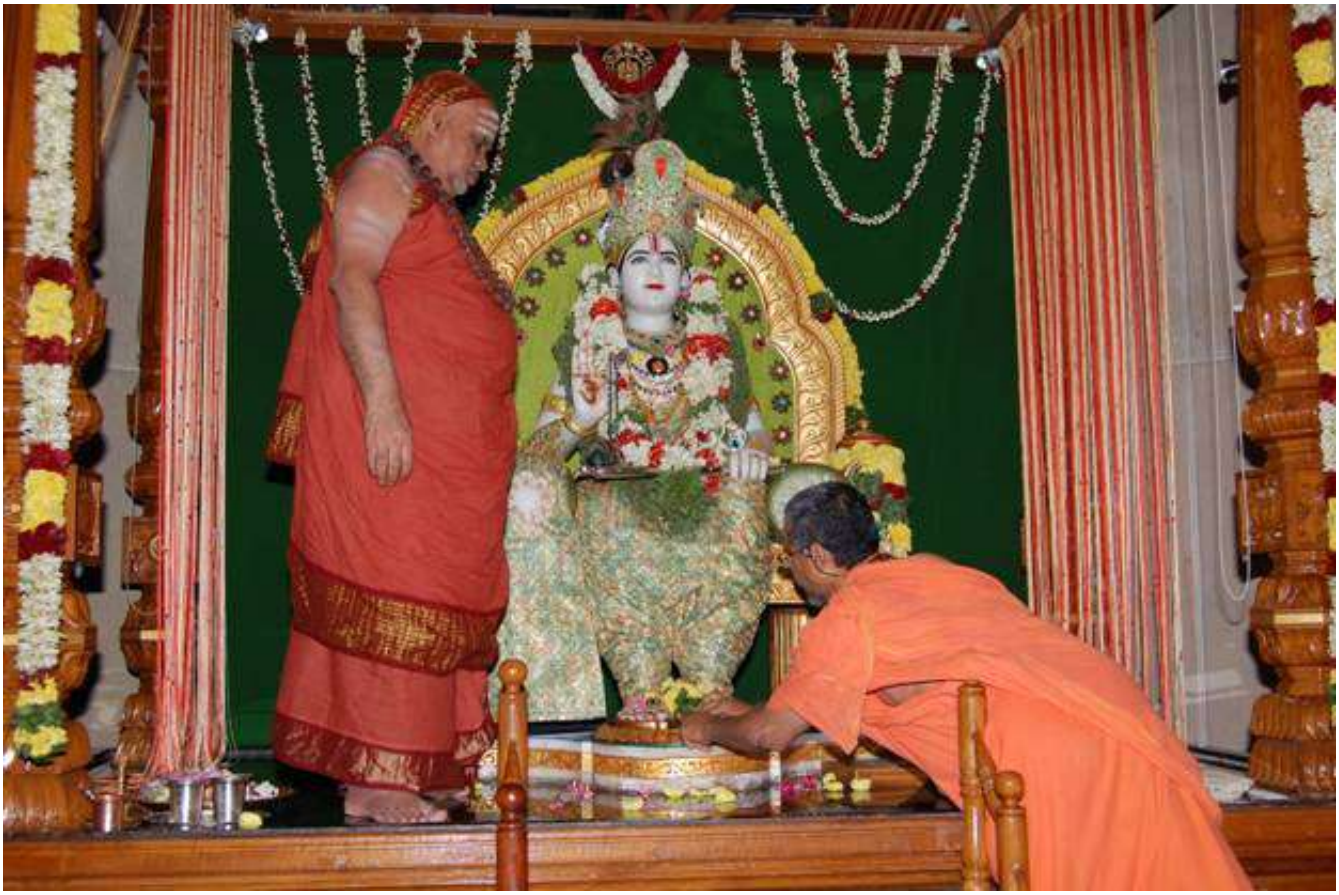
- AdiSankara wrote commentaries.
- He shared with many Mahatmas.
- Faced all controversies.
- Debated with many scholars and established Advaita philosophy.
- He walked from place to place and himself taught to spread the knowledge and thus keep the shastra alive for longer period to do Shastrodharana, and He established Mutts with a vision.

If you take our Gurudev, he went further and beyond - How ?

- He learnt from his Master and with firm conviction and clarity brought this knowledge of shastra to us from the Himalayas to the plains.

- Wrote Commentaries on Sri Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and other great texts
- He, too faced lots of problems in establishing Shastra - because he communicated in the English language
- To keep this shastra alive he established SandeepanySadhanalyas and gave more than 500 Acharyas to the world, who would in turn protect and uplift the shastra forever- (Shastrodharaka). Also to keep this going, he established Missions around the world, Mission Centers with vision to continue this sharing and spreading of shastra to all, irrespective of caste, creed, religion- Shastrodharaka.
- Above all Gurudev lived like Sri Sankara who established himself in "Brahman as Brahman."

How can you say that Gurudev is Shastrodharaka just because of these ?
A simple example from everyday life will confirm: In cricket, if a player strikes a square cut and if somebody wants to comment on it, he must be a master in it. Only then he can comment on it. Sri GundappaVishwanathalone is the authentic person to comment on a square cut as he was adept at it.
Likewise …….. the highest credit and Blessing showered on Chinmaya Mission and Beloved Gurudev comes from Param Pujya HHSri BharathiThirthar Swamiji of Sri SringeriSaradaPeetam. I would like to share a real experience at Chinmaya Kaivalya Salem.
In the year 2013, His Holiness SriBharathiThirthar Swamiji of Sri SringeriSaradaPeetam, blessed Chinmaya Kaivalya and performed a puja to our Beloved Brahma Krishna.



At the Salem Mission Center: HH Sri Bharathi Thirthar Swamiji of Sri Sringeri Sarada Peetam (left), Swami Krishnatmananda (right) and Lord Brahma Krishna (center)



Blessed by His Holiness .....

After that, Swamiji blessed us with His Anugraha bhashanam (benedictory discourse). In that, He mentioned that, the one person who brought Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Upanishad to every nook and corner of this country and shared it irrespective of people [caste, religion, coloretc] and protected the shastra, is none other than Swami Chimayananda and He requested all people assembled there to study in Chinmaya Mission without fail . So Gurudev is the person who really did the seva of Shastrodharaka and he is the fit person to be worshipped with our prostrations to Him as Om ShastrodharakayaNamah!
My Sashtangnamaskarsat feet of beloved Gurudev as Shastrodharaka.
Narayanaya!

OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

348-89: OM SHAASTRAUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Mahadevan Parameshwaran, Acharya CM Rameshwaram, Los Angeles

ॐ शास्त्रोद्धारकाय नमः To Him who uplifted the Shaastraas



In the Gita Dhyaana shloka it is said that Sri Krishna milked the Upanishads for the Essence and fed this to his calf (Arjuna, you and me).

Pujya Gurudev took the Upanishads, extracted the essence, which form the commentaries, which he wrote on each of Vedanta texts so that the meanings became “crystal clear” to those who studied them in the manner he recommended

Gurudev brought the real meaning of the Shaastras into my life.

In his Kaivalyopanishad talks he reminded us in verse 6, of the thirteen arrow-marks or indicators of the Self, which brings us to a state of Awe and touches the very core of our Being.

अचन्ित्यं अव्व्यक्तं अनन्त रूपं....अरुपमद्भुतं I

In the same text (verse 7)the commentary on “Uma sahaayaam...”the way in which the process of making both, the head and heart available for meditation, and not letting the poison of the latent Vasanas “go to the head” can only be the work who uplifted the Shastraas to a new level.

मय्येव सकलं ज्ञातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितिथम् I

मयो सर्वं लयं याति तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् II (V.11)

Gurudev’s commentary on this verse truly shows us that we as the non-dual Self need to understand that the entire world of BMI and OET, all arise in us, stay in us and die in us.

If we use this as a Sadhana, it helps us be present in all transactions with all the three Shariras

OM SHAASTRAUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

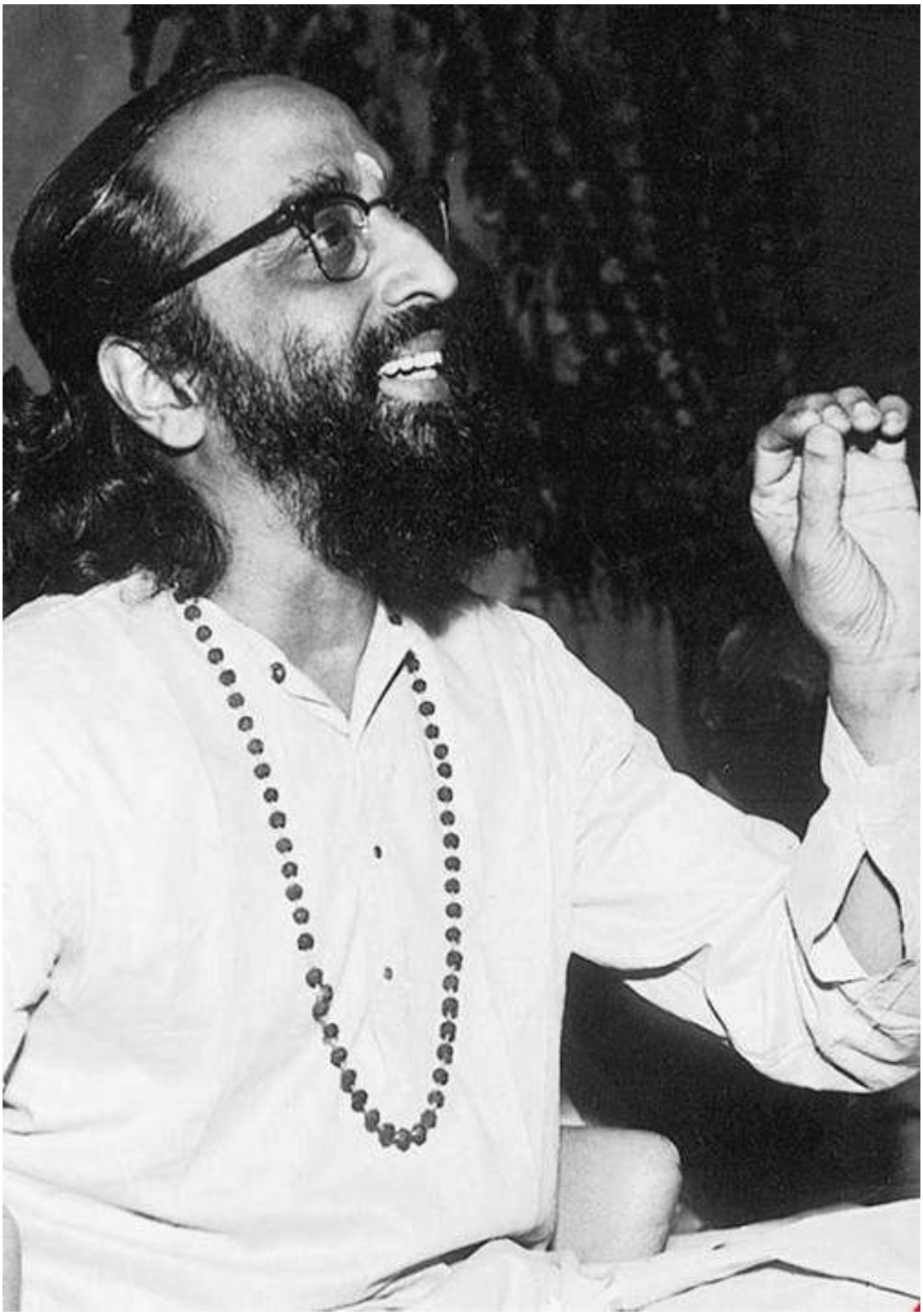
OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

salutations to the one who uplifts the scriptures (scriptural teachings)

One who has retrieved Sastras (scriptures) or one who has revived the Sastras from dormant state. Or one who has reinterpreted the shastras in the context of the present day world. Or one who has made Sastras relevant in everyday life. All these are true in the case of Sri Gurudev.
Gurudev retrieved the shastras from the possessive hands of the conservative few, and made it available to everyone. Before Gurudev, only a very few knew how to access the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita. Most people thought this is India's past glory and not available anymore. Even those who knew how to access the Upanishads, were in the ashramas or Himalayas. It was Gurudev who brought them

to light. Better still he made then available in the language of the times – the post Independence India that was mostly English.
Even though there were a few Mahatmas who tried to rejuvenate Sanatana Dharma, they did not use the original and complete texts in public. They at best choose to talk on topics generally surrounding the scriptures, but not word to word, verse by verse, of the texts, as Gurudev did.
Again, a majority of the modern educated men would not accept the shastras if it did not relate to their everyday lives. Sri Gurudev had demystified many concepts like Yagnas, devas, Mahavakyas, Lokas, and more . He had to highlight the relevant portions in a manner logically acceptable to the modern men. Also in the highly competitive material world unless they find it useful for their day to day living they were not likely to be committed to these texts.
Hence Gurudev explained the Sastras logically to the modern men and brought out their relevance in day to day living.



Blessed by His Holiness .....Brought the shastras logically to the modern man in English .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Sri Gurudev's works are based on Sri Sankara'sbhashya, yet at the same time, easy to understand and inspiring. Swamiji'sThe Holy Gita written in the early 50s is perfect even today, both in content, in tradition, in utility, in inspiration and easy in its style as well.
Gurudev's commentaries on Upanishads especially Mandukya Upanishad, is exemplary. So is His commentary of PrakaranaGranthas like Vivekachudamani.

Swami Chinmayananda as I know Himpg 45
D.K.Garg and Dr. Smt Asha Garg, Lucknow

Gurudev's discourses are highly enlightening and rejuvenating--the listener gets filled with love for life and ready to face challenges he meets every day. One is never bored or tired. Everyone's faculties of the BMI are attuned to the speaker and impact is indescribable.

Vedanta
introduction xiv
A true Guru lives on, far beyond the time of His embodied form. Gurudev is a timeless Scripture today, and will remain so for all the many seekers who are destined to meet Him in their deep meditation in the years to come.

Page 96 and 97

Gurudev revealed the truths of the Upanishads in a uniquely captivating, lucid style--and revealed them to the common man and woman on the street, using homely analogies. He chose to speak in English which pundits at first considered an outrage. Knowledge of Sanskrit was no longer a must to understand the principles of Vedanta, as had been the case throughout the years when the learned pundits had named themselves as the sole guardians of the Upanishads.
To that Bharatagaurava, that Vedaantavid, that Vaagmi, who resurrected the scriptural wealth of India for the world, my prostrations.

OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Known through the scriptures

Shastras are the scriptures and uddharaka is one who has restored or protected. Shastroddharaka is one who has protected the scriptures or is known through them.

We protect the scriptures by understanding, imbibing and following their words. By merely punching in data into a computer, we are not accorded any protection. The scriptures can only be protected by a living person. Their message needs to be imbibed and lived by a living being, only then can they be protected.

The scriptures are given validity by those who understand them and follow their teachings. The Mahätmä who has experienced the veracity of the scriptures gives them validity. Their experience gives authority to the scriptures. Narada Bhakti Sutra says, 'shastrikurvantishastrani – A Mahätmä gives validity to the scriptures. We come to know of their existence because of their experiences. When we hear that Ramana Maharishi experienced this Truth and the Bhagavad-gita also speaks about the same Reality, we develop reverence for it.

Scriptures are blessed by Mahatmas when they discourse on and explain their content. Pujya Gurudev spread the message of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-gita. In a way he renovated the scriptures. Scriptures have to be understood in the context of time and place. Though the central message of the scriptures remains the same, it has to be conveyed in modern terminology. In his time Sri Krishna reinterpreted the scriptures and gave to the world the Bhagavad-gita. For his part Gurudev did great service to the scriptures. He reinterpreted them in terms the lay person could understand and explained it to them in English, a language they understood.

By understanding and following the scriptures and sharing this understanding with others, one can restore the scriptures. Scriptures cannot be just restored in books. They are meaningful only if someone understands them and follows them in their life.



Understood shastras and followed them in his life..... This is 1954, Rewa. Gurudev conducted a Kathopanishad yagna after which He led the people for the abhivritsnana.

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

By following the message himself and also sharing the knowledge with others, Pujya Gurudev restored and protected the scriptures. In turn he was protected by them, because the scriptures protect those that protect the scriptures.

OM SHASTRODDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH

349. OM SHUDDHASATTVAAYA NAMAH

20-04-2016

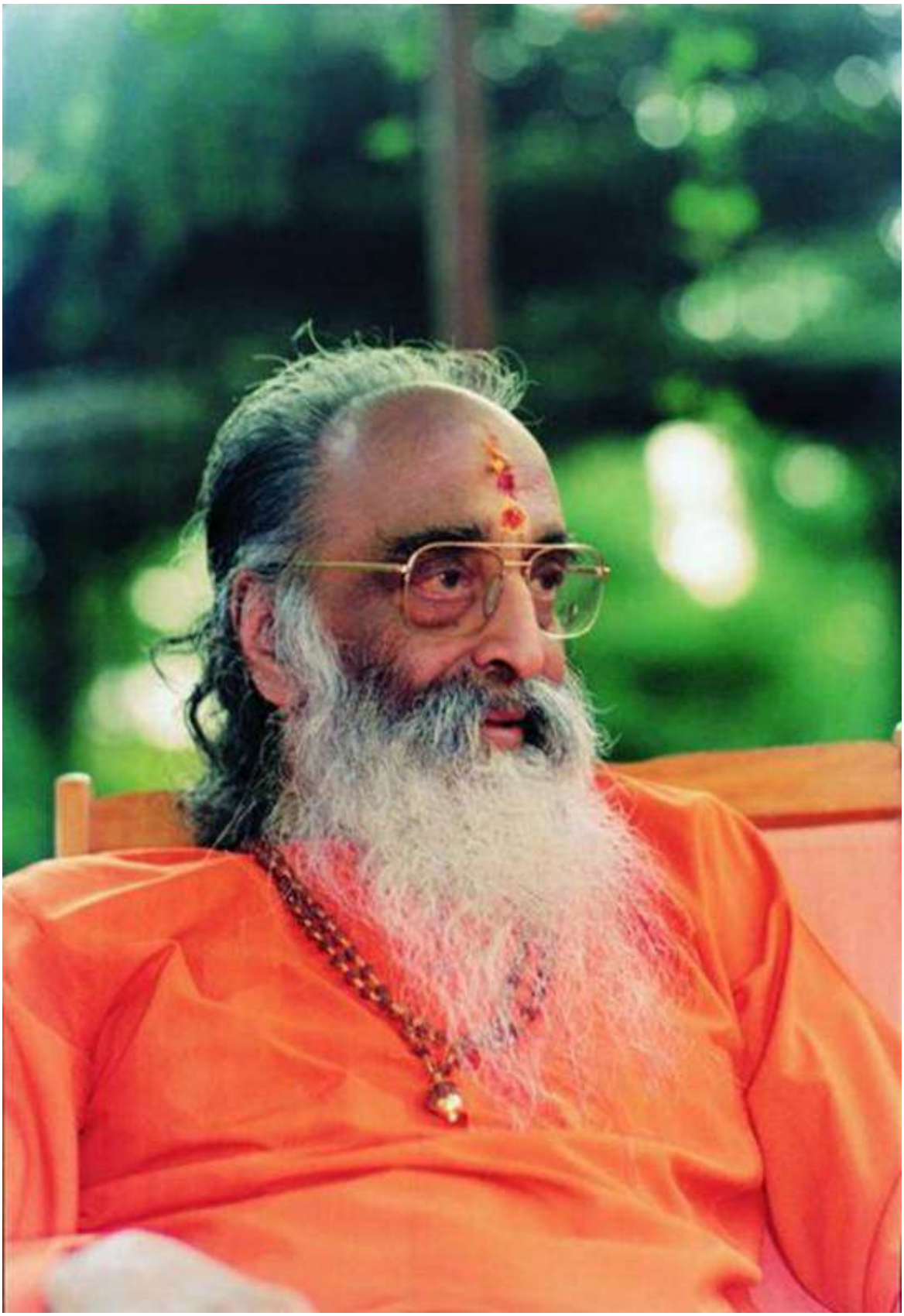
OM SHUDDHASATTVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

salutations to the immaculate (pure) one

Shuddhasatwa is purity of heart. Purity is the opposite of dirt. Dirt in vedanta is any foreign object on another object; like dirt on the ground we say Mother Earth; but on the shirt it is dirt. Therefore, Purity in Vedanta is ‘no otherness’.
Advaita preaches non dual nature of Self in which Sri Gurudev was ever established. Hence there was no otherness (dirt) in Him. He is Shuddhasatwa. This non duality manifests as unconditional love for people. In fact this love for all with no malice to anyone, no materialistic attachment, were seen in Sri Gurudev even before He became a sanyasi, as has been depicted in His biographical sketches and as reflected in His articles as a journalist.

Gurudev writes on this purity of heart in BG 16:1
Purity of heart-- no amount of external discipline can supply the student the positive dynamism that is the very core in all moral living. The Gita preaches a dynamic religion,militant in theory and practice. The Divine Charioteer is not satisfied by a tame generation of passive goodness. He wants the members of the perfect Hindu society not only to live among themselves the highest values of life,but also to burst forth with the positive glow of righteousness and bathe the entire generation of men in the light of truth and virtue--virtue that implies honesty of intentions and purity of motives.



Bathed in the light of love and virtue.... From the collection of Shubha Pathial, CM Portland, USA

If this is Shuddhasatwa Sri Gurudev personified this description.

Vedanta page 166
K.C. Patnaik, manager CCMT publications
Gurudev's kutiya mirrors the peace one can feel in front of Lord Jagadeeswara. Patnaikji tries to capture that feeling: " l go into the kutiya, and when I come out, I feel happy for no reason. I feel an unusual peace that escapes words."
Every Breath a Teaching page 47
Sri Gurudev

I know nothing about others. I only love them ardently,fully,unreservedly. In that love I act shamelessly,easily,openly. Whether you feel benefitted,degraded,roughed up,or mishandled,I don't care: I enjoy such contacts....and I cherish such a life of pure and free love! Your permission is not asked; your acceptance is not demanded; your approval is not expected. It is my privilege to love, and I look forward to no return.
Page 59
Love Caring, Love And Compassion: Editor
Gurudev's compassion knew no bounds: It touched the sick, it bathed new comers with love and acceptance,it bent low to honour the aged,it touched even total strangers.

OM SHUDDHASATTVAAYA NAMAH

OM SHUDDHASATTVAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

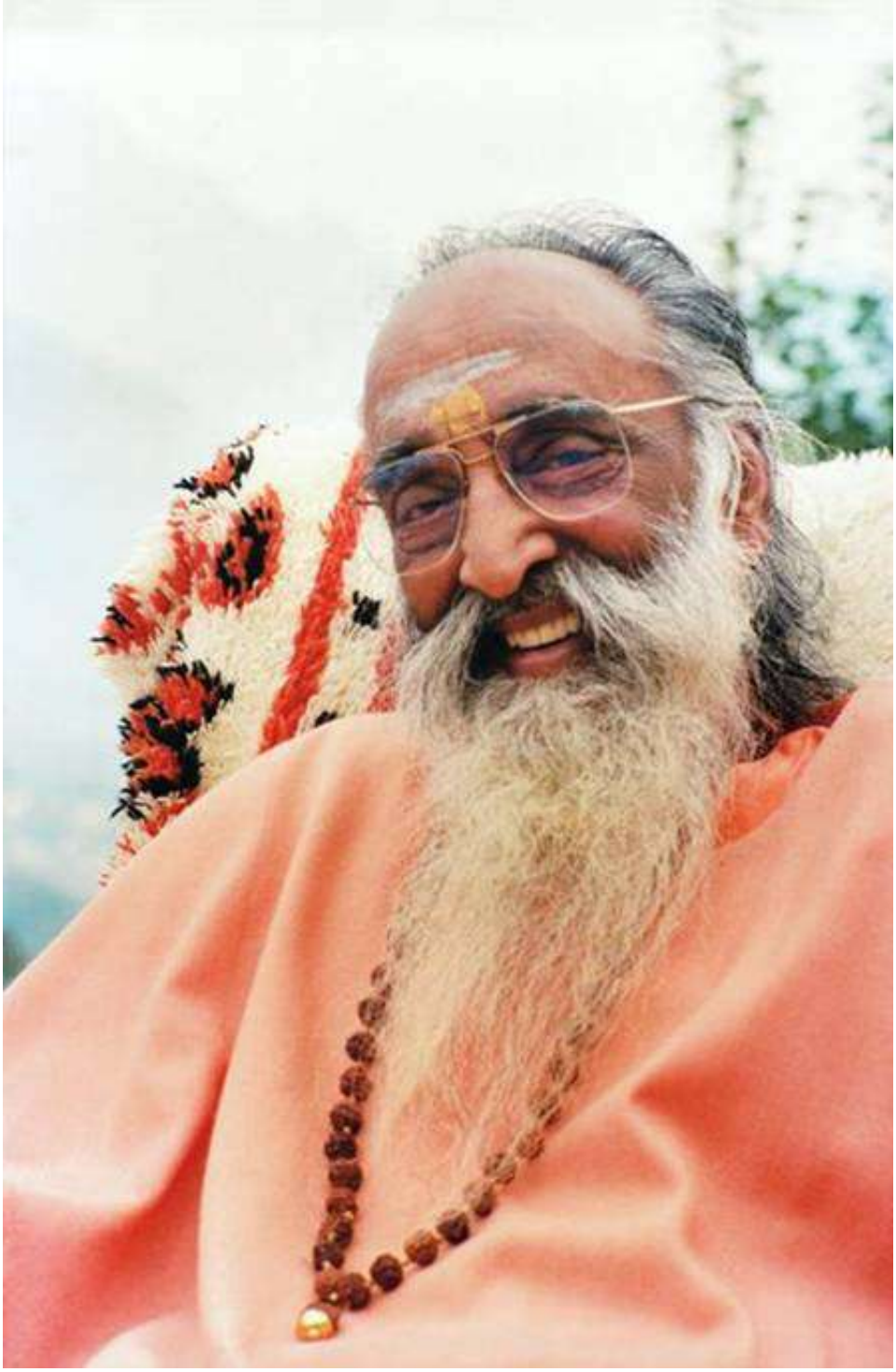
salutations to the immaculate (pure) one
Shuddhasattva means pure hearted, one with a pure, clean heart.
The heart is a synthesis of the mind, intellect and feelings. The seat of feelings is the mind. The seat of thinking, understanding, concepts, ideas and faith or conviction, is called the intellect. Mind is like the floating population but the intellect is a fixed citizen. In the mind there is constant activity. Emotions and thoughts keep on moving. This flow of thoughts is called mind. At some point these thoughts develop into convictions and understanding. They become fixed and become ideas. When we listen to spiritual discourses, the initial thoughts that come to our mind are of the floating variety. Slowly the understanding becomes stable, accurate and more focussed. This is slowly converted into convictions and become fixed ideas or

understanding. This intellect guides the mind. Based on our convictions, different types of thoughts and emotions start appearing.

By listening to tales of the greatness of our country or participating in national festivals, thoughts of patriotism flood the mind. We understand the significance of love for the country. When this love develops, the emotions change and nationalist thoughts start flowing automatically. If convictions change then emotions and thoughts also change. The intellect and mind have their own individual and distinct functions. Despite this they also support each other. Sometimes our convictions are shaken up and converted into new thoughts in the mind. The reverse also takes place when the emotions or thoughts from the mind are converted into intellectual convictions. So there is a constant flow-interflow.

Sometimes the mind and the intellect may not be tuned properly. Some emotions may be superficial and not tuned to the deeper convictions. When the mind and intellect are properly tuned together one's convictions are expressed through the emotions and the emotions are aligned with the convictions. Mind and intellect coming together, in harmony with each other is the heart.

The scriptures say that God resides in our heart. We know about the physical heart but don't have a proper understanding about the spiritual heart. In Vedanta they talk about the mind and intellect but there is no definition of heart as such. This heart is actually a beautiful confluence of mind and intellect. This coming together takes place if the mind is filled with the subtle emotions of love and kindness and the intellect is convinced about the subtler truth of oneness. Suppose intellectually we understand and are convinced that the whole world is pervaded by that one Supreme Reality, then we have evolved greatly. Such a Master is described in Chapter 12, verse 13 of theGita as, "adveshtasarvabhutänäm - one who does not have any hatred for anyone."



Adveshtasarvabhutaanam..... From the collection of Shubha Pathial, CM Portland, USA

When this happens we know that the mind and intellect have become one. The understanding is then emotional and the emotions are with understanding. At present

we have understanding devoid of emotion, or emotions that have no understanding to back them. The spiritual heart being extremely subtle has no location as such in the body. The body itself is situated in the mind.

It is important to understand why the emotions and convictions should merge. Suppose we are convinced that the world is God, that it is pervaded by divinity, then there should be reverence for the world. Only then would our convictions be in tune with our emotions. Also if we have a particular emotion then that should be backed by a deep conviction. This will then give rise to something called a heart. And in that pure heart the truth will shine. We will be able to recognize the truth.

God cannot be known through the senses, emotions, intellectual arguments or even thinking. God can only be known through the heart, which has what we call intuition. The faculty of intuition is generated when the heart is formed. Those without this heart will not be able to know God.

Shuddhasattva is one who has this heart and is pure-hearted. The Reality or the Truth shines in one whose heart is pure. The Reality is very clear to this person. The love, friendship, service, forgiveness and understanding of such a person will be genuine, not otherwise. It is fashionable to say, “I love you,” but there is no genuineness in it. One may profess friendship for life and the very next day just forget the whole thing. In Class 12 we write autographs for our friends, signing as, ‘your friend forever.’ A few years later, we have no memory of those friends. It is all superficial.

But if a Mahätmä loves someone, the love is genuine. If a Mahätmä is convinced about something the conviction is genuine because it comes from the heart, intuition or knowledge which is gained without the ‘normal’ process of thinking. Sometimes we just know something. It may have no basis or logic, but despite that - we just know. That is intuitional knowledge. Mahätmäs just know they are divine and there is divinity everywhere. When they want to express or explain this to others they have to use logic or rational thinking, but this is based on a deep and genuine understanding.

So shuddhasattva is one with a pure heart, having pure emotions and pure convictions, in which is revealed the Truth, the Reality.

OM SHUDDHASATTVAAYA NAMAH

350. OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

21-04-2016

OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

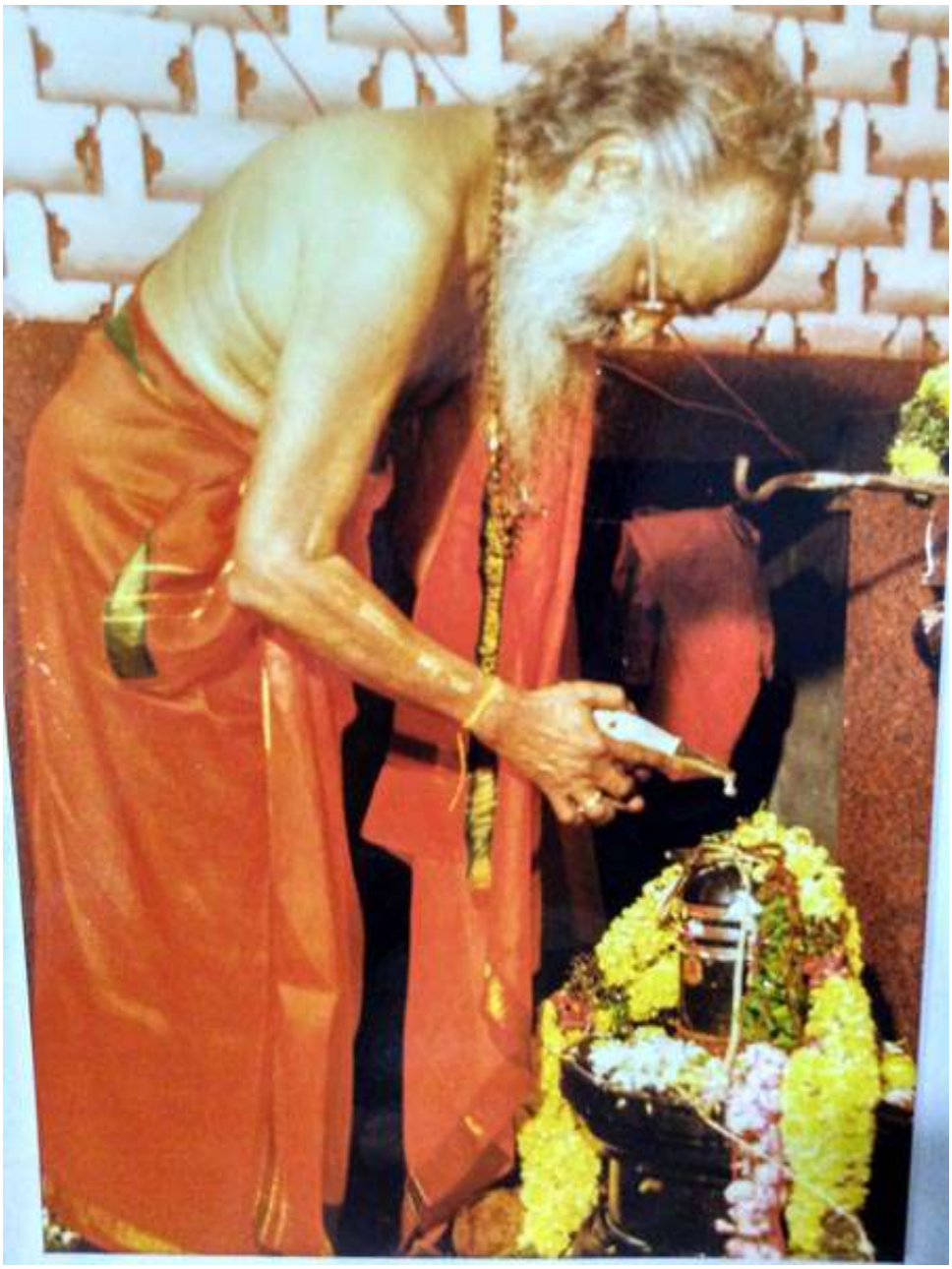
Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda, with his permission

*Saluatations to the one whose life itself was a song of scriptures.

* His every action was a means to connect people to the scriptures.

*One devotee by name Manian, came to Gurudev and said he wished to start a spiritual magazine like India Today, Outlook and so on – a magazine devoted to spirituality. Not many thought it would be effective. Naturally therefore he could not find people to invest in it.

Gurudev suggested few things – one was the name itself – Jnana Bhoomi. Next he gave an idea for how the magazine should take off. I told you – the visionary, thinker, the ruler, the businessman. Brilliant!



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

He said – put small sachets of vibhooti, or chandan or kumkum in every issue, from different temples. Magazine gets launched. And which will have a small sachet of let us say chandan from Guruvaayur temple. You go buy that chandan, print 4000, 5000 copies. 5000 sachets clipped to it. a spiritual magazine talking about adhyatmic knowledge and with a temple Prasad, kumkum. You buy the magazine you have spiritual material and you get chandan from Guruvayur. Next time, kumkum from Meenakshi Amman temple. That way he said there are so many temples. Send your team to every temple and collect.

So in this issue they will write, 'In the next issue we are going to bring you Prasad from Tirupati.' So people wait for it. Motivation...

See his thinking? From any angle you look at him, only wonder! We were sitting there at the dining table. Both of them are having breakfast. We are standing there and watching the whole thing.

Manian went ahead. It was a big hit. That was the first kind of magazine which hit the stands. Before you knew, others were copying that model.

Now imagine in this one action how much benefit is there. One is the spiritual magazine. The content is important. Glory of some temples, glory of a tirtha yatra, glory of the work done by different masters. Interviews, Q&A sessions, this is the theme, which is reaching public. The man who started it is flourishing. And the feeling of getting the Prasad and reverence created for the temple.

How many people get the opportunity to go to Kedarnath?! But then you have Kedarnath Prasad attached to the book.

So when we see Gurudev’s life it was a song of the scriptures. He verily sang the glory of scriptures. All actions worked for the scriptures.

OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

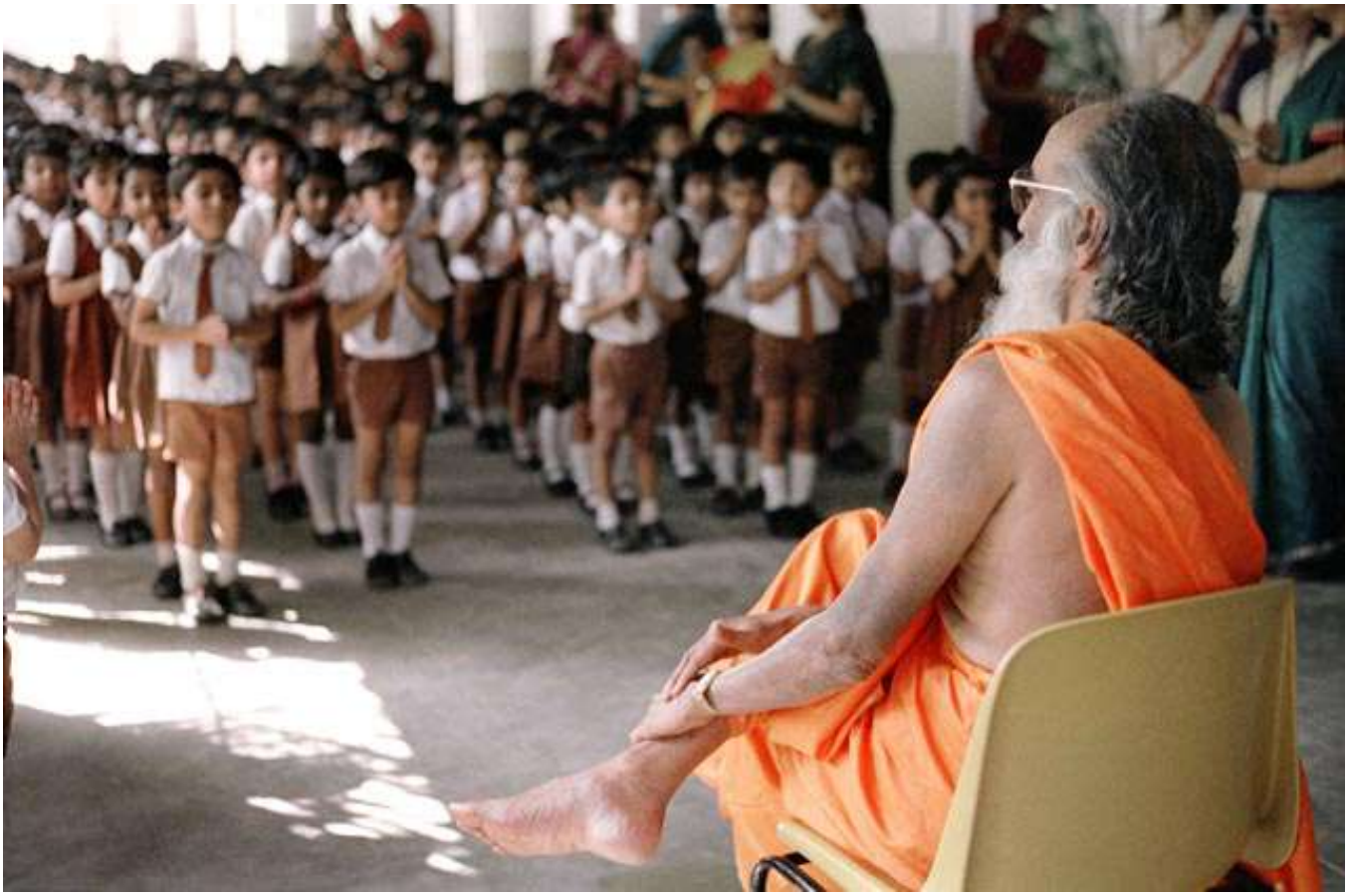
OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Salutations to the one who sings (spreads) (the teachings of) the scriptures

One who has mastered all scriptures. One who has reached the goal of scriptures. He is a Brahma Gnani –means reached the goal of the scriptures.

Sri Gurudev's mastery in scriptures is seen in His presentation. Only one who has mastered can make difficult concepts simple. What He could not teach through His unique BMI chart. He can teach Mahavakyas, all yogas, Upanishads, and if necessary then the Brahma sutras too. He has presented Tat-Twam-asi in the simplest form to seekers: "That dressed in matter is the vainful thou. Thou undressed is That."



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Or, take the manner in which He explained the link between destiny and self-effort: 'What you have is your destiny. What you do with what you have is your self effort.' He thus brought the scriptures into everyday life.

To explain the Atman as the essential subject,material cause, substratum which ordinary being can present it so marvelously as this:
Every effect has a cause.
All effects are nothing but cause modified.
Remove the cause effect ceases.

These are just a few examples to show how much He has mastered the scriptures. Then again the vastness of His erudition. He refers to Bhagavata in all His works. In His lectures on the tenth chapter (Bhagvad Gita video lectures), His explanation of Amrutha Manthana, story of Prahlada and so on are fittingly presented. In Holy Gita, His explanation of Rasaleela, His Hasten Slowly summary of meditation from Yoga Vasishta, His symbolism of Ramayan all show His depth of knowledge of the scriptures.

He is not only well versed in Hindu scriptures, His explanation of the Bible is appreciated even by Christians.

Sri Sankara's Adhyasa Bhashya is a masterpiece. Yet the first erudite scholars try to bring to our attention several things. The text being highly technical in nature, is not so easy to digest and always doubts linger. This Gurudev explains in His commentary on Vivekachudamani verses 350 & 351 with all aspects including the purva paksha with which the Adhyasa Bhashya starts and Sidhanta explaining the Anyonya Adhyasa Mithya Gnana etc in a very simple way, which tells us how adept and agile His learning and knowledge is. This is Sruthi Paraga!

Vedanta- pgs 96 & 97
Gurudev revealed the truths of the Upanishads in a uniquely captivating, lucid style--and revealed them to the common man and woman on the street,using homely analogies.

The sceptical secularist, the devoted Hindu attached to His rituals, as well as those who had been quoting verses from the Gita and Upanishads for years without understanding their meaning--all found an answer in Gurudev's teachings.

Pg 98
Ananta Narayana (uncle Mani)
I had some preconceived notion that the Upanishads were beyond post-graduate level and that I would not understand. I did not know that Gurudev's approach would be to give the background of religion. So for five or six days continually,Gurudev would be answering questions such as – “Why religion? What is religion? Why is religion only for human beings? I was stunned and said,"Oh God!"

Pg 99--Sarojini Menon, Malaya
At other times, just when we felt keyed up and we were listening too tensely, he would allow us to relax,giving us a good laugh by bringing in humorous incidents as examples.

Only an adept can present the sruti in the melody of everyday living.

To that music of our life, my prostrations.

OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the one who sings (spreads) (the teachings of) the scriptures

Shruti means the scriptures or the Vedas. Shruti also means the ears or that which is heard or revealed.

The Shrutis are revealed knowledge, not written by authors either ancient or modern. They are not a product of the intellect or emotions. They are revelations. When the mind and heart become pure, the Truth is revealed. Nobody, including they themselves know why it is so, but it is so. How do scientific discoveries suddenly take place? There is no logic behind it. Scientists just know certain things and so they are revealed. Similarly, in the state of meditation to a pure hearted person certain things get revealed. These revealed messages are called Shruti. This concept is not found only in Hinduism, but is true of other religions as well. In Islam, it is believed that the Koran was revealed to Mohamed. In the Bible also, certain things were revealed.



Through Knowledge we have to recognise our own Self ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The most ancient Shruti we have, are the Vedas. They neither have an author nor do they have any date. They are considered apaurusheya - beyond human intellect, not written or composed by a human being. Being revealed Knowledge, they are authentic and are considered as valid means of knowledge or pramaNa.

What is the main difference between a Hindu, a Christian or a Muslim? Every religion has its own rituals and customs. These are all secondary. The main distinguishing feature is the faith in the scriptures. Followers of the Hindu religion have faith in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-gita and the Puranas. How much they follow them, is a secondary issue. Some may follow them more sincerely than others; the understanding may vary from person to person, that is not

important. The main thing is what your faith is in.

Christians have faith in the Bible. Muslims have faith in the words of the Koran. They may or may not have respect for other scriptures, but they have faith in their own scriptures. As Hindus we may respect other religions and other scriptures but there is more affinity and faith in the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Faith plays a very significant role. The scriptures we believe were revealed but since there is no proof we have to accept it on faith. It cannot be proved because it is not a product of the human mind or intellect. A mathematical solution is there for a mathematical problem; one can prove it. The revealed knowledge of the scriptures cannot be proved with our machines and laboratories. Experience is the only proof of the Truth of the scriptures, which can only be known by following them sincerely with faith. We can experience what is said but before that there is no way to prove it. It has to be accepted on faith. This is a very important point. In the Gita also Bhagavan says, “shraddhavan labhate jnanam – only those with faith will get the knowledge.” Without complete belief and faith, we will not be able to grasp the message.

Shrutiparagaya is one who knows the very limit, the very secret or the essence of the scriptures.

The Vedas have said a lot but the very essence of the Vedas as I have understood is only this, that we should surrender to God and with deep faith, devotion and sincerity sing His name. That is what I have understood from the Vedas.

In the Gita also Bhagavan says:

“Vedaishcha sarvaim aham eva- the very essence and theme of all the Vedas, is this aham.”

Through all the Vedas you have to recognize Me. The very essence and goal of all the Vedas is to reveal to us the Supreme Reality which our own Self. Shrutiparagaya is the one who knows the essence and secret of the Vedas.

Often we are carried away by the non-essentials. There are many topics in the Vedas which may not be directly helpful for everyone because the Vedas are meant for all types of people. Some people get involved in non- essentials, like rituals and waste their whole lives. It is important to know the main purpose of the Vedas and attain it. The Vedas are roughly divided into three sections, karmakanda, upasana-kanda and jnana-kanda. Through karmakanda we have to purify our mind, through upasana we should gain that single-pointedness and through knowledge we have to realize and recognize our own Self.

OM SHRUTIPAARAGAAYA NAMAH

Kindly see Story of Day 348: OM SHAASTRAUDDHAARAKAAYA NAMAH - Offering by

Acharya Mahadevan had been missed; added today.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

351. Om Srotriyaaya Namaha

22-04-2016

OM SROTRIYAYA NAMAHA

Offered by Dr M Ramesh (Anaesthesiologist), Chinmaya Mission, Hyderabad, Telangana State, India

Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda is a great spiritual 'GURU' – Srotriya (well versed in scriptural knowledge) and Brahmanishtha (firmly established in the Self).

He has the great ability to teach Vedanta to a primary level seeker, as well as an advanced seeker with his exposition of Bhagavad Geeta, Upanishads and Brahma sutras.

I quote an incident:-

In 1984 July/August, my wife Dr. Suhasini and I were doing post-graduation in Kurnool Medical College (in AP). One of my cousins married a classmate of mine and we invited them for dinner. My cousin was a surgeon and a Senior Resident in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi. Intelligent as he was, he was also a kind person and cared for the poor and downtrodden. At an ideological level, he was a communist and well-read in that ideology.

During discussion he said, "Religion is the opium of the masses". I retorted saying "will you agree if I say communism/Marxism is Opium of masses, without knowing the theory of communism?" He said "no". Then I told him "first you read Hindu Scriptures and then come out with your opinion". He asked me what books he should read. At that time I know very little about Chinmaya Mission books (though I knew Gurudev and was studying the Chinmaya lessons postal course) and so I suggested "Complete works of Vivekananda" published by RK Mission.



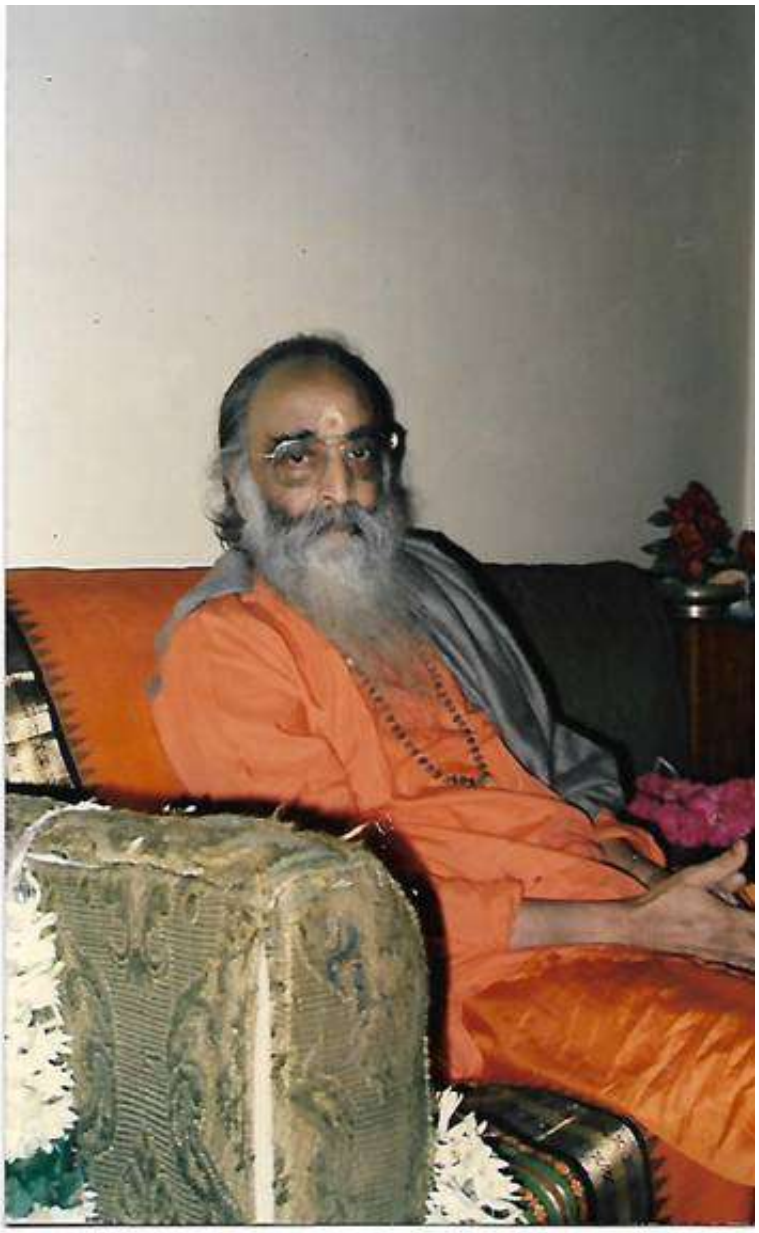
Dr. Ramesh, Dr. Suhasini and daughter Nivedita with Gurudev

He went to Delhi; enquired about those books from one of the doctors associated with RK Mission and was advised to read the last volume of complete works of Vivekananda, which is the essence of all the volumes. He read that book and to my great surprise and shock, he wrote a twenty page letter, criticizing/condemning Vivekananda and Hinduism..... (The logic and content of that letter is not relevant in the context of this article).

I began writing a letter to Gurudev about this issue, but didn't make much headway as I was confused about how the letter was to be framed – what to write, how to write it,what to ask, and so on. This incident remained in my subconscious.

In 1991, Suhasiniand I along with our family members went to Sidhbari(Marathon)Geeta camp. During one of the informal satsangs with Gurudev, outside his kutiya, I told Gurudev about this incident. He listened with total attention and said, "WRONG BOOK TO A RIGHT PERSON." He went on explaining how Vivekananda's works were compilation of his talks, articles, letters, satsangs etc. A beginner without basic understanding or a person without faith in the scriptures (or rather having negative opinion about religion) can misunderstand and misinterpret the same.

Had he been exposed to systematic study, through Kindle Life, Manual of Self Unfoldment, Chinmaya lessons (Foundation Vedanta course) etc. his understanding and response would have been different.



Gurudev was looking at Dr. Ramesh when this picture was taken...

NOTE: HERE GURUDEV IS NOT CRITICAL OF COMPLETE WORKS OF VIVEKANANDA. HE IS ONLY SAYING A PERSON SHOULD BE FIT ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THESE BOOKS. I ALSO FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THESE BOOKS INITIALLY. AFTER DOING “CHINMAYA LESSONS” (in 1984), I THOROUGHLY ENJOY READING VIVEKANANDA WORKS....

Gurudev always insisted on systematic study and reflection for right understanding.

He gave us a “study scheme”, gave us “postal vedanta course” and insisted on “study groups”.

In one of the letters written to DrSuhasini (my wife), Gurudev asked her to tell me to simultaneously read “Manual of Self Unfoldment” while doing “Chinmaya Lessons”.... Gurudev remembering that I am doing “Chinmaya Lessons” and advising further study, indicates Gurudev’s immense love to spread the knowledge. (scanned letter as attachment)

Very interesting letter written by Gurudev to Rudite Emir (USA) Dated February 22, 1972 explains all. (Page 78, “SCRIPTURE: A MIRROR” of Mananam Series – CHINMAYA BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS SERIES).

GURUDEV WRITES:

“Until the first three or four books are over from the study scheme, if you enter into the Gita or Upanishad, you will not at all be benefited, and the students will have very many missing links in their chain of thoughts. That is why the study scheme has been put out. Total and complete satisfaction can be derived only when the student takes up the postal tuition (course) first. All may not realize this, and I cannot help them. After all, our work is only to advice. We do not want to advertise. In short, those whom the Lord inspires the right way alone can be helped on the spiritual path. In case there are students who have taken up the Postal Tuition, it will be very effective if you can organize one evening every week for them alone and strictly follow the Lesson Course Scheme. At Powai (SandeepanySadhanalaya Mumbai), every student starts with this lesson course, and the rewards are stupendous. Hereafter, I would also put pressure because of the beautiful results seen. I must insist that all students go through the postal tuition.”

NOTE: “Chinmaya Lessons Postal course”- At present this is offered as “Foundation Vedanta Course” from CIF – (both postal and as E- Vedanta).

I feel this “Foundation Vedanta Course” started by Gurudev is a MUST for all students of Vedanta course,Grihasthasevaks, CHYK sevaks involved in Study groups and for serious seekers to strengthen their weak links in the knowledge and to increase their ability to teach.

Those who take this course will understand how Gurudev could convince modern university educated skeptics, about the logic of spirituality.

OM SROTRIYAAYA NAMAHA

OM SROTRIYAAYA NAMAH

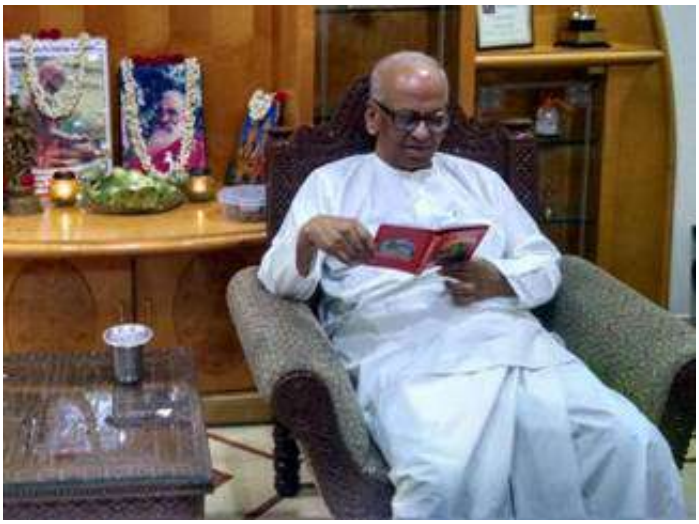
Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Srotriya is one who is well versed in scriptures. There is a subtle difference between the earlier one Sruti Paragaya Namah and Srotriyaya namah.

Srutipaaragaaya means not merely has he mastered the scriptures but also reached the goal therein.

Srotriyaa means erudition and knowledge. That is the qualification, we may say, to be a teacher. Apart from being a Srotriya one has to be Brahmanishtha too – completely abiding in Brahman, firmly established in the Self.

Gurudev has written commentaries on Bhagavad Gita,Upanishads Prakarana Granthas like Vivekachudamani, Atma Bodha, Aparokshanubhoothi to name some and works like Dakshinamurthy stotram, Astavakra Geeta,vakyavritti, Rama Geeta etc.



These show that he is a Srotriya. The way in which Gurudev explained the physical structure of Kubera and the story of Agasthya in His video talks on BG Chapter X, shows His vastness of knowledge.

Vedanta -- pg xiii

Preface

Swami Chinmayananda--known the world over as Gurudev-- walked,talked,and lived Vedanta. Many called Him a living scripture.
Men and women,young and old,spanning many cultures and varied faiths--Gurudev reached them all to reveal the beauty and relevance of Vedanta in their lives.

Swami Chinmayananda as I Know Him pg 27

Smt.Umayal Chidmbaram
Tiruchirapalli.
He made Gita and Upanishads very simple to understand for all people.
There are many devotees of Gurudev throughout the country. Still He touches each and every person's life. We have received His healing touch, at times of family problems.
This is the only way to reach God. There is no other way. I believe that Gurudev lives with us even now.

Page 111

Shri K.V.Pillay Madras.

In 1970, my friend a law graduate used to attend the gospel of Billy Graham. Once I asked him to listen to Gurudev. For 2 days he accompanied me to Ramakrishna School where Gurudev was conducting His talks. He then went alone. He told me, "If Billy Graham had to talk on philosophy, he would have to be a student of Swami Chinmayanandaji for at least 10 years! "

OM SROTRIYAAYA NAMAH!

OM SHROTRIYAAYA NAMAH

Shrotriya is one who is learned and one who has listened.

Shravanam,mananam and nididhyasanam are the three steps that a spiritual aspirant must take. Of these the first step is shravaNam or listening is the main sadhana to gain Knowledge. Nowadays we erroneously believe that we can gain this Knowledge by reading books. This is not true. It can only be gained by listening to the scriptures directly from the Master. In this there can be no compromise. We have to get to the source and learn about the Supreme Reality...God...one’s own Self...the world...karma...bhakti...viveka...vairagya...jnana ...shraddha.



Finally we hear the mahavakya, ‘tat tvamasi’ and then meditate on it. Contemplate on it; understand it subjectively and deeply, not just intellectually but in its essence. Once it is understood one should meditate on it and make that understanding stronger and more powerful.

In the Gita Bhagavan says, ‘Maya tatamidamsarvam - everything is pervaded by me.’

The steps are listen, meditate, contemplate and understand. This understanding is not objective. It is existential, not just at the level of the intellect but the whole personality. We cannot say, “Yes, I have understood.” The understanding that comes we are sitting on the earth is not existential understanding.

When we are told that God is all-pervading or that He resides in our hearts! We should get horripilations, but nothing happens because our understanding is superficial. It is not deep. It does not stir the whole personality and is no good. If after hearing this powerful statement, we merely say, “Yes, yes, He is there in the heart. That reminds me I have to get my heart checked,” it is of no use. When the scriptures say - tat tvamasi or You are Brahman. Our normal response is, “Yes we have heard it...very nice...very good.”

For this understanding to go deep into our system and stir the inner personality long periods of practice and contemplation are required. Then alone does transformation happen. If we take a tablet and just keep it in the mouth, it will not

have any effect. We will see results only when it goes inside the system and merges with it. Similarly our understanding should merge with our Self. BhagavanRamana Maharishi's message was - contemplate on the question: Who am I? This is a very powerful question and should not be treated as an intellectual exercise. It should penetrate deep and change our thinking, our very personality.

One Mahatma asked us to suppose that there is only one sentient person on this earth, the only human being. This person does not know anything and has not read any scriptures. Suddenly the thought comes - who am I? It will be fresh and one would have to go deep to find the answer. Only when one contemplates in this manner does the real understanding take place. When we gain this understanding we can meditate and realize the Truth.

So shrotriya is one who has heard the scriptures, and has understood its depths. It is a technical term referring to one who knows scriptures, has heard it from the Teacher and understood it. The best Teacher is a shrotriyabrahmanishtha, one who is learned in the scriptures and also established in the truth.

Gurudev himself studied the scriptures thoroughly. He first went to Swami Sivananda at Rishikesh and then to Uttarkasi, where he stayed with Swami TapovanMaharaj. Each time the learning was new and fresh. This Knowledge being rare we do not hear about this in the every-day world. Having had a glimpse of it in the Sivananda Ashram, he lived with his Guru for years together. He learned the scriptures sincerely, contemplated on them and then discoursed on them. Speaking on the subject was his method of contemplation, because speaking clarifies ideas. Also when we speak, the Knowledge goes deeper into our own system. This is the beauty about speaking or sharing this Knowledge. If one wants to be convinced about something one should convincingly tell the same to others. The result is that one gets more convinced.

There is this story about a bank promoter who went about convincing others to put their money in his bank. He spoke so convincingly about the merits of the new bank that people put their money in. Seeing so many people convinced the promoter also finally put his money into the new enterprise. The conviction grows when we see other people also convinced. Similarly, while giving discourses people are convinced and when we see this our conviction also becomes stronger. We feel if they are convinced, then it must be true. Shravanam, kértanam, anyaprabodhanam - we should listen, speak and discuss with others because then the understanding becomes clearer and goes deeper.

352. OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

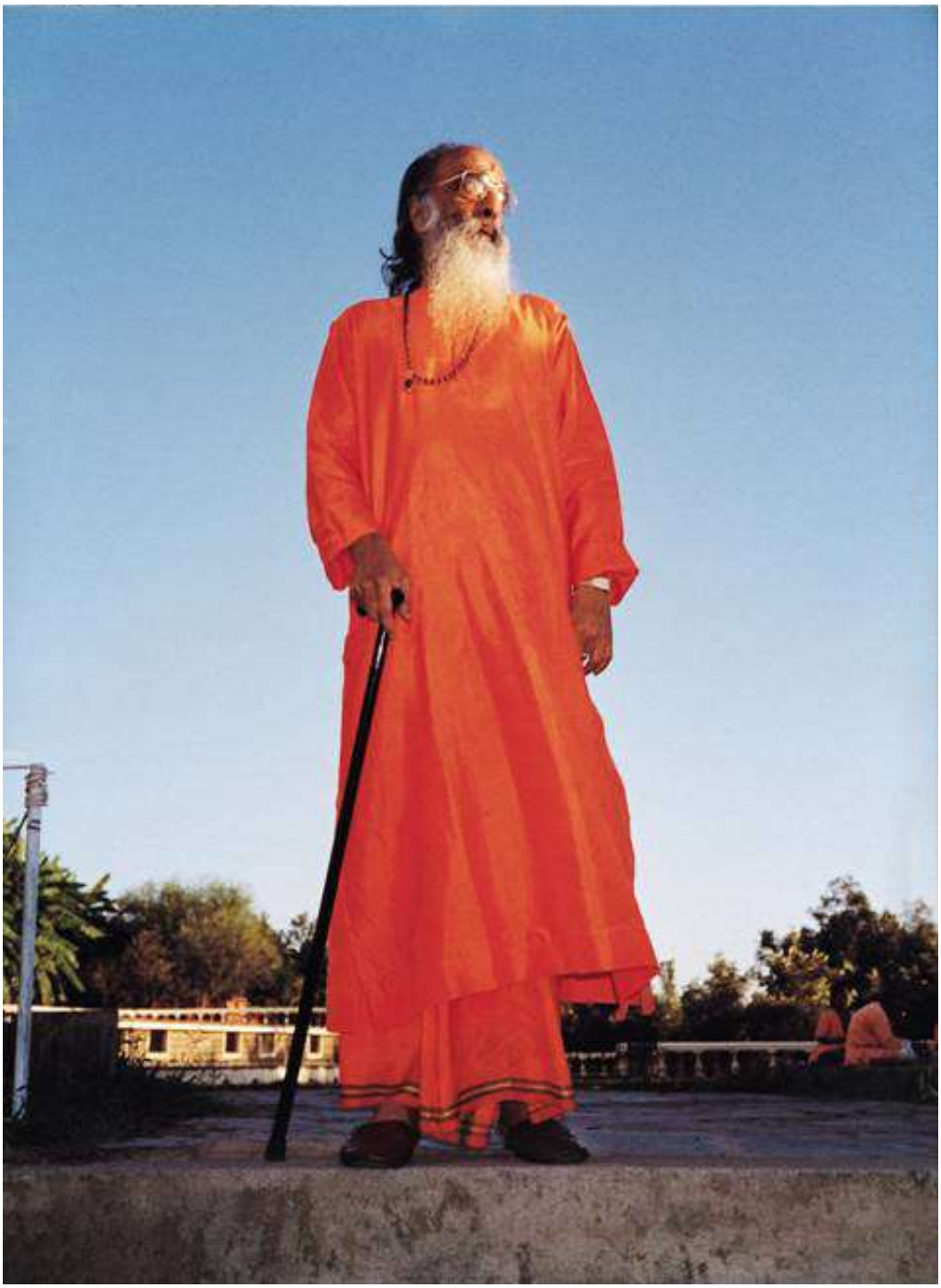
23-04-2016

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

Compiled by a long standing devotee

Gurudev often remarked, 'If a black coat does not make you a lawyer, if a white coat does not make you a doctor, why do you think that an ochre robe will make you a sanyasi?"!! Sanyas is all about the attitude of the mind.

However, the sacred cloth has a great responsibility on the wearer. There was a situation when an Army officer had to escort Gurudev. He informed Swamiji that he would change over from the army uniform and come over to drive Him. The ALL WISE Swamiji asked the army officer, "Does the uniform impose restrictions on you?" and the officer replied in the affirmative and then Gurudev said, "My Guru has given me a uniform which I have to wear 24 hours and so it demands discipline 24 hours...even in my bed, I have to be disciplined."



©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT (shot by Anjali Singh)

How much ever may be written about ‘Anushasana’ (discipline) it would be grossly inadequate. What a role model, Gurudev is, to all those who accept Sanyasaashrama.
During the 1st global tour in 1965, Gurudev had to introduce himself. He told the press, “A Swami is one who is ‘civilly dead’, having no rights, only duties. He

expects neither honour, reward or appreciation, but receives his fulfillment in doing good work. There is no end to the work you can do for your neighbour. In expecting no reward, you make the world indebted to you instead of you being indebted to the world. All spiritual masters left the world that way". Gurudev lived every word, every moment in the same spirit, leaving the world deeply indebted to Him….Hence we worship Him as Phalaasaktirahitaaya Namah (free from attachment to fruit of actions) and Nirapekshaya Namah (without dependence on anyone or thing)

Gurudev's spirit of renunciation was such that He was not attached to anything at all……When He could be 'Dehateeta'(beyond the body), renouncing everything else, being detached from everything, would have been child's play for Him….be it the organization, the wealth, the glory ….

He was not attached even to the organization 'Chinmaya Mission' for which He was the very substratum. When some devotees asked Swamiji about the future of the Mission, He said, "Why should I worry? It is only my shadow.. Does anyone worry about the shadow. It is all meant for you. If you want it, it will go on. Otherwise it will cease". Though He built an empire across the world, He governed them all like a trustee and not like an owner….He is worshipped as 'Aniketaaya Namah'(one with no abode)….He owned nothing and so everything belonged to Him.

Sri Gurudev said in one of His talks, "My Guru had only 3 sets of clothes. I have 300 sets. What does it matter? He was not attached to His 3 sets, and I am not attached to my 300"! A devotee found Swamiji in a simple ochre cloth when He was in retreat at Uttarkashi. Since the devotee was used to seeing Gurudev in silks, he was surprised and asked Gurudev about it. Swamiji said "All the drama and makeup is for your sake – the university educated. I have no use for that here in Uttarkashi".

Not only was He unattached, He did not encourage anyone to get attached to Him. During one of the yagnas, Gurudev's host had a heart attack and therefore, so as to not disturb the family, He decided to live in a different house. This hurt the ailing devotee. Gurudev clarified from the platform "I am much more than a Sanyasi. I am a missionary. Devotees must not hold on to the Swami as if it were a 'Shivlinga' or a 'Saligram' to be acquired and devotedly worshipped. Allow them to serve the society. Do not hang on to the Guru saying – 'He is my Swami – He should stay here, eat this or that'. Let him eat or die. He is Narayana's instrument. Let him work and Narayana will feed him".

He had written to a devotee as early as 1960, "As far as I am concerned, I hold on to none and none hold on to me. I sing my song and pass your gate. Under your balcony, I cannot wait and sing. I run like a shuttle between yagnashalas till the last chord is sung out. I will sing on…and on….and on….! Until the strings burst, until the body of the instrument wears off rubbed against my willing shoulders, I shall carry on"……He lived till His Mahasamadhi exactly as He had written in 1960..Satyasankalpaya Namah(one of true resolve)

How much ever may be written, He will remain Aprameya (immeasurable) and Achintya (unthinkable)….

As it is said in the Shiva Mahimnah Stotram,

Tava Tatvamna Janami Keedrushoshi Maheshwara
Yadrushosi Mahadeva Tadrushaya Namonamah

I know not what you are....To what so ever you are....To That my infinite prostrations.

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai

Salutations to the one who is a renunciate

Sanyasi is one who has renounced everything. Sanyasa also means depositing well. When the same word has two different meanings there is a connection between them. Thus one having been absorbed in Brahman has no value for the world and hence is said to have renounced the world.
Gurudev says sanyasa is not the colour of the robe. It is the state of mind. There are several types of Sanyasis. Sri Gurudev belongs to the highest type of Paramahamsa. Renunciation is renouncing the Ego mainly manifesting asdehatma bhava,the sense of body;kartrurtwabhawa sense of agency;bhoktrutwabhawa sense of enjoyership.
A Brahmagnani is one who has become one with the Infinite, lost individuality therefore no egocentric desires or attachments linger in him.

In Bhagavad Gita Chapter II, this state is described in verse 69 to say that the experiences of dualistic world have no interest to a Gnani and is the equivalent of night to Him; whereas His world of Bliss is night to an ordinary man! [Verse 69: That which is night to all beings, in that the self-controlled man keeps awake; where all beings are awake, that is the night for the Sage (MUNI) who sees.]

Gurudev says He has chewed the world enough found no juice in it and spat it out, just as a child would spit the chewing gum after chewing it off its juice.
We will see some anecdotes reflecting His Sanyasa Bhava:
He Did It pages 49 & 50
Sanyasa is the renunciation of the ego and desires for the world. In the literal sense,when an individual takes sanyasa,he performs his last rites in the world as an individual. From a spiritual stand point,true sanyasa implies Self Knowledge and an awakening to the knowledge that the world is an illusion.
On the auspicious day of Sivaratri,February 25,1949,Balakrishnan Menon was initiated into the holy order of Sanyasa by Swami Sivananda. He plunged three times

into the chilly waters of Ganga,chanting the vows of renunciation with each immersion. His past life washed away like the wisps of a faded dream,He emerged the epiphany of a man reborn.

Every Breath a Teaching pages 230 & 231

Swamiji had to go to a public meeting and asked a senior army officer to accompany Him. The officer said "Swamiji would you give me just few minutes? I will go change out of my uniform. Then I will be with you "(the regulation calls for an army officer to be out of uniform when attending public meetings.) "Swamiji inquired" Why? Are there certain things you are not supposed to do while in uniform?"
"Yes Swamiji!" was the reply. "See that "? Continued Swamiji " That is why my Guru said: Uniform at all times! So, even when I go to bed I wear "my uniform!"



Always in uniform ..... Gurudev at the UN (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Maitreyi Chaitanya, CM Pune

A renunciate!!!Immediately the mind pictures a person sitting in a forest, under a tree with closed eyes, meditating or may be a rudrakshamaala in hand..... eating only roots, fruits, leaves and not living with a wee bit of luxury!

And here we saw Gurudev..... living in nice houses, moving on wheels or wings, well prepared meals, silk clothes, etc.....

And just like people in Dwapar Yuga failed to appreciate the divinity of Lord Krishna due to his human form, similarly we in our times, often fail to understand the depth of renunciation of a Jeevanmukta due to the illusory outer appearances.

Yes, Pujya Gurudev was offered plush beds and comfortable rooms, but how much did he sleep per day?

Yes, they did serve him various delicacies but do we know the pain of eating heavy food 3times×365days×40years?

And that too in the health condition that he was in? And we know that all that came with love and was accepted with greater love and offered to the stomach as an aahuti.

And what about the comfortable aeroplane travels? Were they comfortable at all?

How many of us know what it means to be in exactly opposite weather conditions within a time duration of few hours?

A Sannyasi eats only food offered in Bhiksha, just like Gurudev.

A Sannyasi delivers lectures everyday. Gurudev did it for 40 years , round the Globe.....

A Sannyasi never settles down in a place, keeps moving....

We just need to go through Gurudev's itinerary to know how much he moved from place to place to place...

We can go on enumerating Gurudev's feats, acts, works .....

We have 'seen' this great Mahatma living the extremely traditional and renunciate life in the midst of all the so-called luxuries and comforts.....

Hence let us truly prostrate to this JagadGuru....

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om Sannyasine Namah

Sannyasa means renunciation or giving up of all that is false. It is giving up all erroneous convictions, wrong values and faulty notions which we have held on to and don't want to give up. As soon as the understanding takes place the false drops off instantly. It is spontaneous. Suppose while driving one encounters a vehicle driving very fast, coming from behind. Immediately the understanding takes place and one moves out of the way. Or while eating, say a fly falls into the food; immediately one just drops it. The understanding and the action of giving up are instant.

Normally we take sannyasa to mean renunciation of the world, family or pleasures. But sannyasa is the renunciation of all that is false. When people take sannyasa they have to take ochre robes, and drop their name. Even dropping one's name is not easy. Often we find that people don't want to drop their maiden names after marriage. They hold on to their old name. Then (in some cultures) post marriage, one has to give up one's entire wardrobe and wear only one particular type of dress.

It is very difficult to drop one's name because the past is associated with it. Suppose one wants to drop one's past, one should change one's name. Many of us have pet names. If one were suddenly greeted by one's pet name, at once one would be forcefully transported to one's childhood. The name is associated with form and with so many other things. It is very powerful. Name is a very interesting and powerful phenomenon. When we want to drop certain conditions, of certain things, what are we trying to drop? We are trying to drop the mind, the associations, the thoughts, emotions and the good and bad experiences attached to it. We are also trying to eliminate the sadness, the guilt, the anger, the jealousy and the sense of 'my and mine.' All these are linked to the name. One fine morning if one drops the name and takes on another name, all these automatically get eliminated. They become easier to drop. The change of name is one of the most important and beautiful aspects of sannyasa.

My name has changed many times. My parents gave me a name. As a Brahmachari I had another name. Finally when I took sannyasa I was given yet another name. It's very interesting.

Clothes are also associated with our emotions. When we wear fancy clothes and dress for a party, we begin to feel special. Even an ordinary person starts feeling differently. To convert the tribals, Christian missionaries first distributed new clothes. The simple villagers were used to minimum clothing. They were given European clothes. The natives wore them and began looking different. Some did not remove the clothes for a month.

When the style of dressing changes, everything appears different. Foreigners come to India, and are attracted by Vedanta, ashram, and our lifestyle. They stay in the ashram, start wearing Indian attire and actually start feeling that they want to be Indian. They want to associate. So they start wearing churidar kurtas, and apply tikka on the forehead. In the Iskcon temple, one sees so many foreigners sporting a sari or dhoti because the whole personality changes. People from our villages go to America and change from a dhoti to Bermuda pants and cap. In an instant the whole mood changes. If you happen to meet them they won't recognize you, and you won't recognize them. But when they return and once again get into the dhoti they are back to square one. Our clothes and our name are associated with so many things.
Sannyasa is dropping all that is false and all that is insignificant. Hence the name of a sannyasi is also changed. Gurudev's name before sanyasa was Balkrishna Menon. He dropped that and became Swami Chinmayananda. Swami Sivananda gave him the diksha. We have great affinity and attachment to our hair. As part of the rituals associated with the sannyasadiksha, the hair is also removed. This is all symbolic. When we do something physically it also helps in the process of mental change. Mentally one may say, "I am a sannyasi," but when we physically do a ritual, one feels the intensity of it. Hence the hair is removed.

Gautama Buddha and Mahavir were both great princes. They renounced their respective kingdoms, left everything and adopted the lifestyle of mendicants. They just walked out without a backward glance. Mahavir plucked out all his hair. He gave away everything. Finally, he was left with just one kaupina (underclothing or loincloth). He even removed that, gave it to someone and just walked away. Nowadays Jain sadhus as part of their initiation, have big rituals of plucking hair and

all. But Mahavir did it feeling that he wants to give up all attachments and contemplate only on the Supreme. The same was the case with Gautam Buddha. The feeling was so very intense.
Renunciation is an outcome of viveka, of understanding, letting go what is low and insignificant. If one knows that something is not good, then one should drop it. This applies to objects, food, relationships and habits. If we think that we are not good, then one should drop oneself.

Shadanyasi iti Sannyasi. Shada means six. So one who drops the six enemies of the heart –kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya, is a sannyasi. One who lets go of the ahamkara (ego) and mamatva (possessiveness) is a sannyasi. Sannyasa only is the renunciation of the false, low and negative, not what is positive. Some people say, “Oh I will renounce everything even Bhagavan!” This is not the attitude. Finally before departing from this world, we should just drop everything. Like before going to sleep we should just wind up all issues of the day. It is not advisable to carry unfinished business into sleep because then one may have disturbing dreams. So finish all matters and then peacefully go to sleep. If one is lucky to wake up early the next day, one should start the day afresh; otherwise close all accounts and go to sleep.



He was convinced this was the only path to follow .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Sannyasis are also like this. They close all the accounts with the world and then slowly withdraw in order to realize the Truth. Gurudev had not gone to the Sivananda Ashram to take sannyasa. He merely wanted to see what Swamis do. He really wanted to expose them! But after seeing and listening to the Knowledge, he was convinced and decided that this was the only path to follow. So he took sannyasa and sincerely followed the life of a sannyasi.

OM SANYAASINE NAMAH

353. OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH

24-04-2016

OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission



* Salutations to the one who is composed and equanimous always.

* If we want to experience Infinity, we must keep the mind balanced. This is a pre-requisite and the Gita Chapter 2 is clear about this.

* If you read Guidance From The Guru, Swami Tapovan Maharaj's letters to grahasthas, he says – 'mind in balance is moksha. Beautiful line. Mind in balance is moksha.

* When we look at Gurudev, this balance of the mind was always there. Health going weak – balanced. He never stopped work. As his disciples all of us also feel the same way. You will see this quality in everybody in the Mission. You recover your health little bit, and jump back to work.

* A business school once called Gurudev for a talk. The students, it was seen, had a different attitude; they weren't very delighted. And this is some of the egos which you will come across. These are strong qualities. A professional thinks he is far above others, a business student also has this kind of an attitude.

They think we are the ones who manage the economy of the country and the country's progress is on us. Why should a sannyasi come to address us? What will this old man speak to us in the first place? We are intellectuals. We take the country ahead, what will he do. And one of them said as much to Gurudev. He said – so much work is there, and so little time to do it in; why do we have to have all this kind of talk?

Asking him. End of the talk you decide whether it was necessary or not necessary. That was the response.

Swamiji went on. Absolutely balanced. No disturbance. A person is asking why are you here, what is the necessity! And Swamiji spoke. And naturally when Gurudev presents his talk, the whole thing changes. That young man must have been a devotee or rooted in samskara, for, when the talk ended, he brought a plate of fruits with a cover of donation for the Mission.

Swamiji took the fruits, kept it there. He then took one fruit, looked at it for some time, closed his eyes. Then he whispered audibly for everyone to hear: "I have blessed this fruit. Whoever gets it, will get the best of your placements."

And he threw it among the student audience. Instantly they pounced on it, to grab that fruit. Swamiji stopped. Looked at them and then he said – "what did you say when I came? You are intellectuals, you don't want to waste time. You don't want all this. What happened to your intellectualism? You think a fruit can give you a placement?" He just walked out.

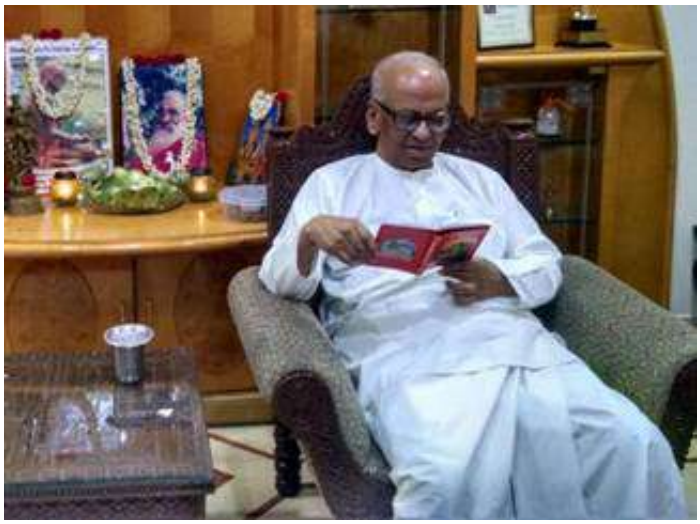
What a lesson! When the mind is loaded with desire, the human mind becomes weak. When that mind is not sure of obtaining that desire, the mind is weak. It will adopt anything for its fulfillment. Placement is the anxiety of the B-school students. The best business house should take me.

But when they opposed – Swamiji remained balanced, undisturbed. This could be considered in polite company, a huge insult – to be invited and then told 'we don't want you, why did you come here? You are wasting our time. The (college) management doesn't realize. We have to tell this, we are telling you.

And Swamiji? Balanced. At all times, be it a loss - mind balanced; be it a gain – mind balanced. He walked across keeping the mind balanced always. Equipoised ever.

OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH

OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH



Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Man of Realisation is a sthithapragna meaning one whose mind is free from waves which is possible when one goes beyond likes and dislikes and has equal vision of everything. Sri Gurudev emphasises this and says realisation is not complete unless one sees the same Self in Him as the Self everywhere. Once you see your Self in all, you go beyond likes and dislikes and gain an equal vision and attitude towards all.

Gurudev in His commentary on verse 9 of Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6 explains Samabudhi as:

“In his equal vision, all of them are equally important and he embraces, in his Infinitude, all of them with the same warmth and ardour. His love knows no distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous, the good and the bad. [...] In the right understanding of his own Self and the resulting realisation of his own

Self, he becomes the Self everywhere. He discovers a unity in the perceived diversity and a subtle rhythm in the obvious discord in the world outside. To Him, who has realised himself to be the Self which is all pervading, the entire universe becomes his own Self, and therefore, his relationship with every other part of the universe is equal and same. Whether I get wounded in the hand or leg, on the back or in the front, on the head or on the shoulder, it is the same to me, since I am identifying equally with my head, my trunk, and my legs, as myself."

Swami Chinmayananda As I Know Him pg 33

Mrs Kuppan Chettiar
Trichy
It was in 1947, when Pujya Gurudev came to Dr. Kalamegam's house. I was called to take photographs. He treats everyone alike --does not discriminate between devotees on the basis of caste or status. His willingness to visit devotee's house and sit and dine together (Samasti Bhojan), impressed me the most.

Pg 34

Dr Sajjan Singh, Rewa

Status No bar
My first visit with Gurudev was very formal. I remember one incident during the camp when Gurudev fell ill. He was sitting in a room. Rao Saheb (later: Swami Prashantananda) was also with Him. I was a bit late, and hence I was little hesitant to enter the room. " Don't be afraid, we are all the same come in!" He said.

This incident is still fresh in my memory. How affectionately He called me and made me feel one with Him.

Every Breath a Teaching pages 68 & 69

Love: The Cook is not forgotten.

Rudite Emir

A group of us were sitting with Swamiji in the living room of His residence at a spiritual camp, chatting with Him quietly in an informal satsanga, just enjoying His presence.
Swamiji looked at one of the devotees and said, "Go to the kitchen (which happened to be in separate building from His) and tell the cook Swamiji sends His love"

This is Chinmaya.
Chinmaya doesn't Boo Hoo when you boo him.
Chinmaya doesn't go Woo Hoo when you cheer him.
Chinmaya remains unruffled.
Chinmaya is equipoised.
Be like Chinmaya.



Om Samabudhaye Namah

OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om Samabuddhaye Namah

Sama is equanimous. Buddhi means intellect or understanding. Samabuddhaya is one whose conviction or understanding remains same, equal under all circumstances, among all people and beings, in all times.

An ignorant or ordinary person's conviction changes according to the circumstances. With good experiences we have one conviction and with bad experiences we have a different conviction. When things are conducive we have one understanding but in the face of adversity the understanding changes. When one gains the knowledge and is deeply convinced the conviction remains the same under all circumstances. The certainty remains despite the outer conditions being good or bad, healthy or sick, favourable or unfavourable. Only then is the conviction proper or genuine, otherwise it is conditional. Whether in satsanga or at a party the understanding remains undisturbed. Our understanding of God should remain firm regardless of the situation. Convictions that change according to the circumstances are not correct.

A pandita or a jnani is one who has equal vision (samana darshan). He knows that the divinity is there in all. So whether he sees a Brahmin, a knowledgeable person, an ignorant person, a dog, a cat, an elephant or a chandala, he has samanadrishti. Similarly our understanding should be firm, steady. The understanding that one is a human being does not change, whatever be the situation. Similarly the understanding, "I am divine. I am Brahman," should not undergo change in different

circumstances.

One pictorial contribution remains to be posted THIS IS CHINMAYA. We will post it tomorrow. Kindly come back and see it.

OM SAMABUDDHAYE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to meera.seth@chinfo.org

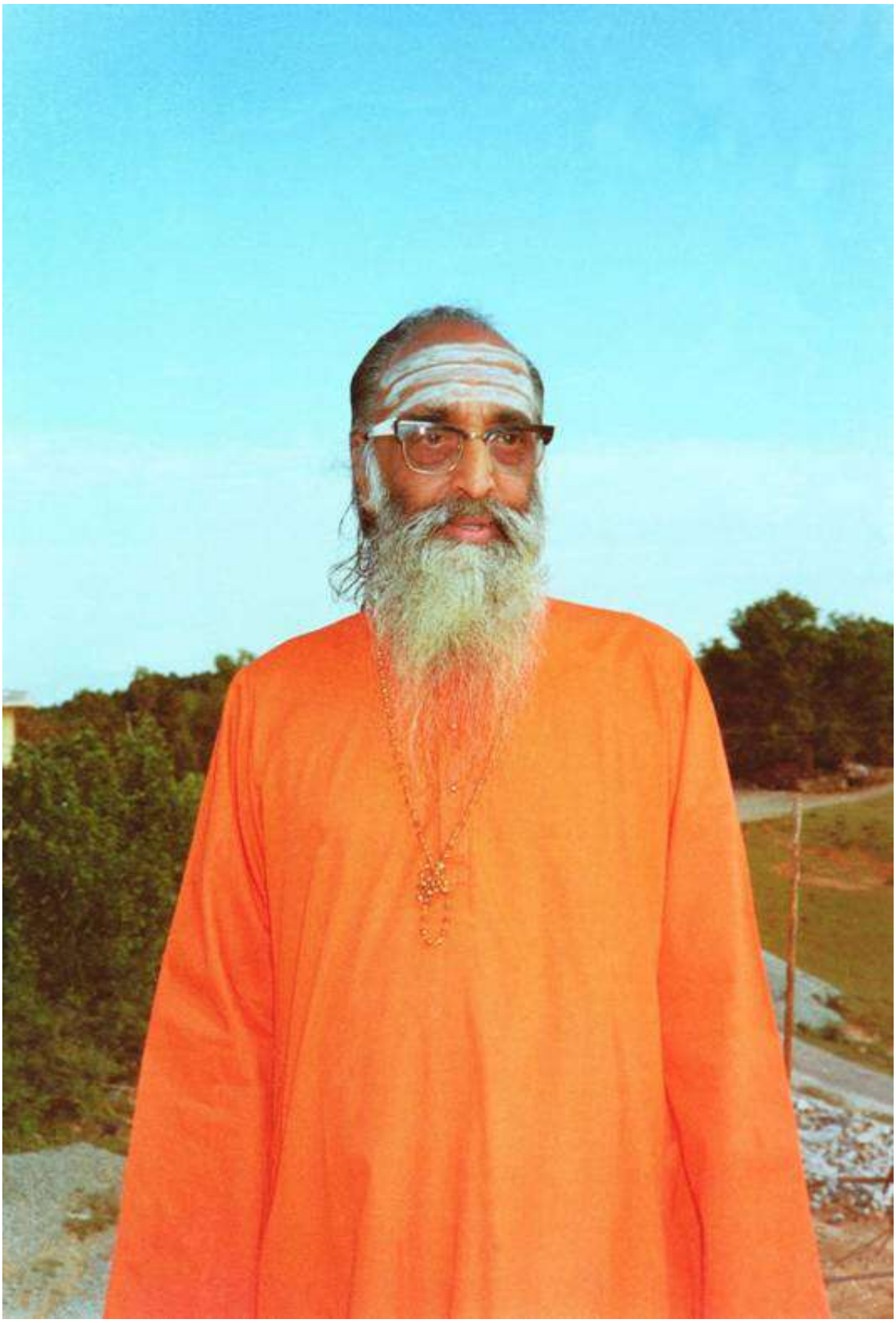
354. OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

25-04-2016

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission

*Salutations to the one who is Existence Consciousness Bliss.
*Wherever such a person is, he knows what he is and ever happy.
*First time when Gurudev came to Chennai (Madras) for a yajna, he stayed at Arani Palace. It's an old dilapidated house which was supposed to be haunted.
*In the evening Swamiji would come out, give talks. People would tell him, Swamiji that is a haunted house. His response –' I'll have some company. You don't worry. I'll have company. I'll stay here. Free, isn't it?' Happy there too!
samabuddhayenamah, saccidananda!



From the collection of Shubha Pathial, CM Portland

*Once it started raining. Yagna was to begin. 6 o'clock, 6.15 ... relentless heavy rain. The yajna could not take place. He comes out of the room, looked at the sky. It was pouring. At 6.20 pm he did what we used to as kids when it would begin to pour like that on a school day.
Such joy seeing it rain and suddenly we would scream – holiday, holiday! Because the roads would make it impossible to reach school. That is what he did. He came out, he looked around. The open air yajnashala -- washed out. That day is gone. Like a child he began to swing... 'Holiday! Holiday!' Saccidanandayanamah. Happy always. He knew the Truth. He knew he is existence, he knew he is cit, he knew he is ananda.
Small small things and the joy was pure. And that joy was so amazing. No one would have thought that would be his response. Shrotriya, brahma nishtha, looks at the sky like a child and declares –'holiday, holiday!' We could not believe what we were watching.
*Everyday Swamiji goes on speaking. It was Nature's way of giving him rest. God must have felt, Son, you take rest today.
Sacchidananda, happy ever. Happy forever.

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Om sach-chid-ānandāyanamaha
salutations to the one who is pure existence, consciousness, and bliss



Sachidananda is the way Brahman is mostly indicated. Names, designations, attributes, are all in duality. Non dual Brahman has no names no designations no attributes etc, and as such cannot be indicated through words. Yet from the stand point of the seeker some indications are necessary for him to proceed on his path of enquiry. Thus there are some words, phrases, sentences which act as catalyst or props for the mind to soar, and then, the prop is dropped when the leap is taken, like in pole vaulting.
Among these words and phrases, Sat Chit Ananda is very important with reference to what we are seeking. We seek deathlessness; from that standpoint it is Sat. We seek Knowledge; from that point it is Absolute Chit. We seek Happiness; and from that stand point it is Absolute Bliss.

He is thus in us as the Eternal All-knowing Blissful Self. This is the state of Sri Gurudev. Even from the relative standpoint, the Bliss (Ananda)that he initiated in us through Knowledge (Chit) is Eternal (Sat). He is the Eternal Blissful Conscious Existence in Us. This is why the Mahatma in love and compassion said, close your eyes and look within, and you will meet Me.

Vedanta: The journey beginspg 7

"Can you tell me more about the cause as I heard you describe it to night--as sat -chit -ananda? Did I say that right?"

"Right!" He said. "Remember the meaning of sat-chit-ananda. It means Existence -Knowledge -Bliss. Think! Isn't it true that you always wanted to live one day longer, that you always want to exist? Are you not always seeking to know more? And are you not always looking to be happy? You are always wanting to get back to the root of our existence. Those desires are inherent in every one, and that shows that our true Nature is constantly whispering to us to come back to the real Self."

Gurudev has got back to the root of His existence--sat -chit -ananda.

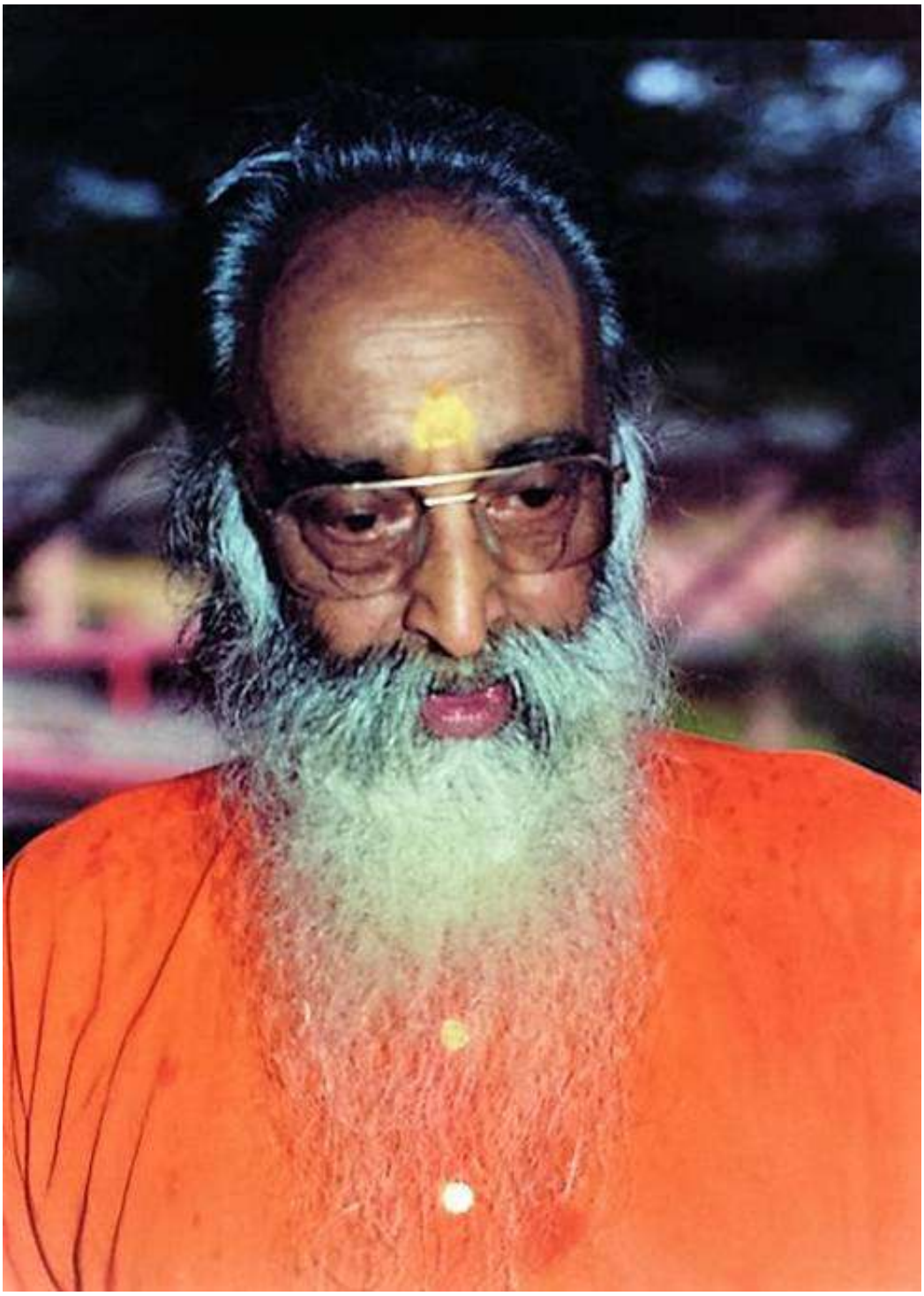
He Did It :The Glory of Himalayas pg 67
If the measure of happiness is pure joy, Swami Chinmayananda has qualified.
If it is eternal peace,He qualified.
If it is Self-awareness,He qualified.
If it is Truth, He qualified.

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om SaccidänandäyaNamaù
One who is of the nature of Sat (pure, absolute Existence), Cit (Consciousness) and Änanda (Bliss). Sat, is one's nature. One does not exist but is Existence itself. Existence is the very nature of that Reality because of which everything that we experience is experienced as 'Existing'. When we look at a flower we know it exists because we can touch it and can see it. We know that it exists. Similarly, we know that the body exists, because we can see and feel it. We know that we exist but find it difficult to explain its meaning. This strange feeling is pure Existence. It's not that because one sees therefore one is. Even with eyes closed one knows one exists as, 'I am.' This am-ness or being-ness is pure being or Existence. That pure absolute Existence is my very nature.
The body and mind change, everything changes but that pure Existence remains. It gets expressed through the body; it gets expressed through so many things. Like beauty may be expressed through the flower. But when the flower is destroyed, the beauty is not destroyed. It may get expressed through something else. Beauty is there all the time. Existence is there. So I am that pure Existence. At present one identifies with the body and says, "I am the body." One identifies with the thoughts and says, "I am the thoughts." But even without identifying with the body and thoughts one remains - the pure 'I am'. One only has to recognize this pure Existence.



Pure Existence ....

From the collection of Shubha Pathial, CM Portland, USA

This pure Existence is also pure Consciousness. One can be conscious of something, like a flower or another object. But there is another very strange sort of experience - I am conscious, I am conscious of this world. When one sleeps one is totally unconscious. On waking up suddenly one becomes conscious of the world, the body and the thoughts which are coming and going. That because of which one is conscious, is pure Consciousness. One is conscious of oneself as, 'I am. I exist.' One is conscious that, 'I exist.' Also, one is aware that, 'I exist.' So that pure Consciousness - not conscious of this or that - per se is one's nature. Ananda is pure Bliss. It is not happiness because of some object or interaction with the world. It is happiness by itself. One's nature is sat citananda. One has to understand and the constantly meditate on this. We should remind ourselves, "I am this, I am this. Sachchidananda. This is contemplation, meditation.

OM SACHIDAANANDAAY NAMAH

355. OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

26-04-2016

OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri H.P. Eswar, CM Mumbai – Matunga area



The 16th Vedanta Course, originally known as Brahmachari Course, was inaugurated by Param Pujya Guru ji in the august presence of Poojya Swami Brahmananda ji at the Powai Ashram on 19th August 2014 – Ganesh Chaturti Day.
The Course that was being conducted by ParamPoojya Gurudev Himself was a four and a half year course.
It was too well known that many students of this course left the Chinmaya Mission at various points of time to be on their own. Poojya Gurudev harboured no ill will towards any of them at any time. “They are doing our work only,” He said and smiled it away. He prayed for the well-being of all, always in all ways.

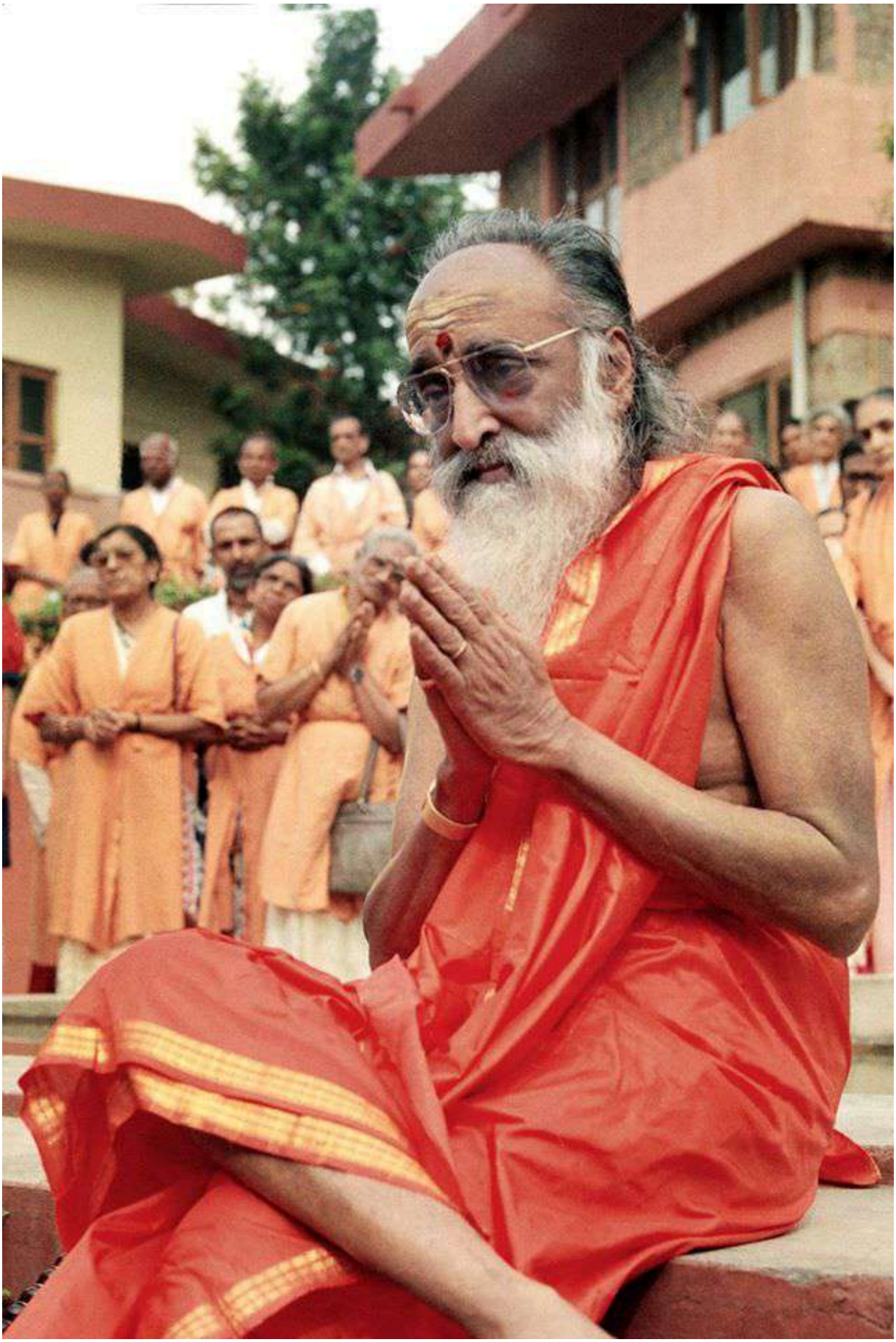
OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

salutations to the one who thinks of (wishes for) the welfare of all

Sri SadguruMaharaj has always been very loving and caring at heart, even before Sannyasa, a heart that empathised with all. This is clearly seen in His articles as a journalist highlighting the plight of the down trodden like the mochi (cobbler), the postman and people like that who keep society working.



Needless to say after Brahma Gnana when one begins to see oneself everywhere and feels unconditional love for all ... (as Gurudev Himself said on several occasions), 'You can't say you love gardening and not water the plants.' Since He loved all, He wanted to serve all. His priority was spreading brahmagnana.
After doing extra -ordinary service in this field He started hospitals, medical centres and dispensaries,rural development programs, educational institutions (vidyalaya, colleges, technical institutes)and especially Harihara schools for the poor. Gurudev wanted to repay the debt of the poor in Himalayas and He started various programs for them at Sidhabari including a nurses training institute. Thus His projects included all services -- spiritual and material, catering to all sections of society and all age groups (pitamahsadans or elder empowerment homes).

Every Breath a Teaching page 54
An embodiment of Love -R.Krishnamoorthy

With His walking cane,Gurudev mentioned me to let people prostrate. Then a middle aged woman with baby in her arms who was barely ten days old,placed the baby at the feet of Gurudev and,with tears in her eyes,said that she suspected the baby would die due to high fever and inadequate medicines. Gurudev lifted the child,stroked its head, and told the woman "Don't worry Lord Sarvesvara will look after him."

Then to me He said, "In six months from now, I want a free dispensary at this place. Get it done! I want every child from the surrounding villages to be looked after by our doctors. I know as usual you are worried where to get the funds. They will come. Take a Sankalpa(declaration of purpose or powerful thought that manifests itself in the material world)."
That very evening,we met a friend,Mrs.SaraswthiAnant, who wanted to talk to Gurudev. At the end of the lady's discussion with Gurudev, He said "MrsAnant will donate Rs. 300,000 for the free medical centre at Tamaraipakkam.
This episode also connects the next Nama Satya SankalpayaNamah

He did it page pg371
The elusive ego strikes a cord

The significance of a breakfast.
Dave Gopisahijwani
Just before Swamiji was to arrive in Manila in 1988, we received a letter from Chinmaya Mission requesting us to avoid organising the morning bhiksa since Swamiji was not well.
But when Swamiji saw the daily schedule we had planned for His trip,He asked,"

Why is there no breakfast bhiksa?"
We explained that we wanted Swamiji to rest and be well.
"I have many children in India who need to eat! So open breakfast biksha!" said Swamiji.

(The ultimate of love and sacrifice)
Page 375 shows another letter of His concern for the less privileged. Pages 376&377 give the details of projects for thewelfare of community, some of them Cord-Mahilamandal, Farmer's and men's club, Self-help groups, Income earning activities and Community based rehabilitation enabling work.
The spread of Gurudev's work and reach cannot be humanly described. One may attempt and sketch an essay, but what He did for the people, for the villages, for the country and the world, lies in the hearts of all the beneficiaries who yet struggle to describe His compassion and generosity and thoughtfulness.

OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

One who thinks of and is concerned with the welfare of everyone. 'Hita' is a very beautiful term. It means welfare, that which is good. The same action or object may not be good for all. Like the same medicine cannot be given to everyone. Each person's disease has to be diagnosed and a special medicine given. Medicine for one person may be poison for the other. What is medicine at one time may be poison at another time, for the same person. Also what is medicine in one quantity may be poison in more or less quantity.



What is good for a person should be tailor made. Therefore in the Gita Bhagavan clarifies what is good and not good for Arjuna. The instructions given to him are specifically for his welfare. He advises the path of karma is yoga:

For Arjuna the teaching is that he should perform his obligatory duties (niyatam karma). He is told to fight the war since it has come. Often we are not clear about what is good for us or the other person. Parents may not know what is good for their own children. They may have good intentions but not have good wisdom to know what is good. Like the monkey sitting on a tree, saw the fish swimming in the river. The monkey thought that the fish must be feeling very cold and wet. So he removed the fish from the water and kept it on a tree near the fruit. When the monkey falls into water there is a feeling of suffocation and agitation. So he thought the fish would be feeling the same. But what is good for the monkey may not be good for the fish. What is good, milk or water? This depends on who is asking. For a fish water is good, it cannot swim in milk.

Hita is very important and interesting term. The scriptures speak of the welfare of everyone. A great Mahatma is one who thinks about the welfare of everyone. He knows the formula. He knows the secret. He knows what is good for all. Sometimes we ourselves may not know, but a great realized master knows. Many people used to come to Gurudev for advice. Sometimes the advice he gave would be very shocking

and difficult. But following that advice, the seekers would always benefit because it was for their welfare.

The one who thinks about everyone's welfare becomes dear to everyone. Sometimes our friends, parents and near and dear ones may not be thinking of our welfare. When Ravana kidnapped Sitaji, all his ministers praised him. Also when they received news of Lord Rama and his army, having reached Lanka, they advised him not to worry. They foolishly bolstered his ego. At home they spoke about his foolishness in having kidnapped Sitaji. They were scared of the consequences. Despite this to his face they were all praise for his actions. The only one with courage was Vibhisana. He spoke the truth and told him directly what was good for him. He told him that his actions were not correct. He advised him to return Sitaji with due respect, surrender to Ramachandraji and ask for forgiveness. With the Lord's forgiveness, he would be able to rule the kingdom and everything would be fine. But Ravana did not listen. He cursed him and kicked him out of his kingdom. Vibhisana refused to support him on the path of adharma. He left and went to Lord Rama.

Gurudeva himself was a sannyasi but he thought about the welfare of the whole family. He thought of the good of children, youth, vanaprasthis and the villagers. He had different programmes for them all to help them in their spiritual and other worldly growth. He had the welfare of everyone at heart!

OM SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH

356. OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

27-04-2016

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

Salutations to the one who is of true resolve

This is an extract from 'Vanaprastha – The Journey to Realisation' – from the Celebration Series, Mananam Publication. [Although, Hemu ji has quoted this story to exemplify SARVAHITACHINTAKAAYA NAMAH – we quote from VANAPRASTHA too, because all stories about Gurudev are so wonderful to hear again and again.]
This is extracted from Chapter 15, from the story of Shri R. Krishnamoorthy (Thatha at Chinmaya Vibhooti). Thatha was handpicked by Gurudev out of the blue to join Him and His mission, at a time when thatha was flying high with his success and business in Delhi.
“The day he got up and left with Gurudev was his first entrance into Vanaprastha. In willingly accepting the Guru’s request to give up the secular pursuits, he had begun his renunciation lessons.
Moorthy watched Gurudev and imbibed what he needed. For example, what he does today seems almost scripted by Gurudev. Today he runs the dispensary at Chinmaya Vibhooti, entirely sponsored by him. Way back in 1989, when the temple at Tamaraipakkam was being inaugurated, Moorthy had a close up view of what is true compassion.
[Italicised are Thatha’s words.]
On the day of inauguration, thousands of villagers were thronging to see Gurudev and touch his feet. So did one lady with a tiny infant in her arms. The protective Moorthy who stood like a wall between Gurudev and the crowd, stopped her. But over his head Gurudev was already asking her what was the matter with the baby. The infant was unwell she cried. He looked at me and said, after the inauguration, you will ensure that she is taken in after puja is done and vibhuti is given to the child ! Then he told her, ‘the child will be ok, don’t worry.’



A lesson in satyasankalpa..... Thatha

Later as he was going out, to the left of the place where he met this lady, Gurudev said, 'Krishnamoorthy, here we will build a free dispensary for the public.' Now we must hear the rest in Moorthy's own words:
As usual, I said, Swamiji, I have only 25,000 rupees in the bank account. He said, don't worry about the money, it will come. You take the sankalpa to complete the dispensary. And tell me that you are taking a sankalpa. I took the sankalpa honestly. And what happened was, two days later, one Mrs. Saraswati Anant came to meet Gurudev and said that her husband – a dear devotee of Gurudev – had died. His L.I.C. (insurance) policy was maturing and there were three lacs of rupees coming to her. "I want to give it to you, Swamiji!". Gurudev looked at both of us in turns and pointing to me he said, "Give that money to this fellow who is standing here." Moorthy shyly thanked Gurudev who said, "That shows your sankalpa was genuine. See! The money has come!"

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri Kumaraswamy a long standing devotee of Gurudev

This was in 1985. I had been having an ongoing difficulty with my boss, and work life was a nightmare. So much so that it had begun to occupy my mind to the extent that I would wake up thinking of how terrible the day would be because I had to meet him.

Those days I was chasing my career and my wife Ramaa, was deeply involved with the Mission and immersed in Gurudev. Seeing my condition, she asked me to accompany her to Sidhabari and tell Gurudev everything. He will show you the way, she said sincerely. Frankly the whole idea did not make sense to me but I was so desperate that I was willing to try anything. It was a very trying period if I may put that simply. And in government organisations, all you can do about a difficulty is grin and bear it.

I accompanied her to Sidhabari without my boss' permission for leave as he was travelling - and thereby I was already in big trouble.

As luck went I got an audience with Swamiji rather easily , and in turn He urged me to speak my mind. I sat there and narrated my woes, not missing a single detail, making sure everything was there to help Him show me the way. I included in it my earlier boss who was very good and how this new boss was difficult to work with... . I must have talked for over 45 minutes.

After I ended my monologue I looked to Swamiji, expecting Him to advise, counsel, suggest direction. Instead He said very simply, "Your problem will get solved when you return on 6th June. "

That was all.

That was all!

I did not know what to feel. I came out and told my wife Ramaa, "I don't think He understood a word of what I said." Ramaa of course chided me and said, 'He knows everything,' which too, of course did not appeal to me.

I attended the camp as scheduled and returned to base after a week, dreading a terrible encounter with the boss.

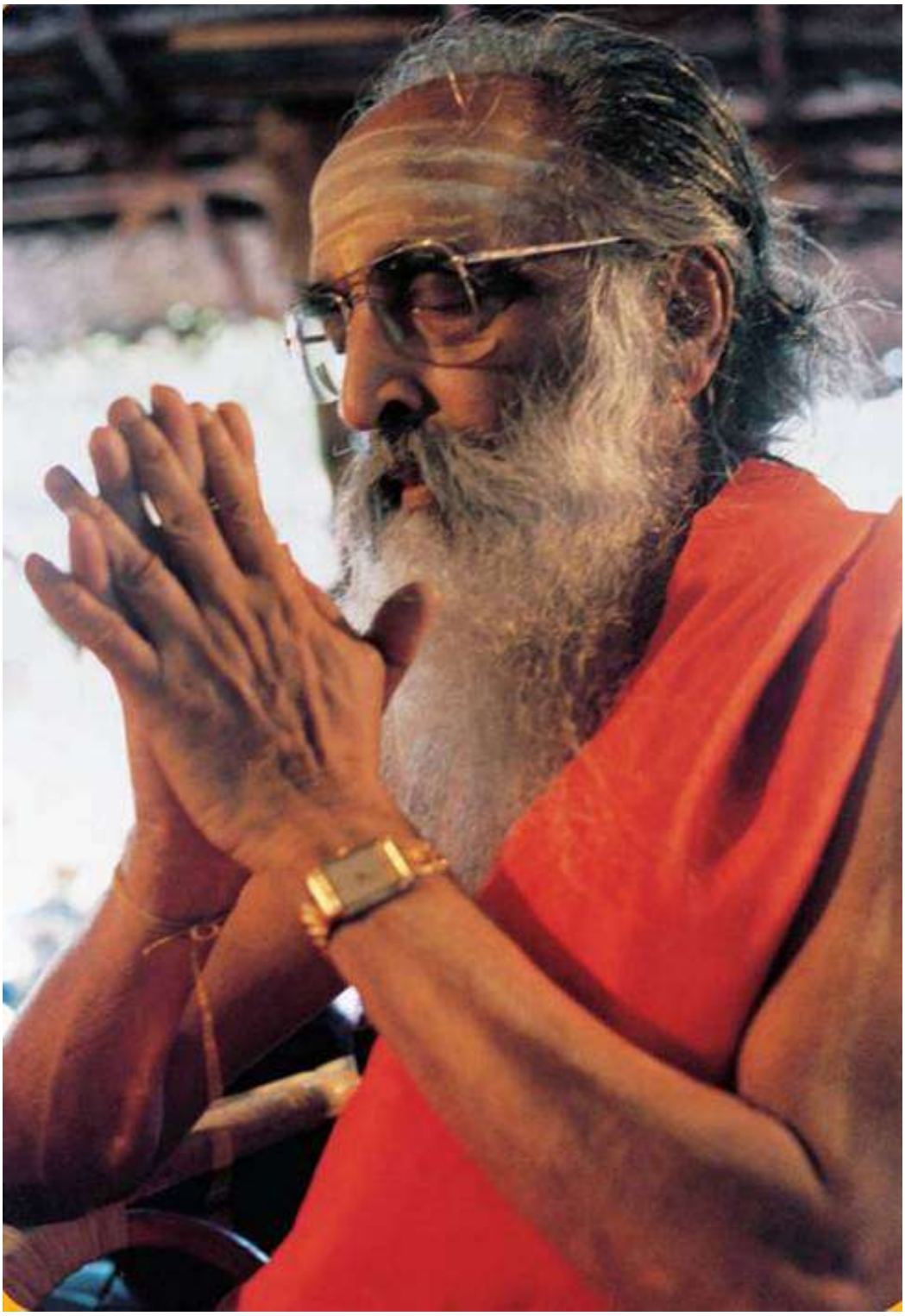
When I reached work, I was taken aback, not to mention I experienced horripilation. Not only had my difficult boss been transferred, but my earlier good boss had been reinstated. I was completely at a loss for words. The date was June 6th.

Days passed. When I met Gurudev next, I took Him aside and asked Him, "How did

you know this was going to happen?”

Swamiji said, “I am not an astrologer…” and then very pointedly He said, “When a man with pure heart says something, it has to happen.”

That was the moment when real understanding dawned upon me. He had genuinely wished for my situation to be changed or improved. He had blessed me genuinely. And it was that pure heart which had made that wish, that had spoken truly. He had intended that my situation change..... And my situation changed. What was more, both bosses also grew in glory! The date 6th was just a bookmark, as it were.



When a man with a pure heart makes a resolve……

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Swami Nikhilananda in his commentary to Shuddhasattwa says, "If a Mahätmä is convinced about something the conviction is genuine because it comes from the heart, intuition or knowledge which is gained without the 'normal' process of thinking." Gurudev's blessings and words arose from that conviction. No doubt He was Shuddhasatva, and when Shuddhasatva resolves....., the thought, sankalpa is fulfilled!

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Sankalpa is used in spirituality both positively and negatively. Sankalpa is desire, imagination, resolve, will, etc. In the case of Gurudev it is apt to take it as resolve or will.
Gurudev being avatara purusha he came with a vision and a mission. He saw the Ganges cascading to the plains below from its sublime source in the Himalayas and resolved He will serve the less fortunate down in the plains. And how He served! Compassion! Thy name is Gurudev!



The resolute One...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Then he resolved to bring back to Bharat Mata her glory of the Satya Yuga. He decided to create a hundred missionaries. His resolve was so pure, that it became fulfilled manifold. He wanted to bring a change at all levels. Thus study groups, Devi groups, Yuva kendras, Balavihars, and grassroot activities that enabled the study of Vedanta, grew. He wanted to redesign the system of education which was (then) only serving the earning of income, bereft of culture. He started schools and colleges with a sharp vision on education.
He realised people cannot preserve culture in the face of problems of living. He therefore started projects like CORD and multi-facility hospitals. Thus He resolved; His Sankalpa became Satya, Real or His Sankalpas are Real.

Vedanta page 208
Gurudev's sankalpa was the cause,and one of the great effects was the Sandeepany Sadhanalaya. Gurudev knew exactly who the eligible students were. With His keen observation and analysis,He wisely selected just sixty students for the very first batch at Sandeepany, - Powai,of whom only sixteen scaled the heights of Vedanta.

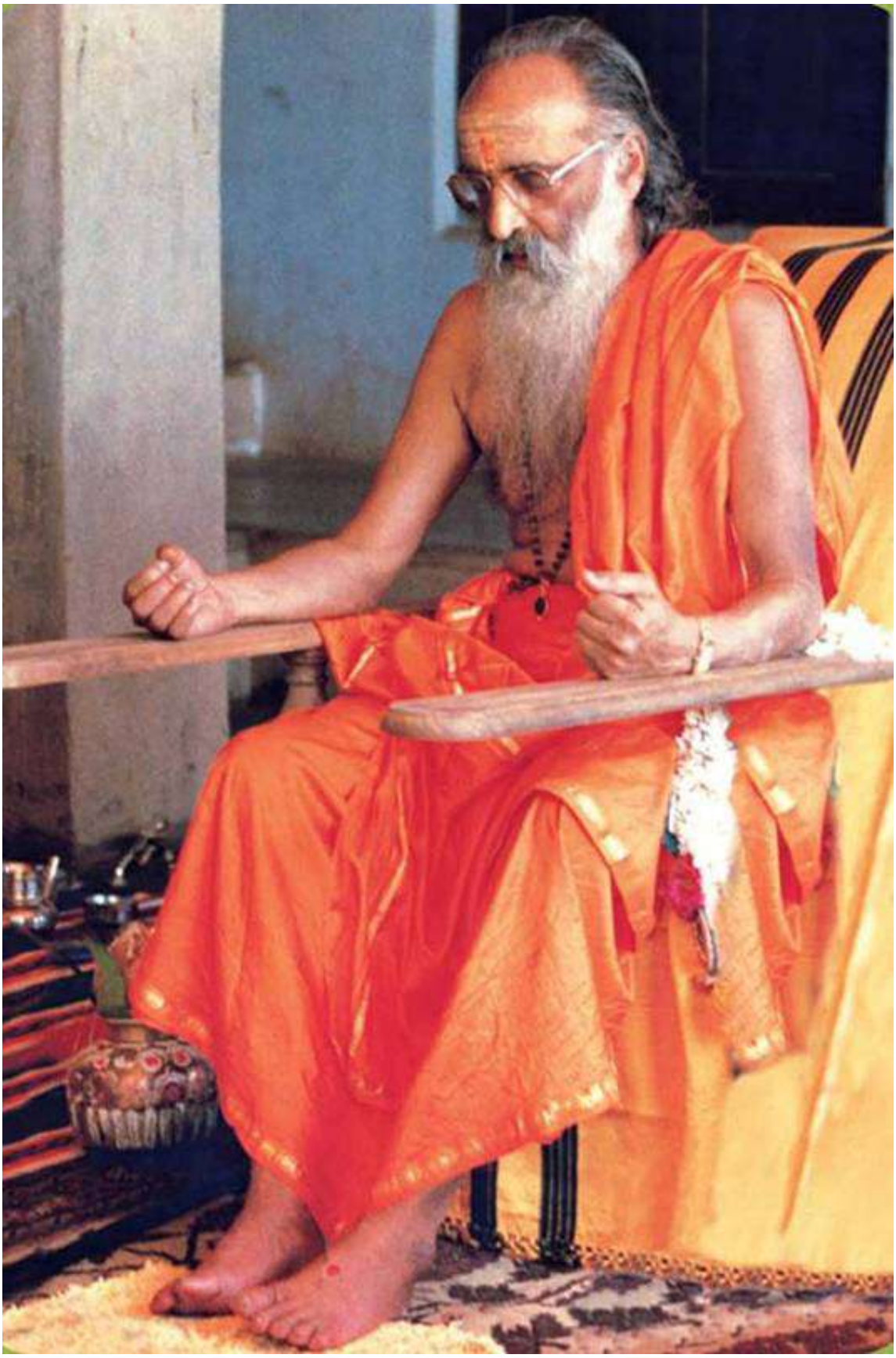
He Did It page 395
The Chinmaya Mission Hospital in Bangalore was conceived as an arena of service for local Mission members. In 1960, a small group of Mission devotees hired a room in a slum area in Murphy Town, Bangalore. They began conducting a biweekly medical clinic for the poor and the needy. When Swamiji heard about the Murphy Town project and its volunteers, who included Sushila Purushotham, Kamala Reddy, Prafulla Iyengar, Smt.Dassanchar, and Smt.Yogam, He was very pleased. He gave them a cheque of Rs 500/- and said, "Why not! This gives me the idea of starting a hospital. "
Once the Sankalpa had been made, funds were collected, land was purchased, and construction planned and executed. When Swamiji checked in as an inpatient in 1970, scores of devotees trooped in and out of the hospital each day. The result: Chinmaya Mission Hospital quickly became famous. Yet another platform for selfless service had been thrown wide open.

Pages 413 & 415
Thus Chinmaya International Foundation has been set up with a view to bridge the fully developed, time tested, trusted, ancient science of the East and the modern developing branches of science in the West. It is a meeting ground for Eastern and Western thinkers to open up new channels of world saving thoughts.
This story unfolded, even as it was being constructed, starting at the beginning--with Swamiji's Sankalpa of Chinmaya International Foundation-- which found its way to Melpazhur Mana, to a village named Veliyanad in Kerala, where the great saint and revered Advaita Vedantin, Sri Adi Sankara was born.

In all the above sample cases we see Gurudev takes a Sankalpa, each one very big, yet each going on to becoming Satya- Real.

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Of true resolve .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Om Satyasankalpaya Namah

Sankalpa means true determination or will. The decision to do something is called sankalpa. It is a vow, a pledge, a decision, or the will to do something. Sankalpa can also be understood as sam + kalpa. Kalpa is kalpana or imagination. Sankalpa means samyak kalpana, or that which is very well understood, and imagined. Sankalpa has the power to change the entire personality, along with the thought processes and emotions of the person. Sitting in Delhi one makes the decision to go to Mansarovar in a month. This sets in motion a new thought process. One begins to imagine the whole process, working out all the details of the journey, looking at financial needs, applying for leave from work and a whole host of related needs to ensure a smooth journey.

Every kalpana starts a different flow of thoughts. Once this is done we need not worry about the type of thoughts to entertain because automatically all related thoughts will begin to flow. Spiritual seekers want to attain God and herein lies the problem. This is not an easy vow to take and hence we do not take this decision. The scriptures say, “Tanme manah Shiv sankalpamastu - May I have good thoughts or sankalpas in my mind.” The spiritual seeker should be resolute in the decision to attain God. The resolution should be “Yes, I want to attain God in this life itself.” Such a sankalpa is crucial and changes the course of the seeker’s life.

In life we make some positive and some negative decisions. Each of these has its genesis in a variety of experiences. Like suppose, a lady falls in the market because of her high heels. On impulse she may vow, “I will never wear these high heel sandals.” But when the memory of the fall is erased, she may very well wear the same sandals and possibly fall again! This shows that some decisions are emotional and not very firm.

While traveling we may be attracted to a beautiful spot and think of buying a plot of land there. This thought creates a particular emotion and subsequently the mind takes a new direction. Further, suppose we are unable to buy the land. This inability to buy the land leaves an unfulfilled desire, which can cause trouble. We may even have to take birth again to buy that particular plot of land. This shows how dangerous random desires can be.

Most ordinary people have sankalpas which often contradict one another. For example we decide to wake up early every morning and meditate for an hour. On day one, we may even meditate for half an hour but then the resolve may be weakened by some contrary thoughts, “I should do it for one month only, or better still just one week.” The will to achieve the goal is diluted and the mind follows this new trail. New arguments are thrown up. It may even say that Gautam Buddha only sat for one week! So with every sankalpa comes a variety of anti-sankalpas. These are like terrorist organizations. The anti-sankalpas remove the strength of the

decision and when this becomes weak, it remains unfulfilled. These are called asatya sankalpas.

A Mahatma is one who has the power of satya sankalpa. Whatever the Mahatma desires, it happens. His sankalpa is fulfilled. It is as though the whole world conspires to make his desire come true. Mahatmas sometimes take fantastic and unbelievable sankalpas and yet we find that they are fulfilled. An example of one such sankalpa was taken by Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda at the time of the Vishwa Sammelan in 2001. He decided that Chinmaya Mission's 50 years of existence should be celebrated in style. Despite some skepticism on the eventual outcome, Guruji's sankalpa remained strong and the event was an unqualified success.

The building of the Akshardham temple on the banks of the Yamuna in Delhi is attributed to the sankalpa of Yogi Maharaja, their Guru. This sankalpa in the mind of Yogi Maharaj was fulfilled by Pramukh Swami. Within just 5 years the Swami Narayana sect built this monumental work of art. That is the power of pure thought.

Bhagwan created this world, through the power of will alone. "Let there be light", he said and there was light. The thought must be direct and backed by conviction. There can be no fickleness or wavering. Thoughts like, "I hope or let me see" are weak and lack sincerity. There is no power behind such thoughts.

There is the story of a Mahatma who gave discourses on the Ramayana. Among his regular listeners, was a lady from a nearby village. One day it so happened that the lady did not come. The next day the Mahatma asked her the reason for her absence. She replied that she had to cross a river and though she kept waiting the boatman did not come. Hence she could not cross the river. The Pundit laughed. He said that Hanumanji crossed an ocean by chanting Bhagavan's name, why couldn't she cross a little river by doing the same. She took this to heart and started coming regularly. One day there was a big storm and torrential rain but still the lady was there. The Pundit knew that no boatman would venture forth, in such a storm. He himself was quite surprised and inquired about how she had come. The lady told him that since discovering the glory of Rama Nama, she had stopped taking the boat. All she did was to chant "Rama" thrice and cross the river.

The Mahatma and other devotees were stunned. Everyone found it hard to believe. But the lady was unfazed and full of confidence. She led them to the river and showed them how she walked across, unaided, by taking Bhagwan's name. She urged the Punditji also to do the same. Hesitatingly, the pundit lifted his lungi a little and stepped in to the river. He promptly fell in. So, the lady took his hand and made him walk with her support. He then held on to her pallu and walked across. Such is the glory of Bhagavan's name.

The power of will has immense power and potency. Mahatmas use this sankalpa shakti to cure illnesses and remove other negativities. We invoke this great power of the ätman when we prostrate and take the blessings of men of wisdom. Their power of will is so strong that whatever they say comes true. People who know of this power often plead, "Oh, please just say it and it will happen." The same was true of our Gurudev. His vision of Chinmaya Mission and other related issues was most

amazing. His concepts of Bal Vihar for children and Yuva Kendra for the youth are path breaking. He would just come up with an idea, announce it and lo and behold, it would manifest. Once with regard to a big project someone said to Gurudev, “Why don’t you ask for some money?” Gurudev said, “Why should I ask anyone when I can directly ask from God, who is Laxmipati? It is His sankalpa. If he wants to fulfil it let Him fulfil it.” Satyasankalpa is a befitting name for Gurudev.

We can also develop this power. As a beginning, we can do this by keeping our word. This power of will resides in the mind and expresses through our words. Like, if we take a vow to keep a fast and we stick to it then we develop this sankalpa shakti. This can be used for our inner sadhana. With this strength if you give a command to the mind, it listens. This is satya sankalpa.

OM SATYASAANKALPAAYA NAMAH

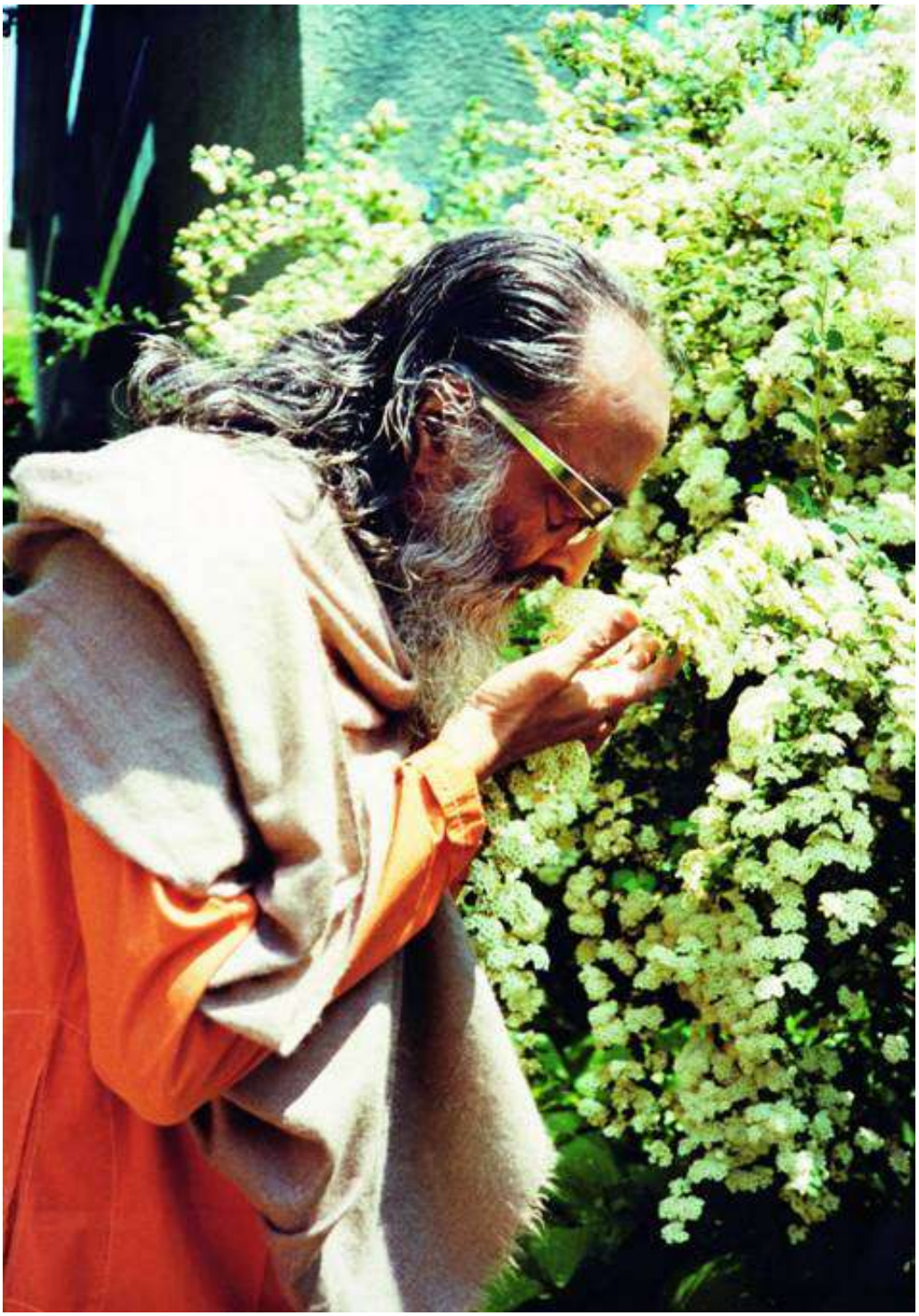
357. OM SANTUSHTAAYA NAMAH

28-04-2016

OM SANTUSHTAAYA NAMAH

salutations to the content one

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda with his permission
* Absolutely santushta, happy, satisfied. Happy within, happy without.



Happy, within, happy without .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

* Subjective happiness -- yes, anybody knowing the Self would stay happy that way.

But Gurudev was also happy at the worldly level. Because he knew how to respond to the world. And so efficient in what he was doing.
* There definitely was a great satisfaction in the work being done. You must listen to his talk on SuvarnaTulabhara. On that occasion where Swamiji says – how it all started 4 decades ago. One movement began and how it became huge. Today there is a great satisfaction. And he says – we are not supposed to be emotional. But I am. Now I am emotional, meaning it should not be there but it is there. And he explained how it was a small thing and how it has expanded. Imagine him, sitting back and looking at the kind of work going on which his disciples were doing. From senior-most to the recent most, new entrant. There is definitely joy, because of such brilliant work that everyone was doing. No doubt it is a huge responsibility.
* . Once I received a letter, from Gurudev – He was overseas. That was when my mother passed away. I was still in college. Gurudev wrote to me to say He had heard about mother's demise and so on. I wrote back and expressed gratitude and told Him what Yuva Kendra members did to help during that period. How they had been there for every piece of work. The kind of responsibility they had taken on and how the CHYK members were doing everything. So I said our Chyks did this work completely.
Gurudev writes – I am very happy to know. I feel fulfilled by the response the Chyks have given. I feel fulfilled. This is how a community should grow, supporting one another. And there too He had a great vision. The place where we lived was Chinmaya Gram, a small colony, some 400-500 families there, all Mission members. There is a community hall. There is a Ganesha temple. Above all, everybody's Guru is one. Weekly Bal-Vihar classes, Yuva Kendra classes, Devi-group, Study group. Imagine the colony. And you know one another. There is a common thread of identity with the Mission. We were growing up there. So he knew the colony, knew where I come from and so He wrote – "Yes, I feel fulfilled."
Because of the Vision, people have benefitted by it. Their unfoldment goes on.
* On another occasion he was talking to Goenka of Indian Express, in Chennai. There he said Yuva Kendra is the last thing I started but that seems to have turned out to be the best. Yuva Kendra came up only around 1975. From Yuva Kendra atleast 125 to 150 have joined the Mission. Because this is like creating the infrastructure. The like-minded people start getting there. Today out of 300 Swamis, atleast 125 are from Yuva Kendra. Senior Swamis in the Mission, some of them. They in turn have become acharyas to conduct classes. You understand how the movement has grown.
And these are the areas where the work has unfolded so well and there is great fulfillment. Imagine Chinmaya Vidyalayas coming up when convents were ruling the whole country. In the 60s, if you wanted a decent education you had to go to a convent school. Then He brought in schools that were academically good with cultural values. In one lifetime, 40 years, the man served 80 schools. Do you understand – 40 yrs, 80 schools? School is a ongoing project. Fulfillment. So many people coming up, sincerely trying to walk the path. Great satisfaction. So we see how satisfied Gurudev was with the results of work. Within? Always naturally very very content. Satisfied.

OM SANTUSHTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Santusta is one who is satisfied. One who has eaten a royal feast, is at that moment, with reference to food, satisfied, since he is full. This fullness is only one aspect of our demands and the satisfaction lasts only for the short period may be two hours at the most. Even in these two hours there are several other desires unfulfilled and we crave for them.

Whereas a Brahma Gnani enjoys Brahmananda the total eternal unqualified Bliss. Naturally He is ever satisfied. Since this Brahmananda is one's own nature, He is satisfied in Himself without depending upon objects, people, experiences. The joys and experiences resulting from external sources, depending upon the finite world can never give total happiness.



Brahmananda is His own nature .....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

This state of total happiness comes only when one has gone beyond the ego and become one with his own Being. When one gains this total Bliss, one discovers that the entire world of experiences were only reflecting an iota of this Bliss of the Self. Not having this bliss man feels inadequacy and to be adequate he develops desires. These desires cause agitations. When one gains what he wanted, temporarily the agitations cease and the Bliss of the Self reveals itself in a calm mind. We think the happiness came from the experience. That is why it is said Vishayananda is only in essence Brahmananda. The joys of the senses are only the reflected joys of the Self. Also in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad it says everything is dear to us because we are dear to ourselves.AtmanastukamayasarvampriyamBhavathi. This is the message of scriptures that Gurudev was communicating and inspiring through His own living. Gurudev in and through His manifold activities never comes down from this Blissful state. Infact, this is the reason sannyasis are called Ananda like Chinmayananda etc. Gurudev was happy under all situations. Whether there were luxury cars waiting to take Him or a not-so-affluent devotee brought an old Fiat taxi to take Him to bhiksha, He was happy. Whatever food was offered He took it. He was taken to hotels for biksha where the devotee had no home in that place, Gurudev happily accepted it. He was always satisfied in Himself by Himself. Atmani EvaAtmanaTustah.

Bhagavad Gita 3-17
Gurudev’s commentary
But the man of perfection, who on transcending his limited identification with the matter envelopments, when he gets himself ushered into the All Perfect Realm of the Spirit, he comes to feel so satisfied with the state of Selfhood which he thereby attains, that he experiences a complete sense of contentment in the very Divine Nature,and that provides eternal satisfaction for him.

Every Breath a Teaching
Greatness in Small Thingspg 146 A
Pencil 's worth
Asha Chakrabarty Mumbai

One time Swamiji could not find a small pencil some 2.5 inches in length. He made Asha Chakrabarty search His entire luggage to find it.
She finally found it, and He was very happy she did. He then meticulously sharpened it and put it in its place." He lived an austere life even in the midst of luxury," comments Asha.
We have seen in another Naama how He slept diagonally when the cot was small, without bringing it to the notice of the host.

OM SANTUSHTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Santosha is contentment or satisfaction. Santushöa is one who is totally content. When we are hungry and eat something, we feel totally satisfied. That is “tushti”. It is the feeling we experience when we get what we like and it is served with love. We are then mentally totally fulfilled and satisfied. Contentment is not only with respect to food but applies to everything in life. This is an art which we have to develop. According to Patanjali Yoga Sutra, ‘santosha’ is one of the ‘niyamas’ or disciplines a person should follow. One should regularly practice santosha or contentment. To be content is an attitude of the mind. It does not depend on the wealth one has. A person with very little may be totally content and a person of great affluence and possessions may still be discontent. Contentment does not depend on the amount of wealth, knowledge or talent we have. It is not dependent on worldly prosperity or fame. Contentment is an attitude which has to be developed consciously.

A person who is discontent is miserable and poor. Someone asked the Shankarcharya, “Who is a poor person?” He replied that one who is discontent and not satisfied is poor. When Alexander, the great, came to India he was in search of a Mahatma. His teachers had told him to bring back from India one Mahatma, some Gangajal and a Tulsi plant. All these had an exalted status. Alexander wanted to bring back wealth and the Kohinoor diamond, but his teachers dissuaded him saying that a Mahatma would be a great blessing.

The story goes that while traveling through a village he saw a Mahatma sitting under a tree. Lots of people were worshipping him. He approached the Master and requested him to come with him. The Mahatma replied, “I don’t go with beggars.” Alexander was shocked and said that he was not a beggar but a great emperor. To this the Mahatma replied, “You have come all the way from Greece begging and looking. You are still not satisfied. You are the greatest beggar. I do not want to go with you.” Suddenly Alexander realized that dissatisfaction is something that nobody can help us remove. It can neither be eliminated by wealth, position name or fame. It is an art, or an attitude which we have to develop, by focusing on what we have and not the lack thereof.

Our mind has a strange quality. It is trained to see what we do not have. For example in a group photograph if someone is missing, immediately our attention is drawn to it. A lady came home after a ladies’ kitty party. Her husband asked her how she had enjoyed it. Frankly she admitted that it was boring, because everybody was present and so they could not talk about anyone. Absence is noticed very intensely. It is like the story of the king who gave a bagful of gold coins to a poor family. When they counted, they found only 97 coins in the bag. They became

miserable because the number of coins was 3 short of 100.

In the normal course, the mind notices what it does not have. That is its nature. Some people are adept in noticing faults. They will find some fault or the other. It may be a typographical error, some problem with the colour, the font or simply why someone is not laughing. Mind is a desire creating mechanism. It creates desires and desires what it does not have. We focus on what we want or do not have. What we have no longer interests us.

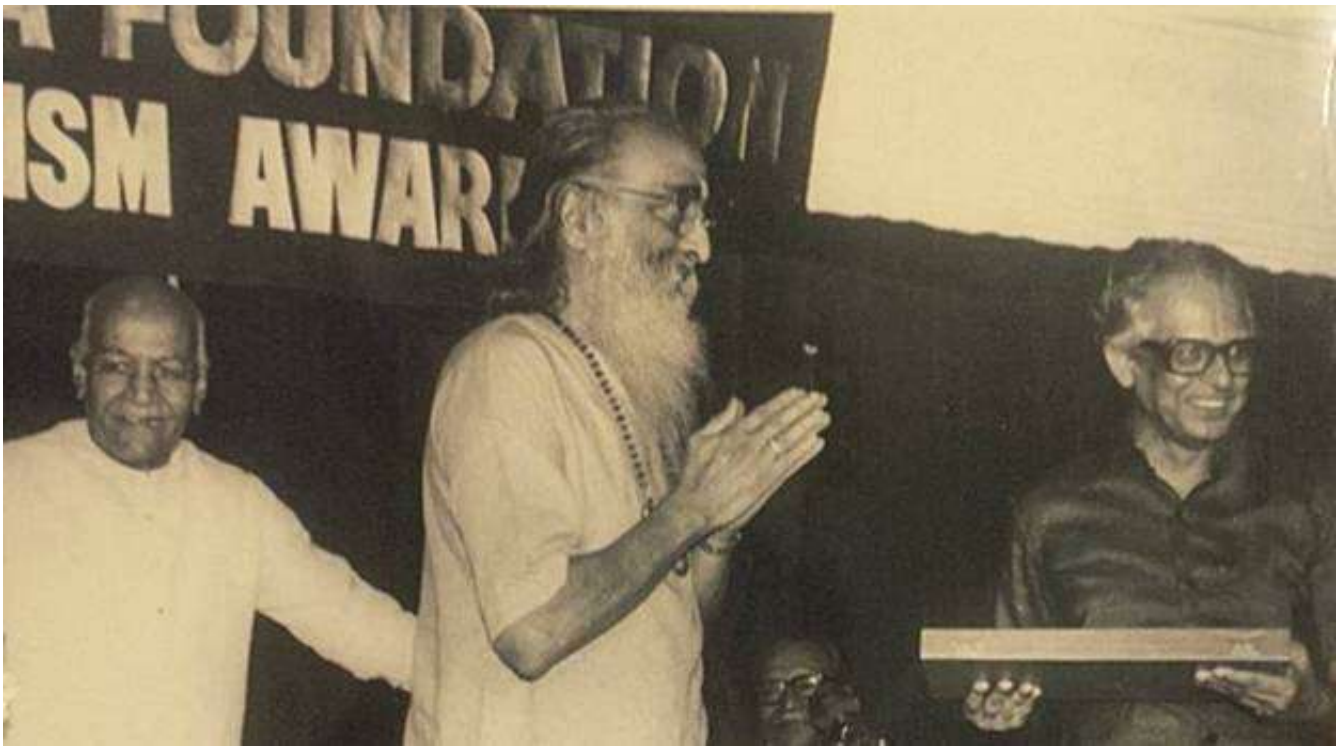
The more we focus on what we do not have the more miserable, incomplete and discontent we feel.
In the GurustrotamShankaracharaya writes –

Shariramsurupamyathavakalatram, yashashcharuchitramdhanammerutulyam, hareranghripadmemanashchennalagnam, tataùkimtataùkimtatahkimtataùkim.

Tatahkim means so what. shariramsurupam means I have a beautiful, strong, healthy and young body. I am so handsome. Yathava - I have a wonderful, beautiful wife wealth, position, name and fame but the only thing that I don't have is faith, love and respect for my Teacher. He says 'tataùkim', you may have many things but they are as good as naught if you don't have love for your Teacher and God. The mind being gross, we only see gross things. We see our neighbour's big car and feel discontented with our small one. But if only we were to value what we have, we would surely feel content and fulfilled.

We forget to count our blessings. The very fact that we are alive and have a human body is a great gift from God. Tulsidasji says, "Sudurlabhtatu". Even devatas find it difficult to attain this body. He considers himself very fortunate to have been given this rare and precious human equipment. We should focus our attention on the body, mind, talent, understanding and knowledge that we have. Everyone has some wonderful talent or virtue. There is no-one who does not have anything. Even when a beggar dies, he leaves behind something. If nothing else, he leaves behind his body. Nobody goes from this world without leaving something behind. So, we all have something and if we focus our attention on what we have, we will be content and joyous.

Unfortunately, we concentrate on the years which have passed and the wealth and position lost. We spend our time crying and weeping, being miserable and sad. This habit can be dropped by developing positive thoughts. "Jab avesantosh dhana, sab dhanadhulsamän – When we gain the wealth of contentment, all other wealth is like dust." It is essential to develop this wealth of contentment. It does not come from outside. Those who have this are fortunate and blessed too. They have understood the worthlessness of worldly wealth. They are content, satisfied and grateful to God. All they ask for is Bhagavan, Himself.



Just Hari Om ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Someone once asked Gurudev what he would like from the brahmacharis. Gurudev said that if I meet them and they smile and say 'Hari Om' that is enough for me. Great master or jnanis are 'alpenatushyate - satisfied by little things.' Even the offering of a flower is enough to satisfy them. The Lord owns the entire cosmos, yet is satisfied by the offering of a flower from the garden.
"Patrampushpamphalamtoyamyo me bhakhtya prayachhati". God is satisfied and accepts whatever is offered with love. This is the attitude we have to develop. The Gita says that those who have this satisfaction, automatically reach the state of meditation. "Prasannachetasohyashubuddhiparyavatishthate". Those who are deeply satisfied, do not go into the future or past. Only dissatisfied people focus on the future thinking that it will be very good. Dissatisfaction takes us into the past and makes us think of the good old days but a satisfied person lives in the present and is available when Bhagavan appears.

OM SANTUSHTAAYA NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

358. OM SAADHAVE NAMAH

29-04-2016

OM SAADHAVE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai

Sadhu is a saint or a pious one. In Bhagavad Gita, Chapter IX, Bhagavan says, one who starts seeking, worshipping Bhagavan with single pointedness is a sadhu irrespective of his past.

In Chapter IV, again Bhagavan says to protect the sadhus and the righteous andto punish the wicked, He takes birth. Putting these two statements of Chapters IX and IV if one resolves to take to divine path whole heartedly, one is sure to get Bhagavan's protection, to surmount his prarabdha

In the SrimadBhagavatham, there is a near definition of a sadhu. (Titikshavah) they endure their problems and sorrows, yet (karunikah) compassionate to other's sorrows, (suhrudahsarvadehinam)friend of all embodied souls, (Ajatasatravah)for whom no enemy is born, (Santhah)peaceful ones, (sadhavah)saintly pious righteous people.

Gurudev endured all His pain yet was compassionate to others suffering, friend of all, had no enemies, peaceful.Gurudev aptly fits the definition of sadhu as portrayed in Bhagavatam and Gita too.

Every Breath a Teaching
Beyond the Body Others come first
Rudite Emir page 266

Swamiji had just come out of intensive care. The tubes had been removed from His throat, and He could begin to talk to us a little, although it was apparent that talking was difficult and His energy level was still extremely low. We would visit Him two at a time. I want up to His bedside, took His hand, and said a quiet " Hari Om Swamiji ".
He then said His first words to me following the surgery:" How are the husband and Children?"

Even then,despite His own pains and discomforts,He put others first.
(TitikshawahKarunikah- Bhagavatha, defining Sadhus)

The final years:Expanded heart-- letter to Rudite Emir

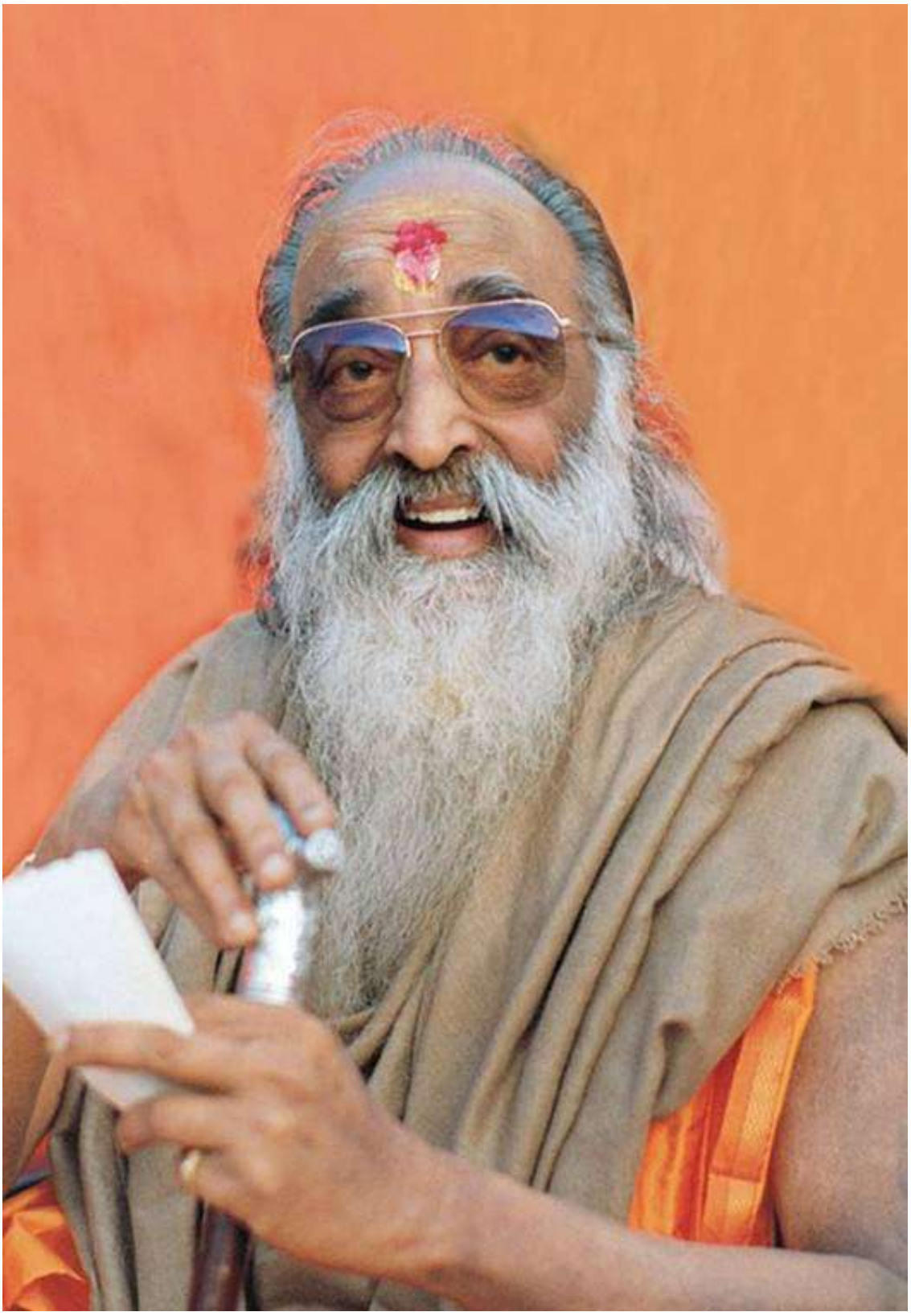
page 278

Years back, a cardiologist had diagnosed a 'heart enlargement ' in Gurudev. On hearing this, we promptly wrote to Gurudev at Uttarkashi, referring to the ailment and extending our prayers for speedy recovery.

Promptly came the witty reply:" All these years I have been trying my best to expand my heart to accommodate all! Now the doctors say it is also an ailment". (suhrudahsarvadehinam-Bhagavata

Page 69
Editor
Probably none of us had ever experienced,through other contacts, the measure of understanding and love Gurudev bestowed upon us. Both small gestures of deep compassion and grandiose demonstrations of His love left us wondering, "Can He really love me this much--me with all my imperfections?”

Vedanta page 185
The abode of Siddhas
Pujya Gurudev was a picture of pure joy. Radiant and reflecting the Lord within Him.
(Santhahsadhavah -Bhagavatam)



Radiant, reflecting the Lord within....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

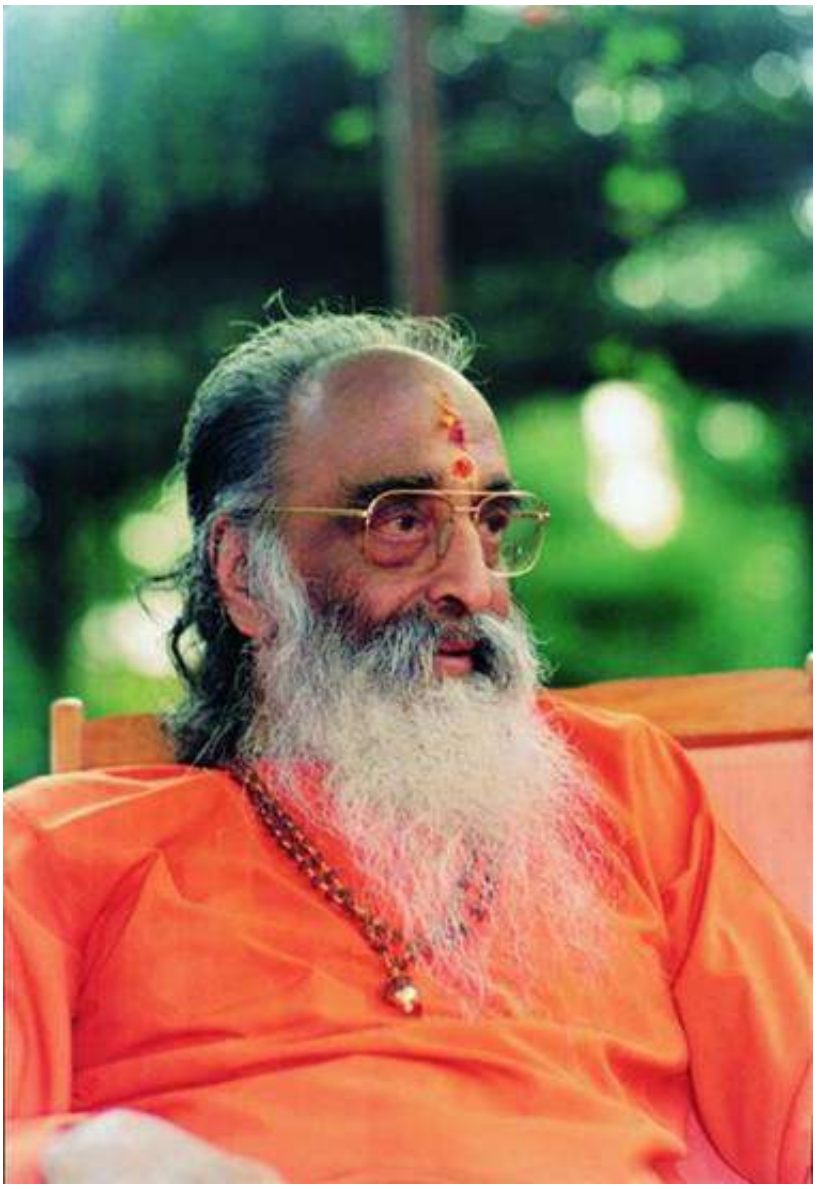
OM SAADHAVE NAMAH

OM SAADHAVE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om Sadhave Namah

Sadhave is a sadhu. Sadhu in Sanskrit is a good person, good in all respects, having fine values and virtues. Sadhu is not dependent on a particular 'mayh', dress, or hairstyle. A person from any field can be a sadhu, or a good person. In every chapter of the Tulsi Ramayana, Tulsidasji praises the noble qualities of good people. He says, "Sadhu te hoi nakarajahaani – a sadhu is one who does not spoil anybody's work."



... for the welfare of the world. From the personal collection of Shubha Pathial, Portland, USA

Qualities like forgiveness or humility are not found in a book. They are not objects to view under a microscope. They lie dormant and are revealed through interaction or through particular incidents in life.

Samarth Ramdas Swami lived on alms. Once during his travels, he stopped outside a home and asked for bhiksha. The lady of the house was busy applying cow dung paste with a cloth on the floor. Angrily she shouted, “You just roam around here and

there, doing nothing. I have to work all day, while you only chant Bhagavan's name." With this she threw the soiled cloth at him. The saint accepted the cloth with the cow dung on it and chanting "Jai, Jai Raghuvir Samarth," proceeded to the river. He bathed himself and washed the cloth. Painstakingly he took out all the threads from the cloth and then used them as wicks to light diyas in front of the Lord in the Hanuman temple.

Samarth Ramdas Swami did not get angry. He told the Lord, "Today, I got this as bhiksha. It was offered to me and I thought it should be used to burn the lamp in front of the Lord." The lady learnt of this. Immediately, she was repentant and begged for forgiveness. But the saint told her not to be disturbed because thanks to her wonderfulbhiksha he was able to offer so many diyas to the Lord. This changed the attitude of the lady and she became more spiritual. Her good qualities blossomed because of this incident; otherwise, they would have remained hidden.

Tulsidasji says we have a storehouse of good qualities within. We do not even know how much goodness we have. Lord Rama was once asked the reason for his going to the forest. He said he went so that the world would learn of the depth of Bharata's sterling qualities. He was such a wonderful person and but for this, the world would not haveknown of his great love and devotion. If, instead of Lakshmana, Bharat had gone with Ramchandraji, the whole Ramayana would have been different.

At one stage of the Sitasvayamvara, Raja Janaka became despondent and said that there was no warrior, or strong person on earth, who could lift Lord Shiva's bow. Ramchandraji was sitting quietly but Lakshmana was beside himself with rage. He took this as an insult to Shri Rama and gave vent to his anger. Everyone including King Janaka was stunned but Lakshmana could not tolerate anyone talking like that in the presence of Ramchandraji. But if Bharatji had been present instead of Lakshmana, both Lord Rama and Bharata would have been unaffected.

Qualities need the right occasion to surface. Everyone has wonderful qualities, good as well as bad, which surface according to the atmosphere. So, we should try to give ourselves a good atmosphere. The purpose of satsanga and visiting places of pilgrimage is to give an opportunity for our good qualities to manifest. Exposure to the good qualities of a Mahatma is beneficial because Bhagavan and all his bhaktas are sadhus. In the Gita, Bhagavan says,

apichetsuduracharobhajatemamananyabhak
sadhurevasamantavyahsamyagvyavasito hi sah. (9.30)

Even if a bad person, takes the decision to follow this path of goodness, at that very moment the person becomes a sadhu. A sadhu is one who has taken the right, and positive sankalpa.

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

359. OM SUMANASE NAMAH

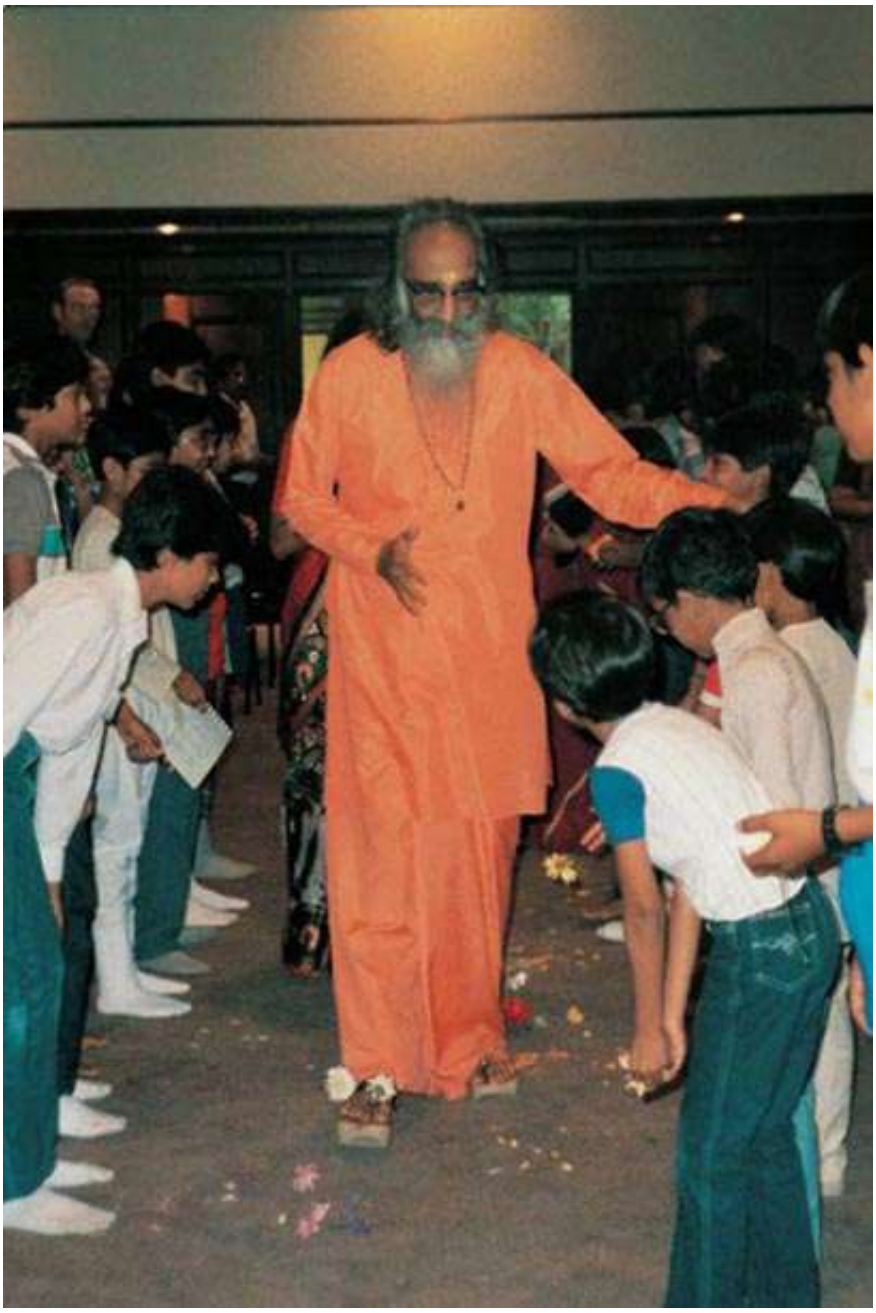
30-04-2016

OM SUMANASE NAMAH

Extracted from the talks of Swami Mitrananda

Salutations to the One good natured and compassionate, whose mind is so pious and good, accepting all kinds of people.

Regardless of which background a person comes from, Gurudev stood by them. Not many people would dare certain things which Swamiji allowed. Controversial people - he allowed them to be around him, saying ‘ok you can grow, you can change.’ He was the epitome of compassion and patience.



Epitome of compassion and patience ....

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

One of our Swaminis-- She saw Gurudev's padukas the first time she came. Coming as she did from a different culture, Gurudev's padukas did look unusual to her. Two knobs and a block of wood – and you walk on it! She looks at it and says Swamiji can I try it?

He says no, that's not the way. Guru's feet has to be worshipped. (Because she had taken him as Guru) But she did not know about padukas and the reverence we attach to it in our culture. So, she had a different way of expression. But He?

Compassionate, believed in taking them along. Explaining patiently. Not being alarmed or hurt. He didn't feel that was disrespect. He knew. He says no it is not to be tried. You have to worship it.

How patiently he carried people along with him and enabled their learning!

A year before I joined the Vedanta Course, the Tirupatiyajna was held. Swamiji was taking Chapter IX of Bhagavad Gita. So before I could leave – I was going to Tirupati from Chennai -- my father asked me which is the chapter he is taking, atleast keep the book with you. Going in, he came out with the Gita book. 'Take this. Keep it in your bag.' I took the book.

End of the yajna I went and showed that book to him. He saw the book. 20 yrs ago in 1968 he had autographed that book for my father. Study Gita, 5 verses daily, and meet me after 3 years. He just wrote that. Thy own self, love, Swamiji. Signed.

He saw, he understood that he had signed it to my dad. Now, he looked. This was one of those moments when you can see fulfillment in his eyes. He signed – son also advised the same. Beautiful. Few people, Western disciples were around and Swamiji was saying – this is our culture. This is what a father should hand over to the son, the property. What should descend down from family to next generation. This; and that too his own book, the Holy Gita that Gurudev had written.

Those days the books used to be published 4-5 chapters together as one volume. It was only later we made Holy Gita as one composite book and then after that we produced individual chapter books. So that was the book being handed over. Son also advised the same. What joy, isn't it? It is the 2nd generation in the Mission. And this is being handed over! Traditionally if you see, what value that is. So that moment brought a kind of fulfillment. His own work … has been handed down well. That was in 1988.

I carried the book with me to Sandeepany, when I joined the Course. Three years later on Shivaratri, I took diksha. Now, because the advise inscribed on that book for me too was – read 5 verses daily, meet me after 3 years - I went up to Swamiji and gave the book to him. After taking Brahmacharidiksha, I was given a new name. I showed the book to Swamiji. He saw, he understood again. I didn't explain a thing. He wrote 3rd time on the same page – father missed it, son got it. Great feeling.

It is this spirit we have to carry on. The parampara. If we can touch the grandfather, the father, the son, the grandson – the whole parampara with this knowledge, imagine the fulfillment. So these are signs of extreme joy and compassion.

Great compassion, signing it that way.

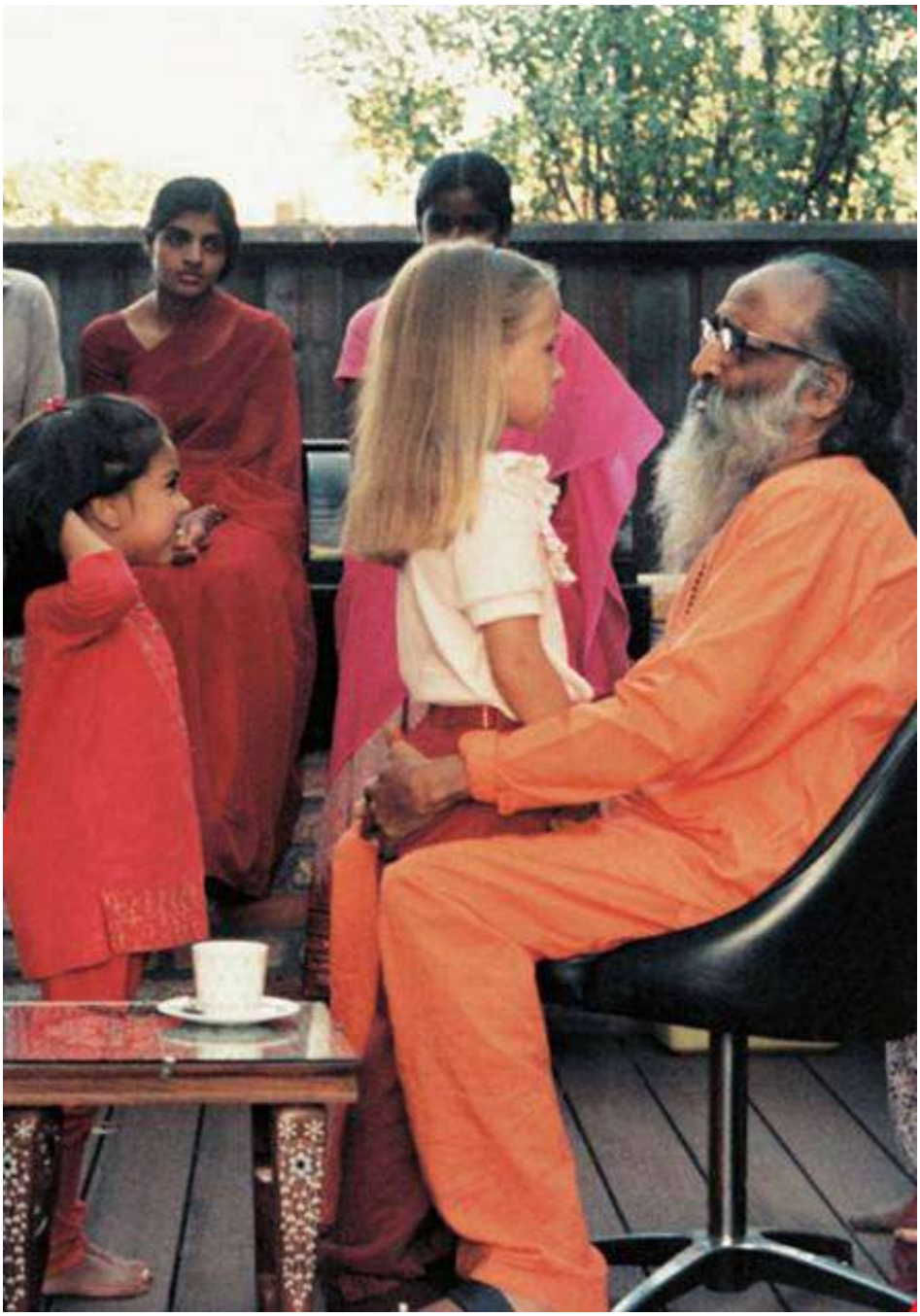
OM SUMANASE NAMAH

OM SUMANASE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Sumanas means a pure heart. A loving heart. Meaning no negative qualities like jealousy, greed, anger, bitterness, malice, backbiting, miserliness,etc etc.

Also one who has unconditional love for all. One who has compassion, sympathy, and concern for all.



Unconditional love for all

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Insecurity brings negative qualities. Insecurity comes from the belief that one is essentially the body. A Gnani like Gurudev who is a dehateeta(who had transcended body consciousness), BrahmaNishtha– (fullyestablished in BrahmicConsciousness) hence secure, and sees Himself in all things and beings, andtherefore ShuddhaSatwa

has (positive qualities), Udarahrudaya (large hearted), His very nature was effortless service of everyone, all the time. He is SarvaHitaChintaka(contemplates good for all); He is addressed in Vivekachudamani as karunyaSindhu(ocean of mercy); He having crossed the phenomena of change and death continuously helps others to cross over this samsara and (vasantavat)like the Spring, (lokahitam) for the welfare of the world, He (charanti) moves. The Spring blesses without any motive and blesses everyone without bias. So too a Gnani,Gurudev.

Here is a narration by Anjali Singh, about how Gurudev was carrying the shawl she forgot, for one and half days; this itself speaks volumesof His love for people.

Every Breath a Teaching

The Lost Shawl

Anjali Singh page 53

Only later,while unpacking his suitcase at the house did Anjali notice two similar shawls lying on Swamiji's bed. One of them was Anjali's, the one she had lost! Swamiji had all along been carrying on His shoulders, along with His own, despite the heat, for one-and-a-half days--through Switzerland, main land Spain, and across the sea to the Canary Islands.

Editorial comment: Now luminous,now gentle, now seemingly harsh, Swamiji's love sometimes left bruised egos in its wake; melted away ego created obstructions, and many a time saved His devotees from fear and despair.

In the previous Namah we have narrated how Gurudevmoved by the plight of villagers not having medical facilities, started a free medical centre seeing a child who had high fever and nowhere to go for medical aid.

Swami Chinmayananda as I knowHim

Mrs.Nirmala Ahluwalia, Bangalore, page 61

I recall once while He was sitting at a camp, somebody was singing Suprabhatam in a very melodious voice. The atmosphere was so divine and blissful that we were thrilled with joy. At the end,devotees wanted to touch His feet. At that moment, He suddenly spread out His legs so that all the devotees could prostrate simultaneously.

***

Gurudev has defined responsibility (in His I Love You Letters) as the ability to respond to others needs.

To that One who had that ability to know everyone's needs, my prostrations!

OM SUMANASE NAMAH

OM SUMANASE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



A good mind .... A great companion...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Su means good and mana is mind. Sumanase is one with a good mind. The mind is our friend and also our enemy. We have no option, but to live with our mind. We can throw people out of our house but our mind remains with us all the time. In fact, our personality is the mind only. The mind can give us great joy or it can torture us.

Minds can be of different types, some pester or nag. Some like interrupting and changing decisions. How then should we deal with this mind? First we need to make friends with it and then slowly transform it. Like Hanumanji went to Lanka and made friends with Vibhishana, Ravana's brother. Subsequently he transformed him and brought him to the Lord. In much the same way, we can transform our mind and take it to the Lord Rama like Vibhishana did. We can transform our mind by taking it to satsanga, by giving it the right information, by feeding it the right type of knowledge, and by reading the right books. We should keep feeding our mind, taking care of it and nourishing it with lots of love.

More important than our body is our mind. Given the right attention, slowly the mind is transformed and becomes an intimate friend. It ceases to be a problem and is a great companion. Then we are never alone. We can either choose to chat with it or remain with it in companionable silence. If we want to think of God the mind complies. If we want to think about the Gita and the Upanishads, the mind supplies appropriate information. If we want to just be silent, happy peaceful and in total joy the mind also sits silently. 'mana evamanushyanamkaraëam bandha mokshayo - Mind itself is the cause of our bondage as well as our liberation.'

'Su manse' means one with a good, pure, friendly, and wonderful mind, complete with all virtues. Vis-a-vis the mind, we should observe it, and not be a disciplinarian or use force with it. People, who torture their mind, need to be careful, because the mind waits for the right opportunity and to take revenge. It gathers all its strength and attacks or revolts, causing pain and confusion. The mind must be dealt with proper understanding. Those who know how to befriend the mind can conquer the whole world with ease.

OM SUMANASE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

360. OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

01-05-2016

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Shubhra ji, a disciple of Gurudev who studied under him directly. She runs Namah Vedanta Center, Woodstock, New York, where she teaches Vedanta.



Salutations to the one who has a good heart

The word ‘heart’ is so connected with Pujya Swamiji (as I called Him)….physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually!

Writing about Swamiji's kind-heartedness feels somewhat limiting, as words are simply inadequate to describe His goodness. On one hand, many people saw Him as a great commentator and orator, a living spiritual Master of high intellectual caliber. Those however, who came close to Him realized that He lived every moment from His heart, gushing out in pure love to serve humanity.

From the podium to the living room, wherever Swamiji was, He communicated with complete integration of the head and heart. He was sensitive to those who worked for Him and served His cause. Even when we were reprimanded – it was out of His sheer love and concern for our growth.

As I sit here writing, a couple of incidents among many others come to my mind.

I had met Swamiji when I was fourteen years old. To me He was the father I had lost when I was eight. My relationship with Him began as a father figure and transformed slowly into a Guru as well. He was always caring and protective about me, making sure I had eaten, had traveled properly and was taken care of. As a teenager I had the good fortune of spending vacations, both in India and in the USA, with Him.

In the late 1970's I was studying in Pennsylvania, America on a shoestring budget. By 1980, it was time to return to India. Swamiji was in USA for His yagna series and He had told me I could accompany Him back to India after His scheduled visit to Pennsylvania. The plan was to travel with Him as He completed His global itinerary and reach India via Chicago, Detroit, and a few cities in Europe. I was thrilled yet I felt dejected. Where would I get the money for such an expensive ticket traveling multi cities? I had just enough dollars for a direct flight to India. I wrote to Him expressing my concern.

Pat came His reply, "....You can certainly accompany me. Don't worry about the tickets etc. We will somehow find a ticket for you. Anyway you have to go to India. Let us calculate and find the difference. I think I can pay the difference. Let me come there. Everything can be arranged."

My heart melted. I remember crying on reading that letter which I still treasure. How could He be so busy, so involved in teaching and traveling and shoulder a hundred other organizational responsibilities – and yet have such large heartedness and magnanimity to take care and provide for me! This incident opened my eyes to His greatness adding another layer to my relationship with Him.

When He came to Pennsylvania he told me it would be better that I go directly to India. I thought there must be a reason for this instruction. I never questioned it, nor did I feel disappointed. I knew that when Swamiji said something it held great spiritual significance, as He knew the bigger picture. To complete this story - He knew from within that His return would be delayed – for, a few weeks later He underwent heart surgery in Texas and the remaining itinerary was cancelled.

When Dr. Denton Cooley operated on Swamiji's heart in Houston in 1980, Swamiji presented the doctor His commentary on the Holy Geeta and inscribed it with, "thank you for saving my life may this book save yours!"

Another incident etched in my memory is during the Mandukya Karika Camp in Sidhabari in May 1991. Swamiji suddenly took ill three weeks into the camp and was hospitalized in the nearest local hospital. It was then decided that He would be flown to Mumbai for treatment. Swamiji who was frail, in need of special care and medical attention could have left for Mumbai directly from the hospital. He announced that He would come back to the ashram and give 'darshan' to all the delegates who had come from all over the world to attend the Camp. Even though we tried to dissuade Him, He would not listen. He asked us to put a bed in the courtyard and said to let each and every person come and do his or her pranams.

I still remember the scene. Swamiji was lying on a bed smiling and acknowledging every person as about three hundred people filed past Him. The people were so touched that even in His condition He felt their disappointment and wanted to console and bless them. They stayed on as the text was completed by the Acharya of the ashram – but their hearts were filled with humble awe at the greatness of such a 'suhrd' being – a living example of Advaita Vedanta expressing itself in Love for humanity.

One could go on ceaselessly about Swamiji's nature….He was a strict disciplinarian, a teacher par excellence, a Guru who had no personal agenda except for the transformation of His disciples. On His birth centenary I offer my prostrations at the lotus feet of such a Master. A sage, who has touched the lives of thousands around the globe. He truly lived his words: In life to handle yourself, use your head, but to handle others, use your heart.

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

Offered by Acharya Vibhuti Shah, CM, Trichy



Among the 108 qualities of Gurudev described in the Ashtotari namavali this is the 101st name. In simple terms ”Suhride” means, Friendly, Affectionate Guru.

A friend is always kind. A loving and affectionate person who shows us by action that they love us.

In the Bhagawat Gita Chapter V, in the last verse, LORD Krishna is called Suhrut or Suhrid. He is called a friend with a kind heart who does only good, HITAM for all. One who helps all beings with no expectation whatsoever of any benefit, for help rendered.

Our Gurudev is an epitome of kind heartedness. He is just as lord Krishna has explained in the Bhagwat Gita.

I will share certain incidents in our family which extol these qualities of Gurudev.

My husband, Mr. Diljit Shah, once on a trip to meet Gurudev in Kerala, confided to him that he could not control his temper and did not know what to do about it. Gurudev looked at him and after a two-minute silence, told him “Go to Tirupati thrice, and have a darshan of Balaji. Go in the free darshan queue only.” And then in his usual inimitable, humorous style told him all will be well.

Later, when an astrologer was reading my husband’s horoscope, he mentioned that he had to repay Lord Balaji of Tirupati in his previous life.

Gurudev had taken one glance at my husband and was able to tell the solution. He was so large hearted that the happiness of his devotee was so important, that he gave a solution then and there, with no expectation in return.

In another incident, when he was in Trichy, my sister-in-law requested Gurudev to conduct the sacred thread ceremony for all our children. He immediately said that it should be done with a proper Brahmana and told us to make the necessary arrangements. He oversaw the entire ceremony and was with us all through. He blessed all the children and told them to do the Gayathri japa regularly, every day. This highlights his sincere and cordial nature as he was with us fully in action and spirit.

On yet another occasion, when my brother-in-law, Mr. Dipak Shah requested Gurudev when he had come to Tamilnadu, to come to Trichy and visit my mother-inlaw who was sick, he did come down for one night. He came in the evening and left early morning. Even for the parents of a devotee he would take great efforts. Such was the affection of our Gurudev towards us.

Gurudev would share the joys of the children, whenever they would come and talk to him about the prizes won in school and the skits played in front of HIM. He was a friend to the children and elders alike.

For a brief period, I was serving in a hospital. Gurudev told me to see Lord Krishna in all patients. He wanted us to grow, to reach the LORD no matter what work we did. He loved all, giving maximum happiness at all times.

His Kind, good heartedness was blessed and encouraged by Swami Sivanand ji and Swami Tapovan ji Maharaj. Swami Sivanand ji’s letter to Gurudev blessing him to go to the people and spread the message of the Upanishads, can be found in the Mananam series, “He did it” on page 79.

With this great heart and endless love, he started the Balavihar and CHYK groups, lighting the lives of children and harnessing youth potential through dynamic spirituality.

Our Gurudev is truly an epitome of kindness.

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

Offered by Swamini Swaprabhavananda,

'A friend in need, is a friend indeed'. Pujya Gurudev is the Supreme Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent - 'antaryamin - अंतर्यामिन - our true friend 24x7.



HE IS INDEED THE ‘FRIEND TO ALL’.

Parama pujya Gurudev's glories as 'the friend of all'! Until 1993 pujya Gurudev’s presence transformed multitudes of lives globally. Thereafter too, as promised, Gurudev guided prayerful souls to spirituality:

Swamini Swaprabhananda’s purvashram account (as Neelam) of how her prayers was ‘heard’ by parama pujya Gurudev – as a universal friend to all':

Neelam was born within a Shaivite Brahmin family. With parents' blessings she was schooled at an Arya-samaj based international school in Tanzania, East Africa. She learnt about spirituality and Sanatana Dharma but strangely had no knowledge of the Vedanta philosophy, or about Chinmaya Mission!

Parama pujya Gurudev has assured us: "Whenever you need me, close your eyes and look into your heart - and I will be there!" It was this prophecy that had begun to play out even without her current life realization of a general promise made ages ago to all.

During 1997 while Neelam lived in the USA, a sudden death of a loved one, followed by a cancer diagnosis of a younger sibling invoked a deep hunger to learn about the meaning of 'life and death'. During the cremation process she spontaneously prayed to God. Indeed, unknown to Neelam, parama pujya Gurudev listened to her deep prayerful yearning for spiritual guidance. "Whenever you need me, close your eyes and look into your heart - and I will be there!" There... It played out yet again.

Soon thereafter, Neelam was inexplicably driven to the Chinmaya Mission Kedar center, Pennsylvania, USA. During that visit, she learnt about 'a residential study course in spirituality'. This information mystifyingly inspired Neelam's quest for deeper knowledge of spirituality, leading to a wonderful series of unplanned events.

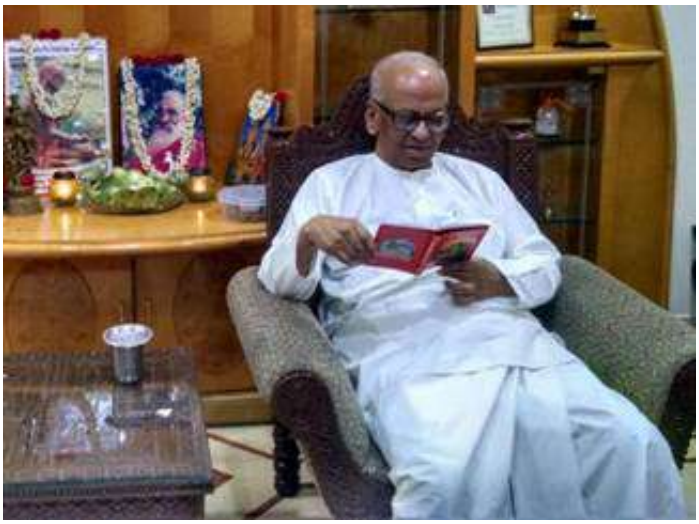
She got a sudden invitation for a wedding in India, leading to a personal interview with pujya Guruji at the Powai, Mumbai ashram, followed with the approval and enrolment for the two years' residential Vedanta course. Returning to the USA Neelam resigned from the lucrative employment, abandoned the almost completed MBA study course and promptly joined the Vedanta course in early 1998!

Neelam's single, wholehearted prayer, 'received' by 'suhrud' antaryamin - parama pujya Gurudev -- transformed her profoundly.

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM, Chennai



Suhrudah is a friend. One of the noblest of relationships. In the Ramayana, King Dasaratha and Jatayu were friends. For this friendship Jatayu gives his life fighting Ravana. Then Sri Rama became friends with Guha, Sugriva, and Vibhishana. All these roles were noble.

In Mahabharatha Sri Krishna was friend of Arjuna; but for Him, Pandavas could have never won the war. One of the noblest relationships in friendship was of Draupadi and Sri Krishna.
In Srimad Bhagavatam, friendship between Bhagavan Sri Krishna and Sudama or Kuchela was exemplary.
In the Bhagvad Gita, Bhagavan says to Arjuna, the reason He is giving him Brahmavidya was their friendship. Bhaktha (devotee) Sakha (friend) cheti. Between friends, there are no secrets. This is not true in any other relationship even between parents and children or between spouses. Or any other.

This could be seen in a great measure in Sri Gurudev. Even very early one of the reasons for His spiritual quest was the death of His friend Shroff.

Though Gurudev was a strict disciplinarian many of His devotees felt the freedom of friendship with Him.

This dual role with a slight variation is brought out by Sri Gurudev in BG 5:29 –

In our ordinary experiences in the world, a man who has kingly powers is very difficult to approach, and the King of kings (Gurudev for His devotees), a personality striking awe and reverence in the heart of the ordinary man, becomes almost unapproachable to the ordinary people. Therefore, the Lord has to qualify His title of Sarvaloka Maheswara with the epithet that He is at the same time A FRIEND OF ALL LIVING CREATURES.

THIS IS EXACTLY HOW WE SEE SRI GURUDEV.

Every Breath a Teaching

Who was He?

Letter to Solange Berg, San Francisco, California, USA, page 314

No part of the world attracts me. It is the people who attract me. I am not a traveller who is travelling for pleasure.....I am neither interested in places nor things. I am interested in man; therefore, I go searching for people to talk to them, to understand them, and if possible, to exchange ideas and give my own thoughts to them.

He did it page 250

Friends

As Gurudev continued His way up to the dais, I waited with bated breath to hear the words He would speak. I remember Him picking up His pointer and saying in the most deep, sonorous voice I had ever heard... “Friends this is not a lecture. It is a discussion between you and me...." I cannot adequately describe the effect that these simple words and the rest of His talk had on me, for I did, in fact, experience it as an intimate conversation with a friend going on inside my heart, and not as a lecture happening outside me!

To that friend of all of golden heart, my prostrations.

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

OM SUHRDE NAMAH

Offered by Brni. Anupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar, Gujarat

salutations to the one who has a good heart



When the vanaras were building the bridge to Lanka, much activity was going on, huge rocks and boulders were being moved and carried to build the bridge and every monkey in the army was working very hard. Sri Rama realised that so much work, night and day, was possible only out of their bhakti and love for Him. But He also noticed this tiny squirrel that would roll in the mud and go shake its fur between the rocks that had already been laid, thus filling the gaps between the rocks.

Sri Rama was very pleased but He saw that the monkeys were getting annoyed with the squirrel and scolding him.

No doubt Sri Rama was full of praise and encouragement for the monkeys (utsaahavardhakaaya); but if He saw that the squirrel's work was adding value to the

bridge, it was the goodness of His heart that saw good in every effort - big or small. 'No task is unimportant,' Gurudev too would say, and He urged us to work in the spirit of yagna.

It seems to me that behind this encouragement was a heart that wanted sevaks to learn the right attitude along with sevabhavana... there are many managers who encourage workers but out of a desire for their own glory. But Gurudev encouraged for the sevak's own karma yoga to be strengthened -- because He cared deeply about each and every one of us, no matter a monkey or a squirrel.

To that teacher who only thought of our welfare, our prostrations.

OM SUHRDE NAMAH

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR



Om Suhrude Namah

Su is good and hruda is heart. Suhrude is one who has a good heart. Sumanase and suhrude have the same meaning in a way. Both mean a good hearted person.

Heart is the combination of mind as well as the intellect. The heart, combines in itself deep understanding and sublime emotion. When sublime, pure emotions and a deep understanding of oneness come together, we have, what we call, heart. Some people are emotional, without understanding. Some people have understanding without any emotion. The best is a synthesis of both - Shiva and Parvati. Ardhnareshwari – Prakriti and Purusha. Both the left side and right side of the brain should come together in equilibrium. We have these two sides to the brains – left and right. Some people are predominantly left brain people, and some are right. Some wise person quipped, 'There is nothing right in the left and nothing left in the right!'

Poetry and mathematics should co-exist. Along with dance and rhythm there should be discipline, both blending together in a symphony. When bhakti and jnana both go together, there is beauty, otherwise it is dry and one sided. Our hearts should be like Hanumanji's. He opened his heart to reveal Rama, Lakshmana and Sitaji. He had everyone's welfare in his heart, even Ravana's. In Lanka, he was captured and taken to the darbar (court of Ravana), tied with ropes, kicked and insulted by everyone. Even in that condition, he gave only good advice and knowledge to Ravana. There was so much love, regard and concern for him.

Ramchandraji had a vision which he shared with Hanumanji. Hanumanji implemented it. He was all alone when he undertook his historic journey to Lanka. In those days there were no cellphones, so there was no contact. Nowadays we can keep in touch with the boss, consult long distance and even get advice. But though he had no physical contact he had the vision. He remained tuned with Bhagavan because of the purity of his heart.

He knew what Bhagavan wanted and how He felt about what He wanted done. So, he took his own decisions. Burning Lanka was not part of the plan but since the situation demanded that it be done, he did so. Being in tune with the Lord, he intuitively knew what to do. Bhagavan was not angry with him, because Hanumanji had merely implemented His vision.

A person with a pure, good heart is suhrut/suhrud. Someone asked our Gurudev about his heart problem. He said, “My heart is expanding actually, there is no problem. It is expanding to accommodate everyone. All blockages are removed.”

OM SUHRIDE NAMAH

361. OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

02-05-2016

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

Offered by Smt. Vijayalakshmi Prakasam, devotee of Gurudev in Chennai –began attending camps and yagnas of pujya Gurudev from 1982. Served many brahmacharins and swamis of Chinmaya Mission who came to Chennai - known for her hospitality and love for all the acharyas of Chinmaya Mission. Smt. Prakasam is also the mother of one of our senior Swamis.



Smt. Vijayalakshmi Prakasam to Gurudev's right.

Salutations to the self luminous one.

Does this mean that Gurudev was a light like the sources of light in the world – the sun, moon, stars and the fire?

I see all these sources of light and they become objects of my awareness. All the lights I see, shine on account of the light of awareness. Gurudev is the awareness, seated in the hearts of all. In the words of Pujya Gurudev, "It is the Light within that makes that SUN shine."

Saints or Mahatmas like Gurudev, with Self-knowledge, function in this world with a falsified ego. Some rare few plunge themselves into a world of activity, ever keeping the vision high.

At this plane of existence, Svayam Jyoti is completely independent. Thus with or without someone else, they proceed with the Lord's work. They are not bothered if their requests are turned down. It being Lord's work, more and more people do step in to contribute in various ways as the work progresses.

Gurudev being committed to a very high vision, would start off executing his plans with or without someone else's help. When a team got formed, He took the team along, with a lot of compassion; but he never ever waited for them to start. He enjoyed doing and did whatever needed to be done, even if it seemed trivial.

It is a known fact that during the 1st yagna at Pune, Gurudev wore a turban and a vest and went around the town on a cycle with a megaphone, shouting, 'Come and listen to the swami who has come from Uttarkashi and is giving good talks in English'. He himself inaugurated the yagna since 'there was no one else who was prepared to do so'. Gurudev Himself was the marketing manager, marketing the yagna; Himself was the speaker in the yagna; Himself got the notes of the Yagna ready for being printed; Himself proofread it; Himself arranged the printing by writing letters to probable sponsors and speaking to them; Himself published the talks.

In the Kathopanishad commentary of Pujya Gurudev, Swami Sivananda – Divine Life Society, notes that this is the first time in the history that [alongside] talks the same is also being printed simultaneously. His inspiration level can't even be imagined by us. (This beautifully written sentence by Swami Sivananda ji appears in the Kathopanishad commentary in Tamil, which was published in the early 1950's. The book's price was One Rupee and it has been handed over by me to archives.)

What gave him this strength? He knew that it was Lord's work and Lord Himself is doing the work. Can anyone ever imagine ruining Lord's work or plan? He would not quit even when the going became tough. True to His words, 'Success lies in the race run and not in the trophy won'; He enjoyed every bit of it. ' In His own words 'I know nothing about others. I only love them ardently, fully, unreservedly. In that love, I act shamelessly, freely, easily, openly. Whether they feel benefited, degraded, roughed up, or mishandled, I don't care: I enjoy such contacts…and I cherish such a life of pure and free love! Your permission is not asked; your acceptance is not demanded; your approval is not expected. It is my privilege to love, and I look

forward to no return.'

A devotee asked Gurudev, watching Him work for an average of 18 hours a day 'Don't you ever get tired?'

Gurudev burst forth with laughter saying, 'If I were doing the work, I would have been exhausted, not just tired. But with Lord Narayana Himself doing the work, why should I get tired?'

If I can feel and experience that, then nobody can keep me down, unless I decide not to rise again; If I can move ahead in the noble work shown to me, with or without someone else, I invoke Pujya Gurudev as Svayamjyotise namaha in my chosen field of activity. He is the inner awareness who ever illumines our path.

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Swayam Jyotishe Namah - prostrations to the Self luminous, the self-effulgent one.

All lights that illumine the world to us cannot illumine if there is no life principle in us. Yet the life principle, the consciousness, does not need another light to illumine it. It is self-luminous. In Kaivalyopanishad this is called Svaraat.
Again all light -objects or sources of illumination can illumine only light and not darkness. With any light other than the Self we cannot find darkness. But it is the Self that can illumine both light and darkness. Hence it is said superior to darkness (tamasah paramuchyate). This also called light of all lights(Jyotishamapi jyotihi).

Sun, moon, stars, fire, and other sources of light cannot enter into us. Yet we see in our dreams a world without these external lights. It is the Atman that illumines the dream world also to us. Yet the Atman without which other lights are of no use, does not need any other light to illumine it. This Self effulgent light is Swayam Jyoti Chinmaya. Chinmaya is pure consciousness. The state of a Brahmagnani Gurudev, Nirvikalpa, is free from objects to illumine and hence in that stage the Gnani Gurudev illumines Himself. Swayam Jyotishe Namah.

This is the essence of the famous mantra chanted at the Aarati indicating the Self Brahman " Na tatra Suryo bhaati na Chandra Tarakam.....". That Self cannot be illumined by Sun, moon, stars, lightning or fire. All of them shine from the borrowed

light of the Self. This state is said in Kaivalya Upanishad, as: " Aham vijanami vivikta roopo,na chasti vetta mama chit sadaham." I know them all; none know me the Eternal Consciousness.

Swami Chinmayananda as I KnowHim pg 9

Shri T.N.Parthasarathy Madras
He is now "ANTARYAMI" and is always with me. He is always available for me,and I can invoke Him at any time or place. I live with this conviction.

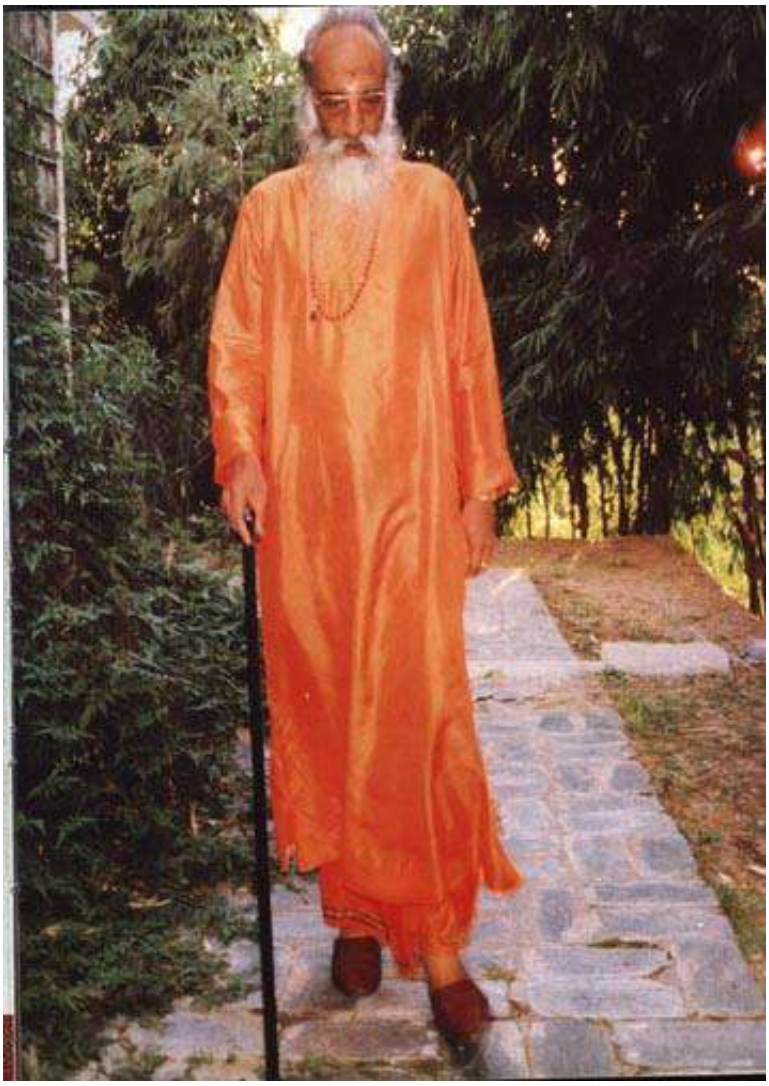
Page 17 Shri Krishnaswamy Madras

Swamiji is not here physically but we can feel His Presence,that He is always with us. Swamiji has changed many situations in my life. Even if I pour out my problems looking at Swamiji's picture,they are solved.

Every Breath a Teaching

Miracles/ Shivaratri Miracle page 138

anonymous
It was Shivaratri at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai.
Those who were there that night recall that when Gurudev came out of His room, He was 'shining ', as though light were streaming from Him.



Shining .... Ever illumining

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

Meditation

Energy Explosion page 212

Anonymous
At a spiritual camp at Humboldt State University in California, a young man was sitting in morning meditation.
As he meditated, the young man had his eyes shut. At one point, he experienced an inexplicable feeling that prompted him to open his eyes and look at Swamiji. Swamiji was staring straight at him. Something--it felt like energy--shot out from the third eye region of young man's head, and the same thing happened from Swamiji's third eye, and the two energies met with an explosion in the middle,sending the young

man into a very deep meditative state. He stayed in that deep state for some five hours afterwards,alone and totally quiet.

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

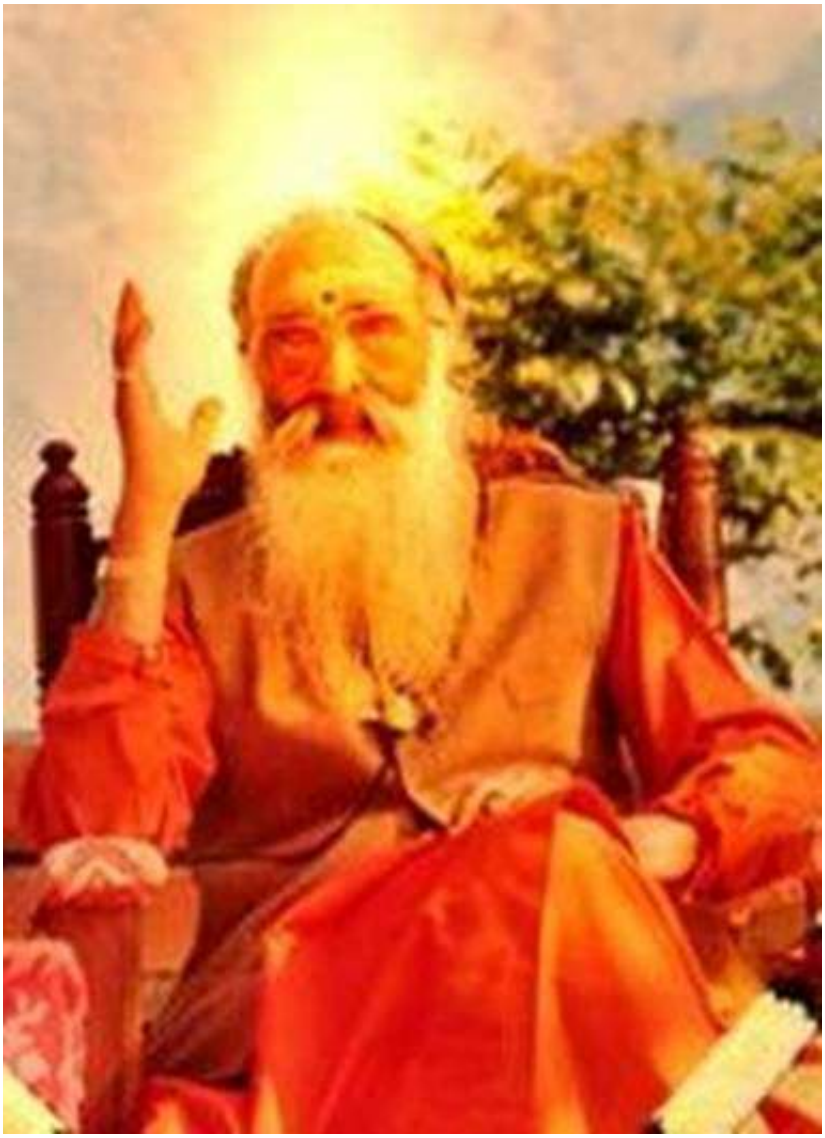
Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Svayam is self and jyoti means light. Svayamjyoti means self-lighted or self-luminous. One who does not require someone else's light. Like the sun has its own source of light. It is self-luminous. The moon and the earth are not self-luminous. They require the light of the sun in order to be illumined. Similarly, neither our body nor our eyes are self-luminous. They require the support of the mind. Sometimes our eyes are open but the mind is somewhere else. The result is that we don't see. The best example is of students in a classroom. Their eyes are in the class but the mind has travelled elsewhere. Even though the ears and eyes are open, nothing registers, because without the mind they are not empowered. They function in the light of the mind. Unless the mind supports them the eyes cannot see.

The mind also does not have its own light. Varied thoughts pass through the mind. Sometimes we are not even aware of those thoughts. We only become aware when we focus our attention on them. The mind itself receives light from the Self, which is self-luminous. It does not require any other light or support to know its presence. The presence of a body or some object can be confirmed only by looking at it. But to know whether I am there or not, I do not have to look. Even when my eyes are closed, I know that I exist, because the existence and awareness of myself is in my Self only. It is not dependent on my eyes, ears or mind. I know of my own existence by myself. This is what is self-luminous. I am aware of myself as 'I am'. That is Self-awareness.

The Supreme Reality becomes Self-aware as 'I am' and expresses in this world as, 'I am this', or 'I am that'. Pure 'I am', is the self-luminous aspect of that Reality. Svayamjyoti – one's own light. In the worldly sense, a Mahätmä issvayamjyoti. He depends on His own glory. 'Sva mahimne pratishthita - He is established in his own mahima, or glory.' He does not depend on anyone else. 'I am great because of my Self'. My greatness is independent and depends on my Self. In the world, people generally have dependent greatness. They are known via someone else. Some sons are known by their fathers. Some fathers are known by

their sons. Yet others are known by their dogs. Both go together. Our Ganesh Bhagawan is known by His mouse, or rather the mouse is known by Him. They go together.



Self Luminous...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

But a great Mahatma is dependent on himself. He is great because of his own Self. That is why when they travel from one place to another they don't have to carry things. They are great treasure houses in themselves. They do not depend on books or on anything.

They don’t carry names, addresses, phone-numbers or other paraphernalia. They go themselves. One fine day, suddenly Shirdi Sai Baba appeared, in Shirdi. Nobody knows from where he came. He just came there and became the king of Shirdi. Great saints and Mahatmas are self-luminous.

OM SWAYAM JYOTISHE NAMAH

Contributions can be mailed to CIF Sevak at this address meera.seth@chinfo.org

362. OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

03-05-2016

OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by SwäminiSwaprabhananda was introduced to the Chinmaya Mission in 1997, while resident in Washington, D.C A graduate of SandeepanySadhanalaya, Mumbai (11th batch), she was initiated as brahmacariNiVibhooti Chaitanya and in March 2013 was ordained into sannyäsa order as SwäminiSwaprabhänanda.



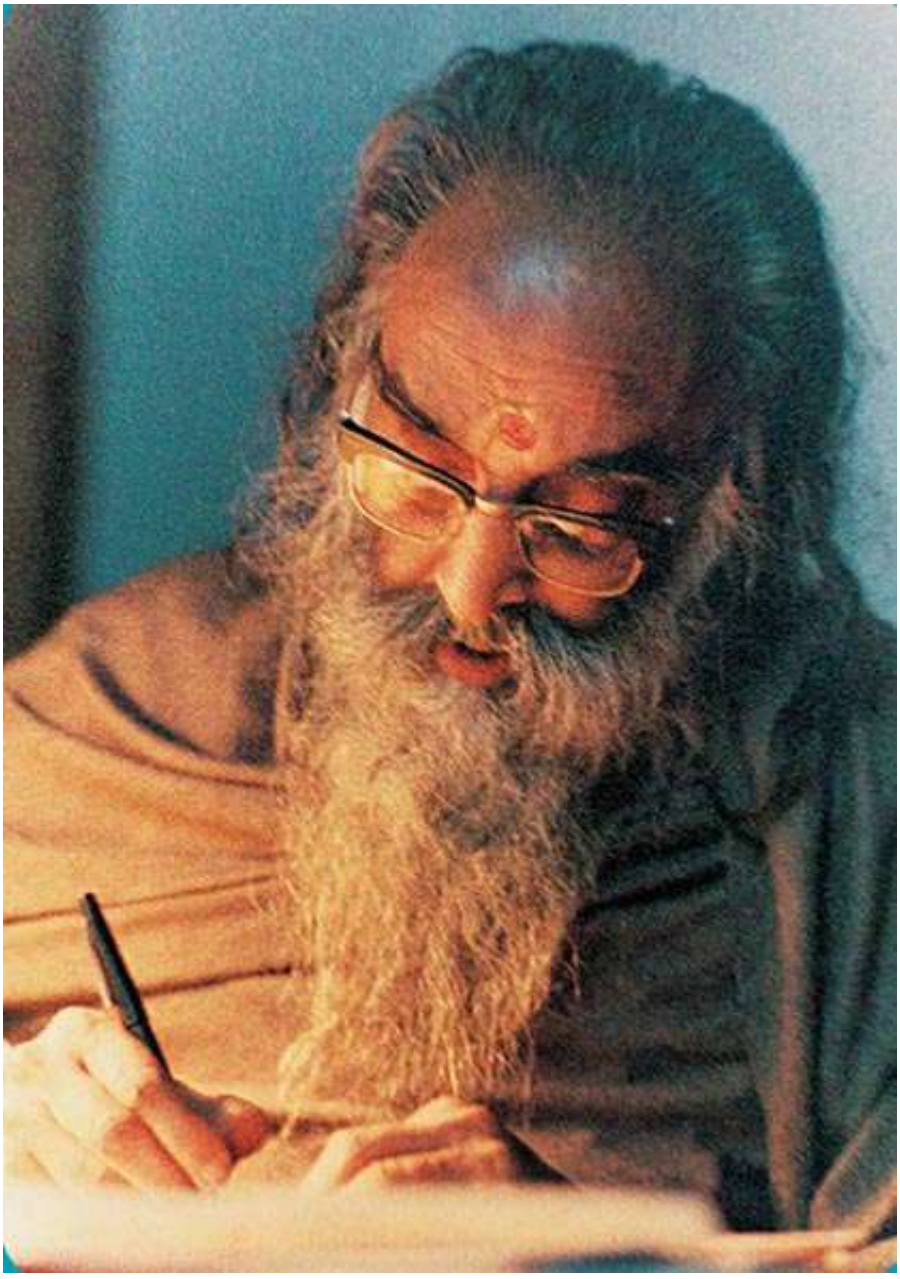
||Sthitapraïyäyanamaù||

Pujya Gurudev through his commentary on the Holy Gétä – chapter 2 guides us to understand who is a true Sthitapraïyäya. The goal is not to simply identify one but

to appreciate the characteristics within such a supreme role model and be intricately inspired towards imbibing the awesome qualities.

Instead of merely explaining the verses' meaning, Gurudev gently steers us to grasp the essence of each characteristic of 'a realized saint', first hand. Only the one who knows, will know what to say! Yaḥpaśyati = one who sees; saḥpaśyati = he actually sees. Thus by our very own SthitapraïyäyaSad-guru, we are nudged to deliberate within, and distinguish 'the right types of Masters – from the charlatans'.

Appearances are more often deceptive, therefore we must utilize our God-given special gift of sharp intellect to differentiate between the deceptive and trustworthy.



No hankering, no attachment, no fear, no anger ... muni of steady wisdom

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

We will succeed in clear discernment by taming the mind, purifying and surrendering it at the holy feet of a genuine sthitapragnyasadguru!

Bhagavän explains to us the characteristics of sthitapragna:

- One whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who has become free from blind attachment, fear and anger, is indeed the muni or sage of steady wisdom –sthitapragnyaaya -2.56

Such a one is not carried away by desire for preya-based happiness and has tamed the three foes, namely Raga (Desire), Bhaya (fear), Krodha (anger).

- One who is entirely unattached, not charmed at being received well, nor vexed at evil, his or her wisdom is steady.2.57

Other earthly species instinctively react to the stimuli, but human beings are blessed with intellect to discern and respond or not act. A spiritually established one transcends the three gunas and remains neutral to environmental stimuli.

- Like the tortoise withdraws its limbs, one who can completely withdraw the senses from their sense objects, his or her wisdom becomes steady.2.58
- Sense objects fall away from the abstinent person, leaving the longing behind. But even that longing ceases when one realizes the Supreme. 2.59
- The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man who is striving after perfection. 2.60
- The steadfast, having controlled them all, sits focused on Me - as the Supreme; his or her wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control. 2.61

“Out of purity and silence come the words of power.”

Swami Chinmayananda

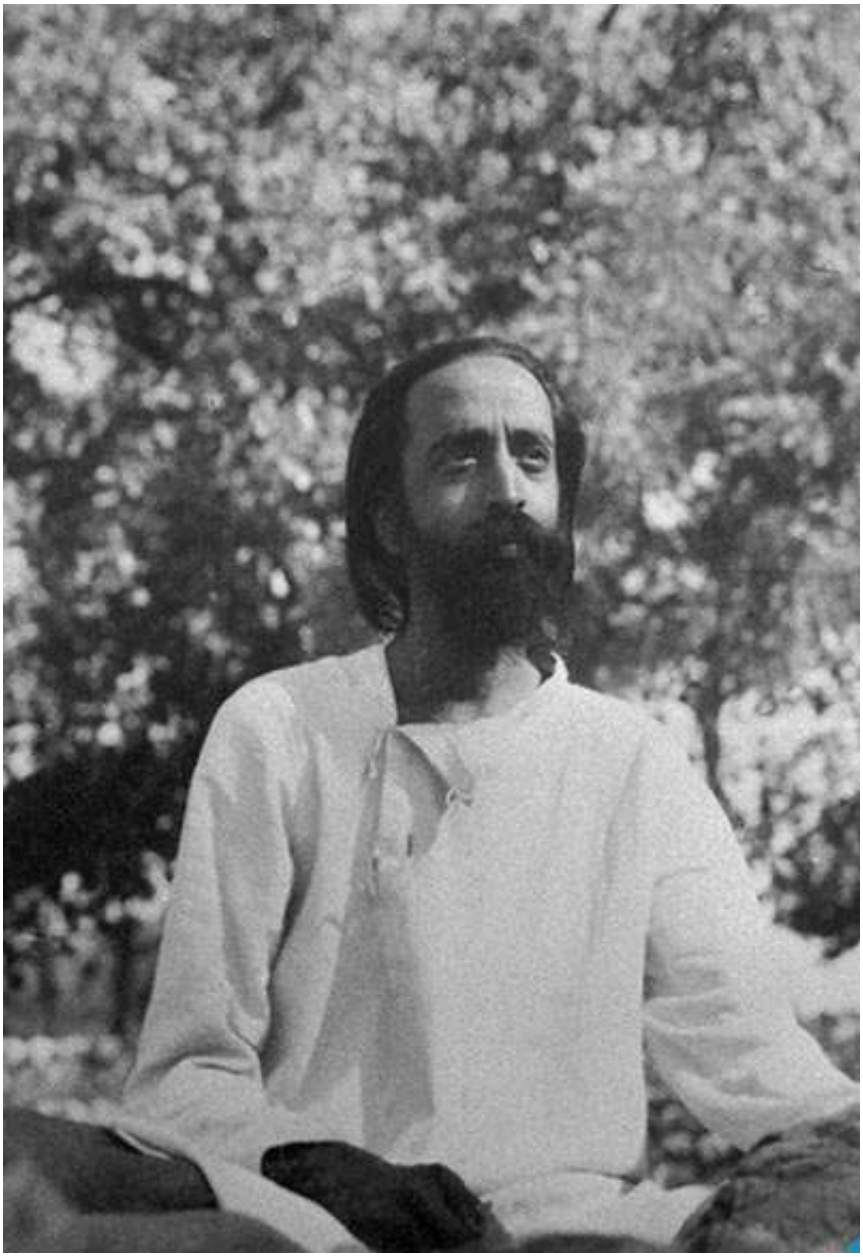
OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Sthithapragna means a man of steady wisdom. This is not an intellectual state. It is the state of realisation.

Sanskrit provides slightly different meaning one who is settled in the Consciousness. This is a man of realisation.



State of Realisation.....

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Gurudev says in His commentary on BG II -54
In this stanza and the following section, a man of steady-Wisdom (Sthithapragna) means, one who has through direct realisation come to experience and lives His Godly Self.

The next verse says a sthithapragna is one who has cast of all desires. In this context Sri Gurudev explains in detail this 'casting off' is due to His growing out into the ultimate dimension, like a child that leaves the toys as it grows.

Gurudev says "A perfect Man is defined here therefore,not only as one who has no desires,but also as one who has positively come to enjoy the Bliss of the Self!

" In the Self, the man of steady wisdom,SELF SATISFIED IN THE SELF,can no more entertain any desire, or have any appetite for the paltry objects of the body,of the mind or of the intellect. He becomes the very source of all Bliss.

This state of Bliss was the experience of His devotees in His very presence.

We shall see this state of Sri Gurudev through other sources.

In the story reproduced below from He Did It, Gurudev sees an issue from the stand point of the intention of love, in contrast to others seeing the same issue from a material standpoint. Swamiji says though they are right since the decision has been made, it is about respecting the love of a humble farmer in the act of donating land to the Mission. Gurudev was ready to forgo the entire project instead of hurting the farmer.

A Sthithapragna sees the same world differently. He evaluates the world from a higher stand point. Read this episode to understand the two standpoints and thus know the Sthitapragna:

HE DID IT :

Perfection in higher ideals pages 348 and 349

The executive committee in Lucknow have met and decided that the land in Lucknow,where we just did Bhumi Puja is not large enough for the prestigious Chinmaya International Residential School. Hence, we have decided that we will sell the plot and buy a larger plot, a good distance away from the city with the same money.

Swamiji put away the letter and said to us,"They may decide, and they are also right; the land is small,however the final decision is mine. I will veto the decision. Either the school will built on that plot which was given to me by the old village farmer or the school will not be built in Lucknow.!"

This elderly farmer came up to me and offered me his land saying,'I have not been educated, but I hear you build good schools, please take my land and build a school.'

The committee in Lucknow was over excited to have a school in their area. We quickly went did the Bhumi Puja. We should have thought before, whether it was suitable or not. Even I did not."

Swamiji's commitment was to the "intention" and not to commercial gain. He had accepted the gift of the land from the farmer with the intention of building a school, and He did not renegade on His moral commitment.

It is with such a pure mind and fearless intellect that Swamiji laid the foundations for an institute of learning, to produce citizens of the world with clear thinking, right decisions, strong convictions,and steadfast values.

Vedanta - Other temples and houses Divine

Seeing the Lord every where

It was always inspiring to see Parama Pujya Swami Chinmayananda undertake any action. Everything He did was always performed in an exemplary fashion. He was a Man of Perfection-- a " Sthithapragna ". He taught us by His actions to live the teachings of Vedanta in our daily lives. He showed us how to live the Lord everywhere!

Page 321

A Man of Perfection must have a big belly to stomach peacefully, as it were, all the experiences of life,auspicious and inauspicious.

When such a Mastermind sits dangling his foot down,it is again significant, in the symbolism of Puranas.

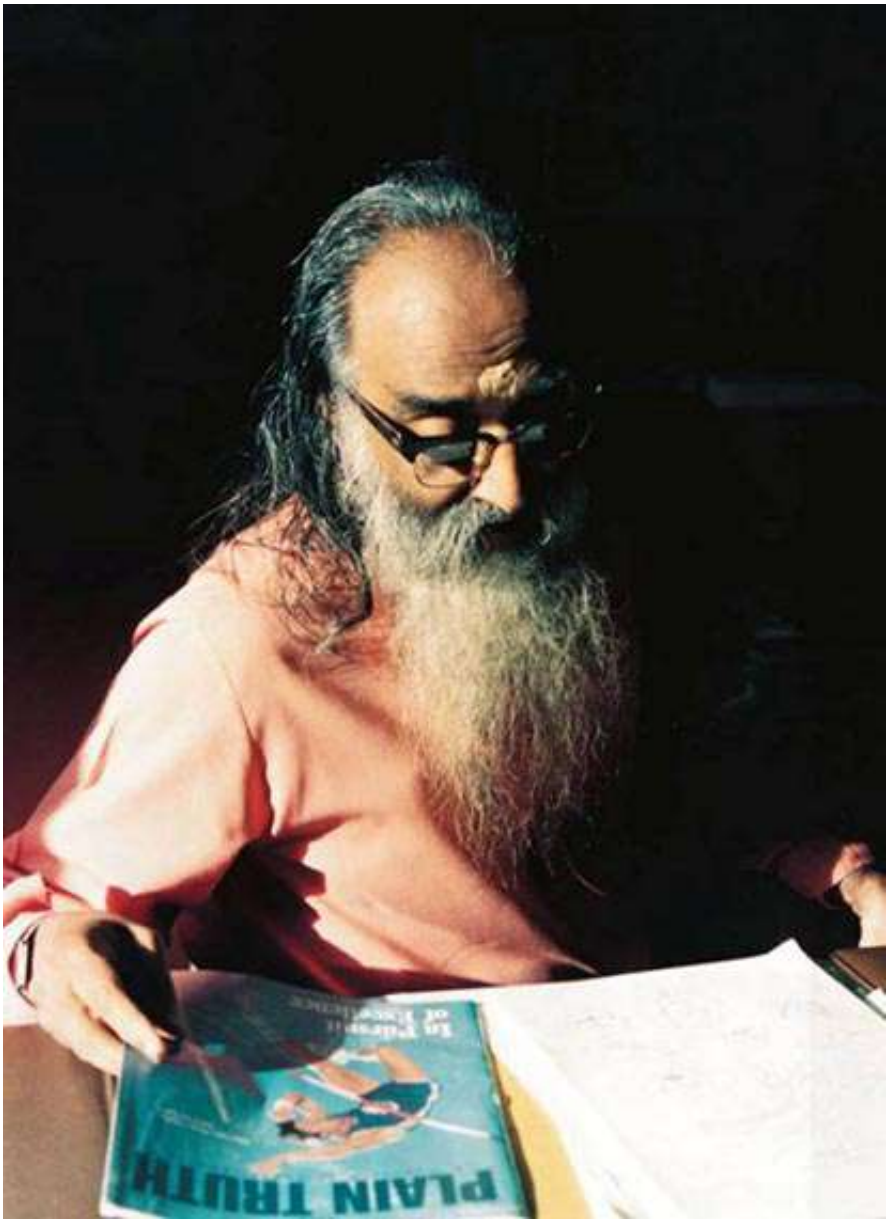
A perfect Man of Wisdom has integrated them both (mind and intellect)to such an extent that they have become One-- an intellect into which the mind has folded and has become completely subservient.

OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Sthitaprajna means a person of steady wisdom. Prajna means wisdom. Sthitha is steady, firm. Firm wisdom, firm understanding, firm realization. 'Prajna' is not just ordinary information. It is not just knowledge. It is knowledge associated with experience. When we read that fire is hot we gain some knowledge. We then say, "Yes, fire is hot." But when we put our finger in the fire and check it out, we get firm knowledge, along with experience. We know without a doubt that the fire is hot. Similarly, a sthitaprajna is one who is established in his own Self. He knows without a doubt that I am 'Sat-Chit-Ananda'. Such a one is totally established in the Truth.



Totally established ... I am Sat Cit Ananda ...

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT

The Gita(2.55) defines asthitaprajna as:

“prajahati yada kamansarvanparthamanogatan

atmanyevatmanatustöahsthitaprajnasyadochyate.”

When a person is free from all desires and is totally satisfied in His own Self. There is no desire for any objects. His happiness neither depends on status, state, outside objects, nor the future. Happiness does not depend on the outer world. His happiness depends only on himself.

Through shravaNa we listen to the scriptures and learn about ourselves. Through manana we come to understand the Truth and through meditation, we come to experience It. Once we meditate, experience and get established in It, all doubts disappear. No one can then shake that person out of this understanding. When a Mahatma says, “I am Brahman”, He knows that He is Brahman. Nobody can either confuse or brainwash him, because the conviction is firm, steady and unshakable. There is no doubt in his mind. This is a sthitaprajna and such a one remains same in all situations, in joy and pain, in honour and dishonour. ‘mana apamanayostulyah’- in honor and dishonor[BG 14:25]; Then ‘shubhaashubhaphale,’- results of good and evil[BG 9:28]; and ‘yanishamsarvabhutanaàtasyamjagartisamyami-- What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; [BG 2:69]’ The characteristics of a man of wisdom are enumerated in Gita, Chapter 2. ‘nabhinandatinadveshti, santushtoyenakenachit – A sthitaprajna is content in himself, neither attached to anyone nor disliking anyone.’ Gurudev was such a man of steady wisdom – a sthitaprajna.

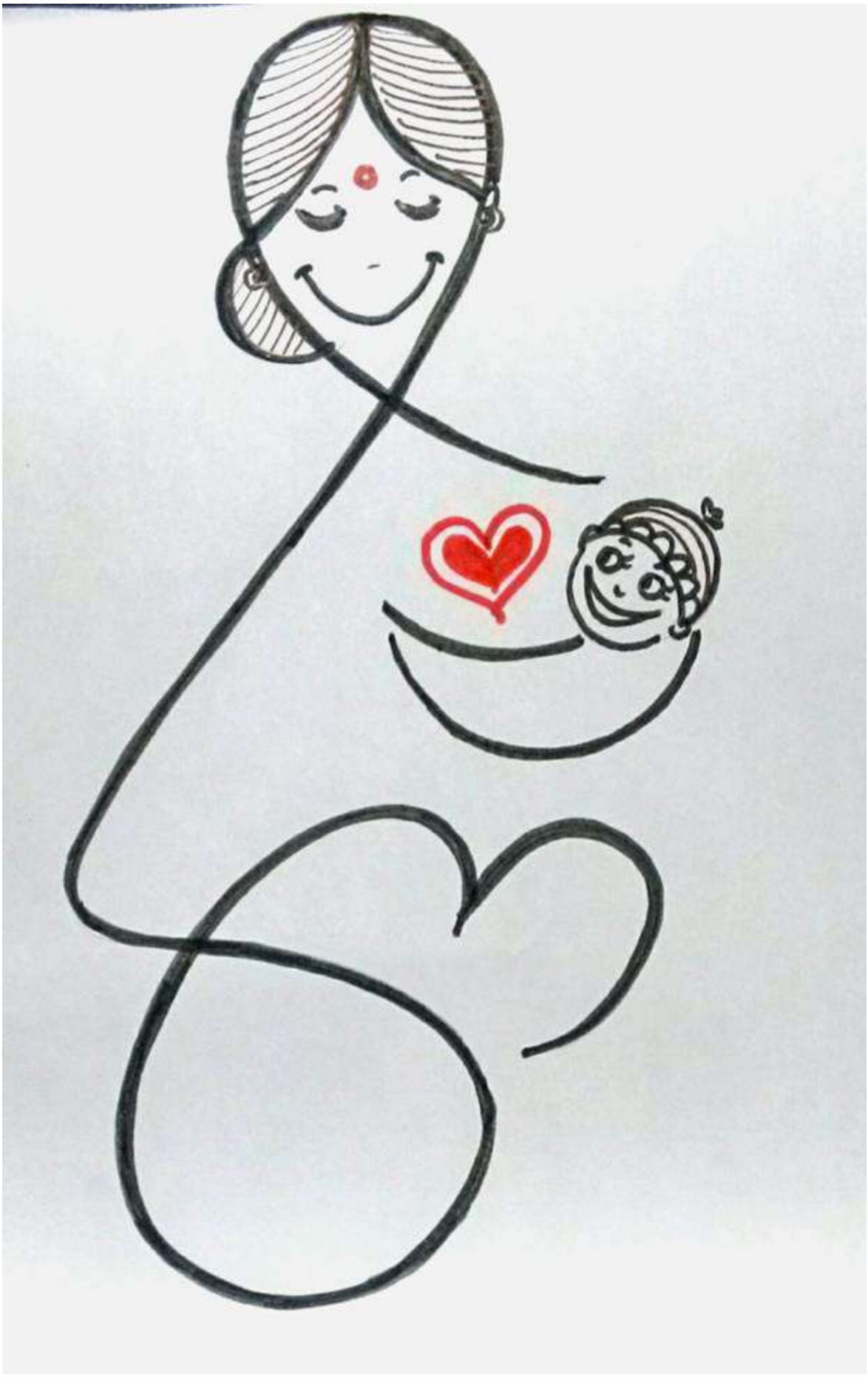
OM STHITAPRAGNYAAYA NAMAH

363. OM KSHAMAASHEELAAYA NAMAH

04-05-2016

OM KSHAMAASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Darshini Bhatt, a setukari from CM Ahmedabad



OM KSHAMAASHEELAAYA NAMAH

OM KSHAMAASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Atmavidananda (Br.Vishrutji) CM Anantapuram (Andhra Pradesh)



Swami Atmavidananda (erstwhile Br. Vishrut Chaitanya)

1987-September. We were some 12 CHYKs preparing to pilot Gurudev from Vijaywada airport to Guntur. Eight of us were from Vijayawada, four from Guntur (both are adjacent towns). The entire operation was neatly planned and orchestrated. We CHYKs took our job as pilots to Gurudev's car, very seriously. We were all identically dressed, our colors, our bikes, everything. We each wore headbands that bore the CHYK emblem. And across our chest we wore a prominent sash that said Chinmaya Yuva Kendra.

There we were, all 12 bikes smoothly accompanying Gurudev who was in a Contessa given by Mr. Subbarao for the journey.

Now two of the pilot bikes were being ridden by MK and SS. Just as we cross Vijayawada, there is a small hamlet named Mangalgiri. Somewhere before this, MK and SS suddenly took off and could not be seen among us. Their bikes were Royal Enfield, very powerful bikes which are also faster, whereas the rest of us rode simpler bikes and kept to the steady 65 kmph, as agreed.

But funnily, when we entered Mangalgiri, there by the side of the road, for all to see stood MK and SS in their finery, the CHYK name blazing down across their bodies, both drinking a cola from a kiosk by the road. Those days these were called ‘cold drinks’.

Gurudev saw them. We all saw them. Mangalgiri is a small town, so everything there is to the town is by the roadside.

Gurudev’s look said it all, but no word was uttered by anyone. We were all petrified. What firing awaited these two we wondered.

In Guntur, Gurudev was being hosted at the Cotton Board’s guest house. As we entered the guest house devotees received Gurudev with poornakumbham and then we all entered and Gurudev was seated on a sofa. Within a second Gurudev said, “Where are those two? Call them here now.”

A chorus went up in the hearts of all chyks present, “Finished...!”

MK and SS were ushered forward. They stood there in complete gear, the fiery CHYK sash across their bodies and other paraphernalia. Gurudev shouted at them, “How can you leave the cascade in between? Is this what you learn from being a CHYK?”

And almost immediately he softened. Gently, in a voice that melted hearts, he said, to MK in particular, “If you wanted to have cold drinks, you should have told me, all of us could have had one each! Why drink alone?”

Then on a sombre note Gurudev said to all of us, “When we work in a team, we should stay together, work together.” Then in most sweet a voice which you cannot but obey, he said, “Next time, don’t do this, ok?”

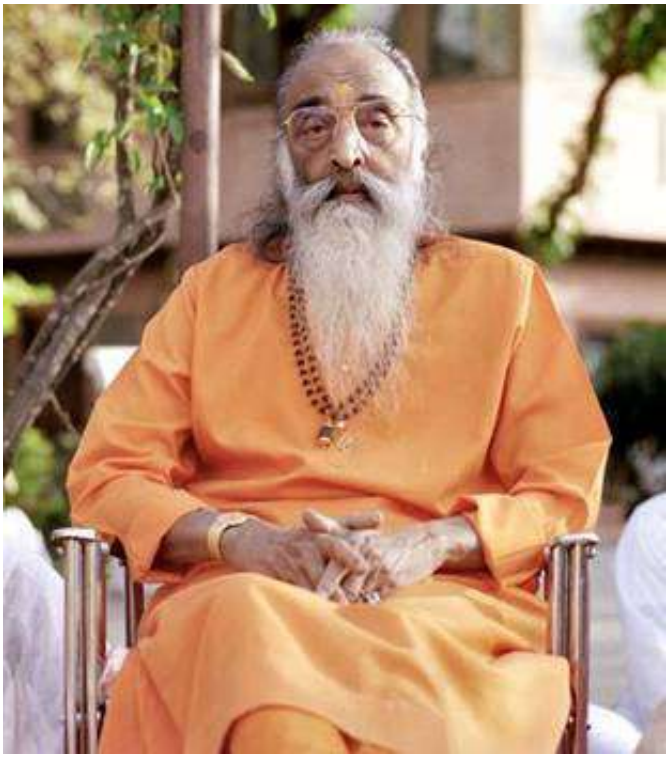
To that most forgiving and loving teacher, our prostrations.

OM KSHAMASHEELAAYA NAMAH!

OM KSHAMAASHEELAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Titiksha is endurance.Kshama is both patience and forgiveness. Infact forgiveness is the result of patience and endurance. This endurance has been mentioned as titiksha, one of the qualifications needed in a spiritual student. Naturally a Spiritual Master has gone beyond this Stage. In the experience of the oneness of the Self where all duality has ended resulting in Unconditional Love for all, endurance and forgiveness are effortless. Such masters even when they apparently censure their devotees or disciples, it is out of total love and concern -- corrective like a parent toward the child. Agitations,bitterness,grudge all belong to the mind of the one who is body conscious. A Gnani,dehateeta (beyond the body),dwandwateeta (beyond the pairs of opposites), who sees Himself in all does not have any repulsion. Tato najugupsate says Isavasya Upanishad since all duality has ended.



Unruffled serenity ..... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

In the Puranas we get the story of Maha Vishnu who instead of reacting to the kicking on His chest by Bhargava Muni, made that mark 'Srivatsa' permanently remain on His chest. This endurance was the yard stick the Rishi used to know who is the greatest among thedevas.

Thus this value of Kshama is held in high esteem in our culture. In Tamil there is a proverb which says one who has endurance will rule the earth.

Sri Gurudev comments on this Kshama in BG 3:16:

Forgiveness- Patience (Kshama)

The context in which the word is used here should increase the depth of the meaning. It is not merely 'a capacity to patiently live through some minor physical or mental inconvenience, when insulted or injured by others '. It is a subtle boldness that is shown by a man in facing the world around with an unruffled serenity even in the face of most powerful opposition and provoking situations.

Every breath a teaching

Love:Thefts forgiven page 71&72& Bharat B.Gupta

Swamiji established pitamahasadan, an old people's home in a village area by the side of the Ganges, at considerable cost. Always striving for perfection, he had several amenities provided for the Asrama. Over a span of ten years,thefts occurred there several times.

While showing Him around, we mentioned the thefts.

Swamiji asked us not to lodge any report with the police. He also did not encourage the idea of fencing the windows, saying,"The need of the other person was perhaps greater....or else he would have not stolen from an Asrama."

OM KSHAMASHEELAAYA NAMAH

OmKshamasheelayaNamah

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Salutations to the Forgiving One

Kshamashila is one with the ability to forgive, both oneself and others. In foolishness and ignorance, one may sin against or hurt a Mahatma, but such is their greatness that they forgive totally. In this respect they can be likened to the Earth.The Earth is called kshama – forgiveness. Whatever are our actions; the Earth accepts and forgives all.

A Mahatma has this ability and large heartedness to forgive. Despite the physical

pain inflicted on him, Jesus Christ prayed for those crucifying him: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”[King James Bible, Luke 23].This ability to forgive is the strength of the strong and comes out of great wisdom and deep realization.

When the tongue is accidentally bitten, we don’t break the teeth.Forgiveness is spontaneous because we know that the tongue and the teeth are both parts of the same being.Even the thought of forgiveness does not occur to us, because we feel a deep sense of oneness with the teeth.

The heart of a Mahatma [too] does not recognize any separation – all beings are manifestations of the same divine Self.Where then can there be any question of forgiving or holding a grudge?

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda tells the story of a Mahatma, one of whose disciples used to sneak out of the monastery every night and go to a nearby village for some entertainment.He would use a stool to climb the compound wall and then jump across. Later, he would return the same way. One night, as usual the student returned, scaled the wall and stepped on what he thought was the stool.To his horror, in place of the stool he found the teacher standing there! The teacher did not rebuke him. He just removed his shawl and gave it to the boy saying, “In this cold, you may catch a chill. You should wear a shawl when you go out in the evening.” From that day the boy was totally transformed.

Our Gurudev was like that. On occasion, he would get angry but soon after he would be the epitome of kindness. If a brahmaharé erred, he would be punished. Gurudev would say, “No breakfast for you.” Gurudev would also go without food. Inherent in this punishment, there was forgiveness, and that forgiveness had the power to effect an instant transformation in the student.



The Guru who punished himself.....©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Since we expect God to forgive us, we should also have the ability to forgive. If we retain anger and the desire for revenge, we create a lot of disharmony and conflict. Many of us carry a lot of anger and hatred against ourselves, our near ones, our parents, our brothers, our sisters. We even have anger against God and the law of karma. When we forgive, the heart is cleansed and we experience the happiness and peace which is there.

364. OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

05-05-2016

OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Offered by BrniAnupama Chaitanya, CM Jamnagar, Gujarat



OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Salutations to the one who is embodiment of knowledge / wisdom.

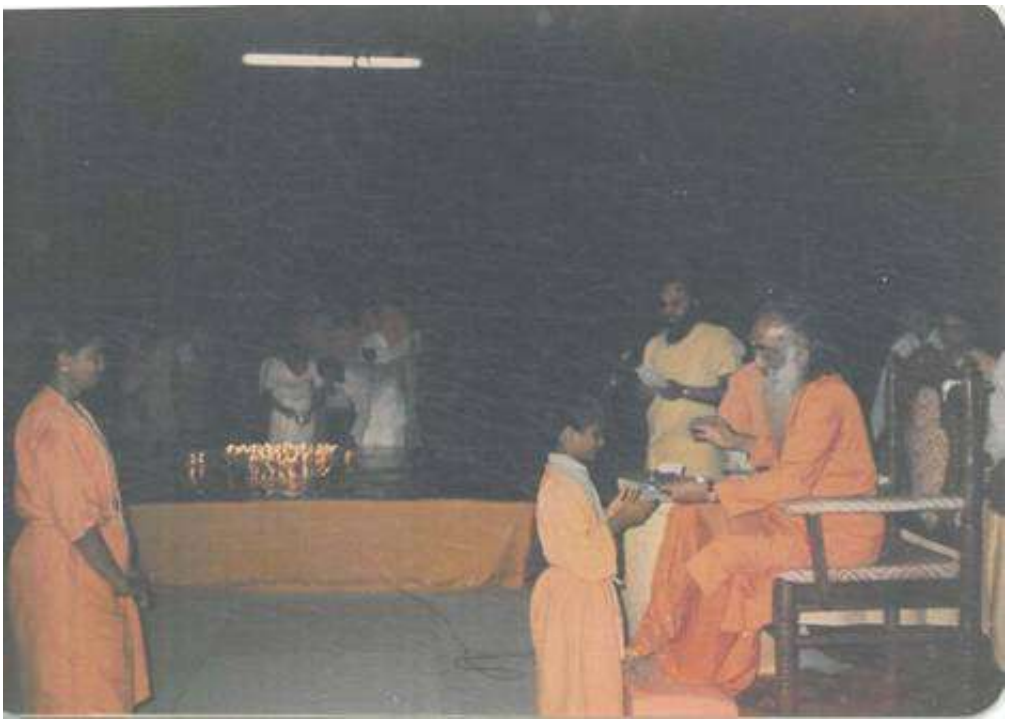
Offered by Shri. Ramana, CM Chennai

In krutagnyatastotram , Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji writes

ye gunahsarva-shastreshuvarnyante brahma-jnaninam
tairayamsarvadapurnorajatesarva-yoginam

Pujya Gurudev is fully endowed with all those virtues and glories described in all scriptures about knowers of Brahman (characteristics of a realized person) and he shines among all yogis. Whichever assembly He was in, His presence was something very special, and everybody was very eager to listen to His words.

Gurudev is embodiment of Shaastra. He is Jnana Moorti, Brahmavid Brahma.



A young Ramana receiving a certificate from Gurudev



Shri Ramana as Gurudev's 'walking stick'. Older brother Swami Advayananda ji holding the umbrella for Gurudev.

Also His life is a life of teaching, a life of sharing the wisdom of the Shaastra. He delighted in our transformation when this knowledge went through us.

jnana-yajna-pracharam cha brahmachari-prashikshanam
shruti-smrti-puranadi-vyakhyagrantha-prakashanam (5)Kritagnatastotram

He conducted a series of discourses for disseminating jnana by teaching Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and the like. In the beginning he himself publicized the yagna, conducted it and then prepared booklets on it. He taught these word by word -- and since there has to be participation of the student too --he insisted that all devotees have books in their hand.

To keep the flow of knowledge, he started SandeepanySadhanalaya where acharyas, both men and women belonging to any caste or creed would get trained for a life of study, reflection and teaching.

What is more, he created a legacy in the form of books, audio and video recordings for us to hold on to gnana.

Gurudev was a lamp and he lighted so many lamps, and encouraged each one to light more and more lamps. At the end of camps, He would ask the delegates to carry a lamp lighted from near Him, and keep on the geographical map, on the State/City/ place from where they come. This was to remind us that we go back home to share the knowledge received. Thus there were many who started balavihar, study groups, devi groups etc to make this possible.

When a devotee asked Gurudev, when can I meet you next, he quipped 'Meet me in my books'. He wants us to hold on to the knowledge tradition.

As seekers we do start with worship of the idol/Guru Paduka; Gurudev nudges us to move forward with the Bhavana or attitude that whatever we do, we do it as service for the Lord; This must continue till I have darshan/ vision/experience of the whole world as Lord. This completes one's transformation process. May we accomplish this with His grace.

Om Jnana MoortayeNamah

OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Offered by Dr. M. Ramesh, CM Hyderabad



Dr. Ramesh

Gurudev is the Embodiment of knowledge - "JNANAMURTAYE NAMAHA"! Is incomparable - "NIRUPAMAYA NAMAHA"! Is a great scholar - "MEDHAVINE NAMAHA"! Is well-versed in Scriptures - "SROTRIYAYA NAMAHA"!

Gurudev started the concept "Jnana yagnas" - discourses on Geeta, Upanishads, Prakaranagranthas and Brahma sutras, from a public platform, not only in our country but throughout the World! He wrote commentaries on all these!



With Dr. Ramesh's daughter, Nivi…

Gurudev used every available medium to communicate the wealth of the Knowledge he held within himself, to the people:

*He held 'informal satsangs' - three to four a day for forty years!

*he wrote letters! His letters, mostly hand written, to thousands of devotees, touching their heart and influencing their head, have by far been the most powerful means of transforming and teaching.

* The number of talks he gave since he came down from the Hills in 1951, cannot even be evaluated. He gave hundreds of talks to intellectuals, students, and others, introducing the subtler concepts of Vedanta in an informal way, to make them understand!

*Gurudev started SANDEEPANYS, modern institutions that taught the ancient Vedanta which in turn created a vast pool of teachers (brahmacharis) who then went from place to place to teach more and more people.

*His books, "KINDLE LIFE", "MANUAL OF SELF UNFOLDMENT" are unique - most suitable introductory books for the modern university educated intellectual! Prakaranagranthas for present generation!?

*One more unique gift given to us is his "Chinmaya lessons" offered by post those days, which have evolved to online lessons, webinars, email based lessons…..! Today CIF calls them Foundation and Advanced Vedanta Courses.

*He revived a fantastic concept called "Gurudakshina", which is used for mission work! A unique "Gurudakshina envelop" went around during a Jnana Yagna; while it received gracefully whatever the devotee wished to offer, it also collected data about the devotee, his field of interest and so on.

*Started most important ground level activity, most suitable for every age group in modern times and for revival of Sanatana Dharma - Study Group, Devi Group, CHYK and Bal vihar!

* Then there are the numerous temples, schools, homes for empowering elders, Village development projects etc..... you can still add!

Gurudev is comparable to AdiSankara, who was born for revival of Sanatana Dharma!

Gurudev has given us all the material for Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga! What do we lack?

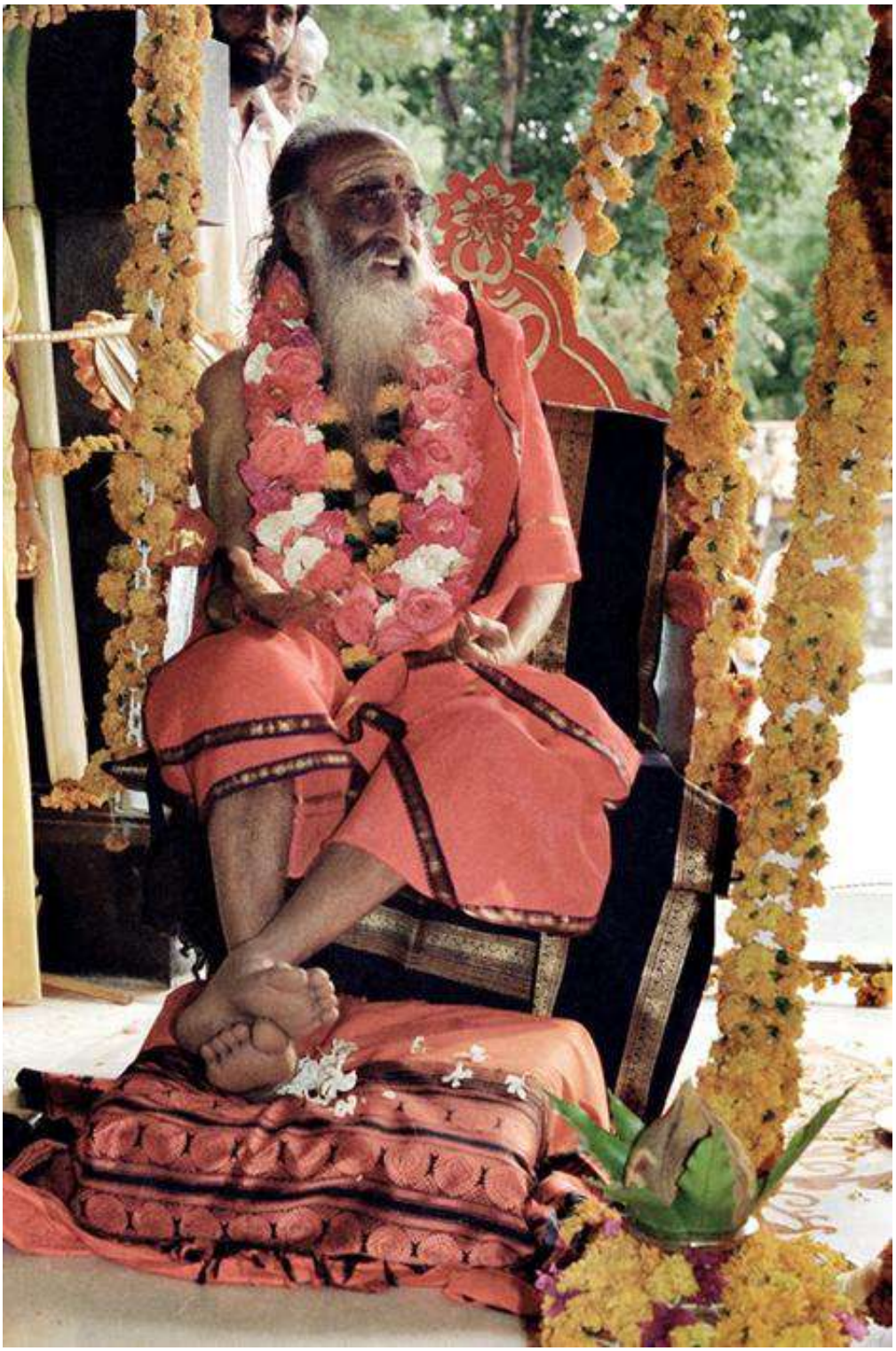
Om NirupamaayaNamah! Om MedhavineNamah! Om SrotriyaayaNamah! Om JnanamurtayeNamah!

Om Sri Chinmaya SadguraveNamaha!

OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Gnana knowledge. There are two types of knowledge: Para and Apara. Spiritual and Emperical. Emperical knowledge has to be translated into results through work. Spiritual knowledge, or Brahma Gnana, is a fulfilment by itself. Brahmavit (knower of Brahman) becomes Brahman. Gurudev being a Brahma Gnani is naturally Gnana Murthy. That is what His name too is:‘Chinmaya’.



That is what His name is too ... Chinmaya...©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

A Brahmagnani sees only Brahman everywhere since in His experience of Brahman, all duality ends. Therefore, there is nothing other than Brahman which is Pure Knowledge -- Chinmayam. This also is the Mahavakya: Pragnanam Brahma. Gurudev being Brahman Pragnanam-GnanaMurthi. All relative knowledge are knowledge of things whereas Brahma Gnana is Knowledge alone. Chinmatram. KevalaGnanam. Satyam GnanamAnantam Brahma. This is called also Svarat. SwayamJyotihi.

In the empirical knowledge there is knowledge and ignorance. Brahmagnana (Chit) illumines both knowledge and ignorance!

Swami Chinmayananda as I knowpage 55

Shri R.B.Singh,Rewa
I cannot know Him. But He Himself is not different from the Lord, He is revelation of the Vedas. He is our Sastra lived.
When I listen to His Bhagavad Gita, it is Lord Krishna talking directly to me. When He teaches Upanishads, it is the truth lived by the Upanishads, it is the truth lived by the Rishis being told to usfortunate ones, directly.

He did It page 167
When Swami Tapovanam read the MandukyaKarika discourses in His weekly Yagna Prasad Mail, He was very pleased. "Yes, this certainly was spoken by Chinmaya," He said. He meant that the person ‘Chinmaya’ had stepped aside and the wisdom of the true Chinmaya (pure knowledge) had come through Him.

Vedanta page 76

Gurudev then continued His lecture:
To students of Vedanta, the Guru is the embodiment of their Goal. The Guru is nothing but pure Consciousness, absolute Bliss, and eternal Wisdom.

OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

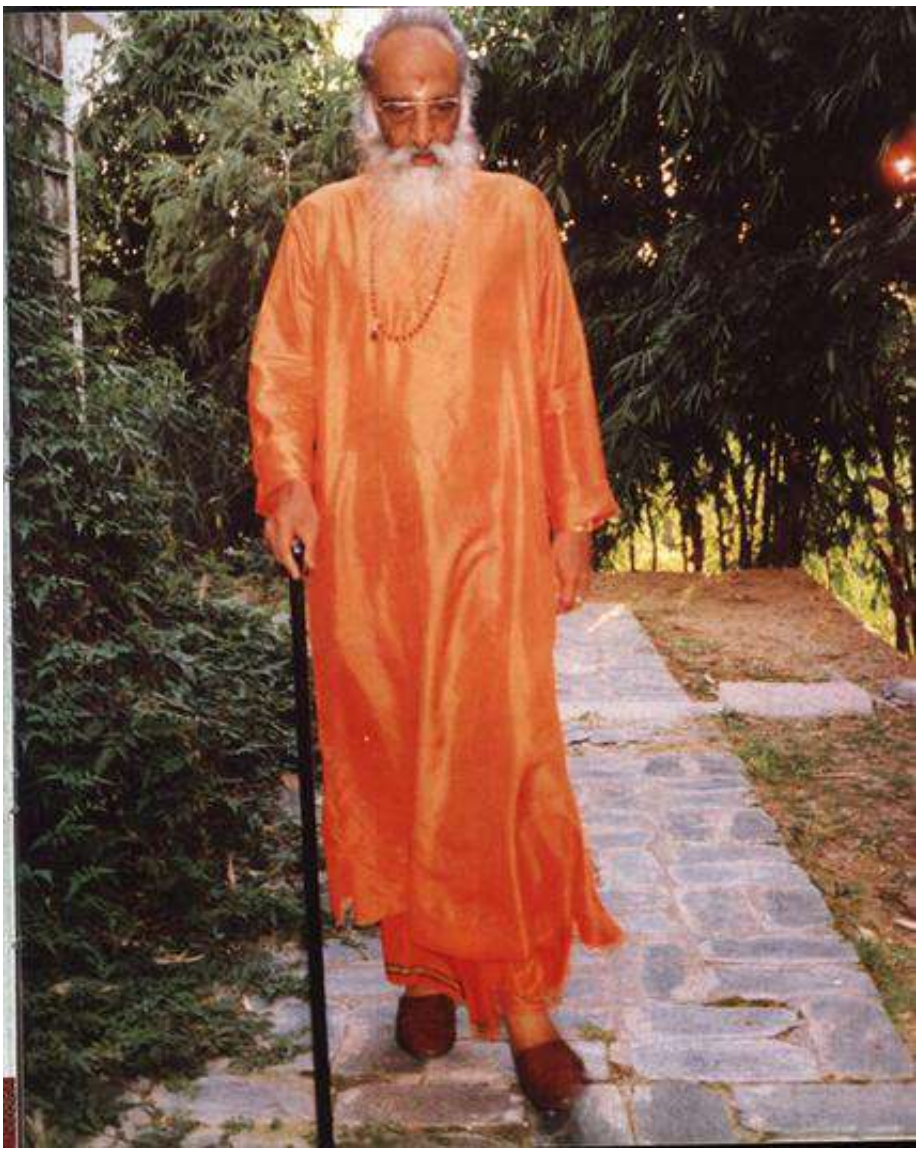
Om JnanamurtayeNamah

Jnanamurté means the embodiment of knowledge. The scriptures say that the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. One, who knows the Supreme Reality, becomes one with it.

In the case of ignorant people, knowing is different from being. Though we know a

lot we are unable to apply the knowledge, so we remain different from the knowledge. Our knowledge and our being do not coincide. We hoard books without knowing what is said in them. The knowledge is in the book, but unable to absorb it, we do not become one with that knowledge. We know about peace but we are restless. We know about forgiveness but we have anger in us. We know about dispassion but our attachments continue to flourish and grow.

Mahatmas live their knowledge – to them there is no difference between knowing and being.



Where Knowledge and being coincides.....©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

A devotee once asked Pujya Gurudev, “Please tell us about Swami TapovanMaharaj.” Gurudev said, “You have read the Upanishads. You will know what Swami TapovanMaharaj was.”

In a dialogue between Lord Rama and Lord Hanumana in the Muktika Upanishad,Lord Hanumana tells Lord Rama, “I want to know the essence of who you are.” Lord Rämaadvises him to read the Upanishads.

“mandukyamekamevaalammumukshunamvimuktaye.”

Even just one Upanishad, the Mandukya Upanishad, is enough to give this understanding to a seeker.

Knowledge is not information; knowledge is not an upadhi. Upadhis are conditioning which are different from us. But in the case of a Mahatma, the knowledge and his own nature have merged to become one. “BrahmavitBrahmaivabhavati.” The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.

People may have more than one external Guru. BhagavänDattatraya claimed to have 24 Gurus. Among them he named the five elements, a prostitute and an arrow maker. He revered them all as His Teachers. In life we have mantra gurus, tantra gurus,upasana gurus, vidya gurus, siksha gurus, and diksha gurus. But only the Sadguru has the power to transfer this knowledge and take us to the Supreme Goal.

Our eternal relationship with the Teacher, who is God in human form, is symbolic of the relationship between the Lord and His devotee. We come in contact with many saints and sages and with few of them we develop an affinity or a feeling of reverence. We are convinced that this person will be able to guide me. The one or two people who instil this faith in us, is the Teacher for me. Gurudev used to say that when we accept someone as Guru, it means that we are ready to follow discipline and follow instructions.

OM JNANA MURTAYE NAMAH

Kindly check story 329 and read the offering by Swamini Gurupriyananda ji

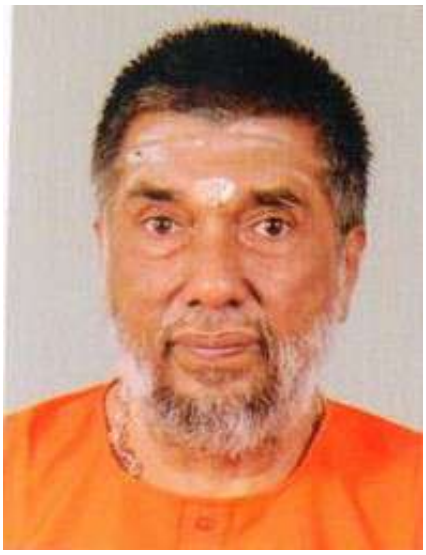
Please see story 300 Naam 41: OM TEERTHASWAROOPAYA NAMAH for the pictorial offering from young Bhavya, North Carolina

365. OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

06-05-2016

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami Gabheerananda, CM Trissur. Swamiji is a direct disciple of Gurudev and is a batchmate of Pujya Guruji



salutations to the one who attained the goal (reality) through the path of knowledge

Swami Sahajananda ji received a letter from our ParamaPoojaneeya Gurudev ji on 4th August 1993 (according to Indian calendar). This was in reply to a letter that Swami Sahajananda ji had written to Gurudev, where he wrote about his illness. Sri Sahajaji had been suffering with lung cancer for a few months. He found it unbearable – suffering with excruciating pain.

Therefore, he (Swami Sahajananda ji) wrote in great agony, seeking Gurudev's blessings.

Our Gurudev's reply:

You are not the body – You are nobody.

You are ever THAT and THAT only.

Be eternally THAT

And hence, now drop the body and I know you will drop it quickly.

You are only SatchitaanandaParamatma.

Therefore, drop … drop … drop!

Ever BE the Brahman!!!

--Om Jnana YogineNamah is the 106th name written by Poojaneeya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda ji in his composition of Chinmaya AshtottaraNamavali.

This letter of Gurudev's to Swami Sahajanandaji, amply exemplifies that our ParamaPoojaneeya Gurudev was an exalted jnana yogi who keeps on blessing one and all his devotees with Brahmajnana.

Swami Sahajananda ji read what our Gurudev penned and attained Samadhi on 5th of August 1993.

Our Gurudev attained mahasamadhi on 3rd August 1993.

Letter reached Swami Sahajananda ji on 4th August 1993.

Swami Sahajananda ji attained Samadhi on 5th August 1993.

A very old picture of the Swamis here:



Swami Gabheerananda in brahmachari's yellow; Swami Sahajananda in saffron

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

GnanayogineNamah- One who has attained union with Brahman through Gnana.

Chapter XIII of the Bhagavad Gita enumerates different methods for Self knowledge.

13:25

Some,by meditation, behold the Self in the Self by the Self; others by the yoga of knowledge(by SANKHYA YOGA); and others by KARMA YOGA.

Here when it says different methods for Self-knowledge, knowledge itself is an end.

One who has become One with Gnana (Brahma Gnana)
Gnanenatukaivalyam is a famous statement which means liberation can only be through knowledge.

Atmabodh gives the reason thus: action being a product of ignorance is not opposed to it hence ignorance which is the only cause for bondage can be ended through knowledge alone.

Gurudev not only took to the path of Gnana and became a Brahma Gnani He also dedicated His entire life to the propagation of this Gnana and created a network for all times to come to spread this knowledge.
Even in this sense Gurudev can be called a gnana yogi and we bow down to this gnana yogi.

GnanayogineNamah.

Chapter IV of the Bhagavad Gita clearly says the Supreme Peace is gained through knowledge. GnanamlabdhwaParamsantimachirena adhigachati.

Vedanta page 49

Vedanta treatment,as a sadhana, amounts to a therapy,a practice, a training for life itself. This intentional way of living is a path in Vedanta--a path which we must walk and not talk about endlessly. This is no doubt a vigorous system designed to release the individual from the repressions imposed by blind impulse, ignorance of Self and craving. An entire course from the starting line to the winning post is mapped out in our Upanishads. For the one who has the heroism to follow the path faithfully, it can remake him totally-- leave him transformed, recast, a different being cured of all life's crippling disabilities.

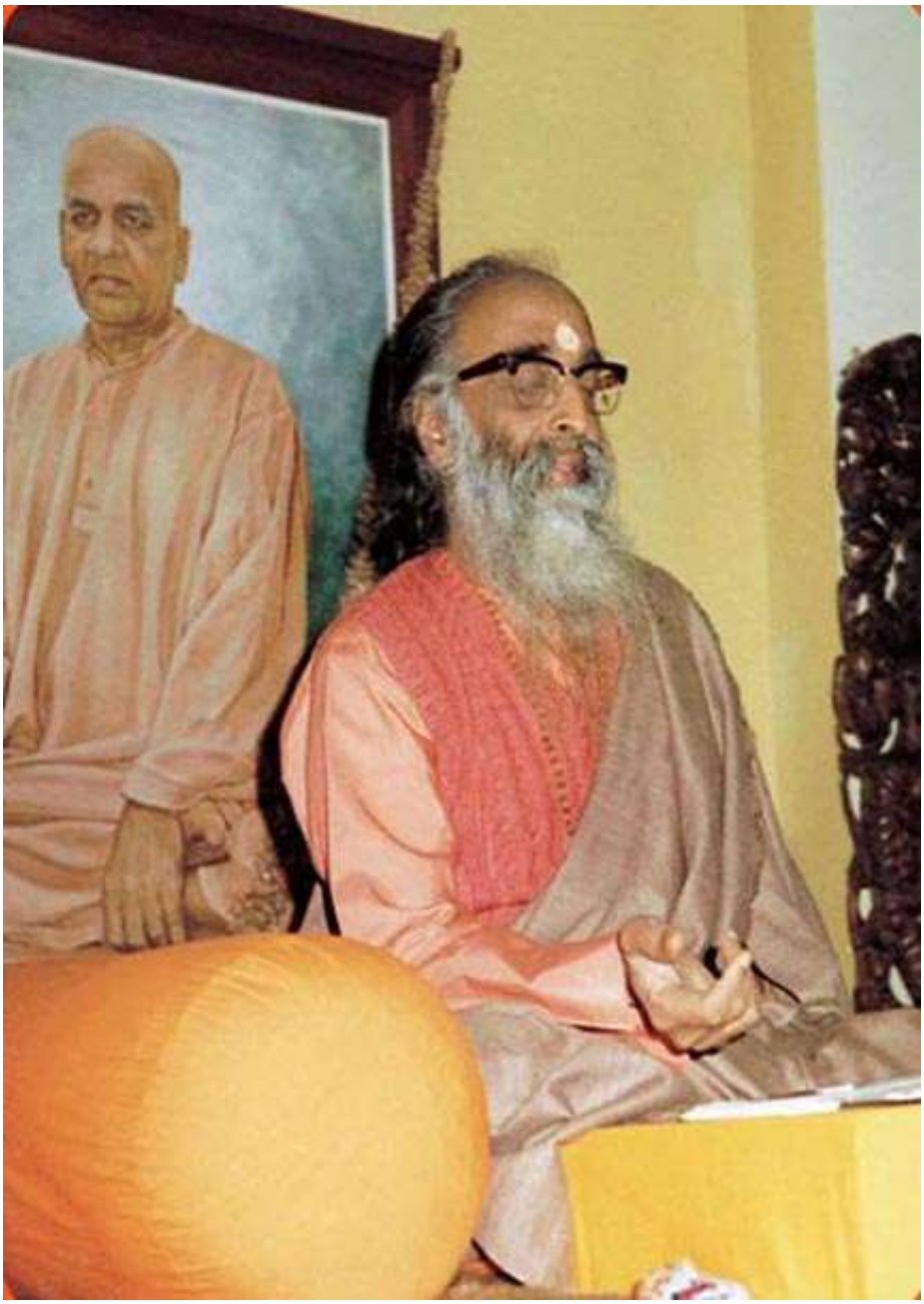
Gurudev's name itself says: one who has become the very knowledge -- Chinmaya. Gnana yogi.

He Did It page 121

The perfect name -- Guruji

Swamiji was devoted to the study of "pure knowledge ". He was a true Jnana Nistha -- one who abides in truth--and this is the central aspect of His life and work. Everything He did was for the propagation of Knowledge,in which He Himself was firmly established. Abiding in the Self Knowledge, He brought about the legacy we see and experience today.

Until the very end,even when His health deteriorated, He remained steadfast in His love for and abidnce in, "pure Knowledge."



Jnana Yogi – the perfect name

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head CM Delhi & NCR

Gurudev was a Jnanayogi . The scriptures enumerate many yogas - karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnanayoga, ashtangayoga, asparshayoga, mahayoga, and others. Every chapter of Gita is ayoga – Arjuna vishaada-yoga, jnana yoga, karma yoga,sannyasayoga, to name a few. According to the Gita all these yogas ultimately fall under two main categories.

loke'smindvividhanishöhapuraproktamayanagha|

jnanayogensaìmkhyanamkarmayogenayoginam|| B.G. 3.3

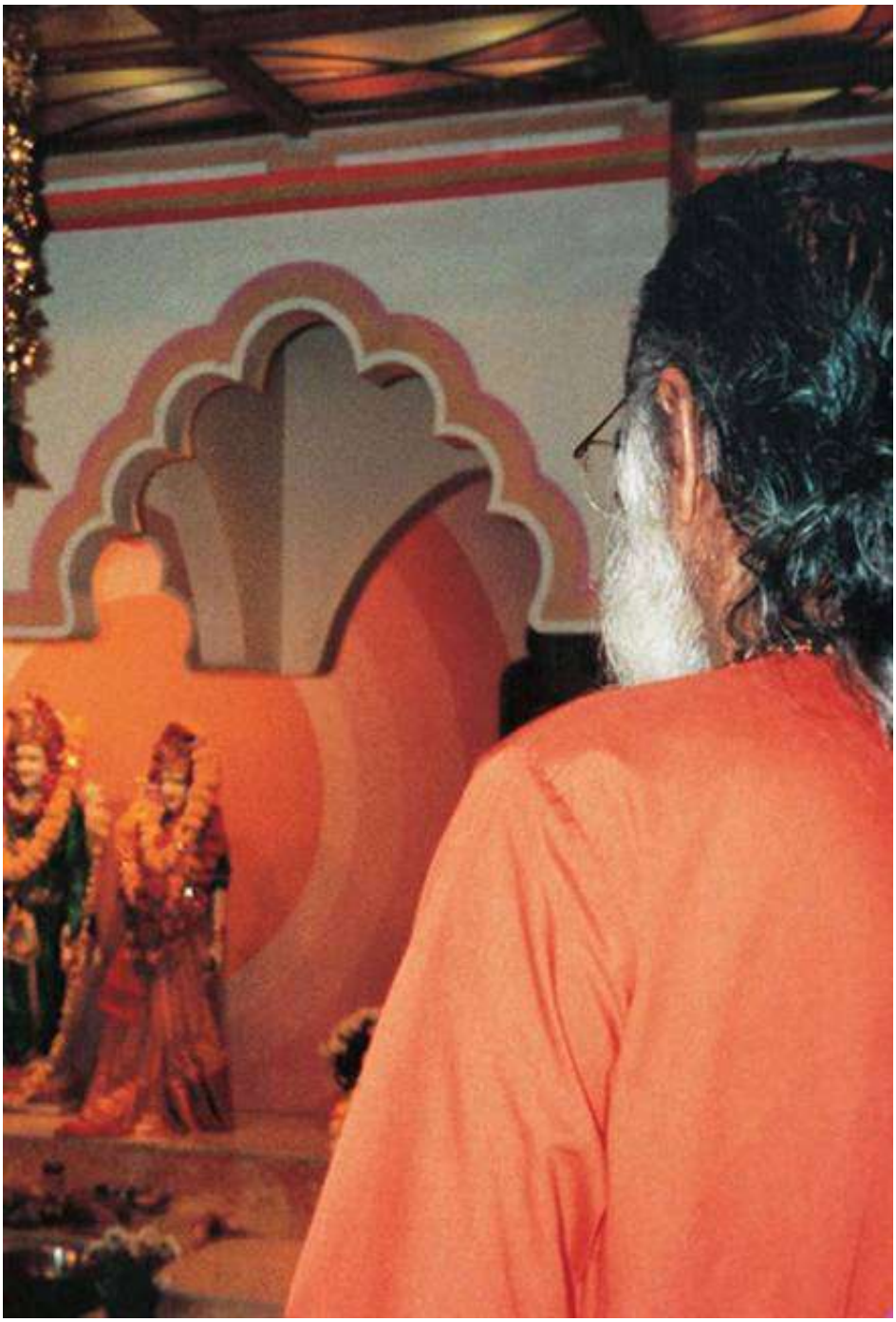
They are karma yoga and jnanayoga, the path of action and the path of knowledge respectively. In other words, they can be termed the path of 'doing' and the path of 'knowing'. The'doing'in this case is a step that leads to 'knowing'. Our initial sadhanas or spiritual practices may involve certain practices,which eventually lead to knowledge.

"sarvamkarmakhilaàparthajnaneparisamapyate".

Lord Krishna says that all actions ultimately merge in knowledge. Knowledge or understanding is the ultimate aim and goal of life. Karma yoga, bhaktiyoga, or the performance of upasana, ultimately leads to the understanding or realization of the Self.

Gurudev like other masters on the path of jnana yoga, followed this path of knowledge sincerely and with great purity. Though a great karma yogi and a bhakta,he stressed the importance of understanding.During his lectures he would say, "Don't look at my beard. The longer the beard, the greater the suspicion. Think!" He had his own inimitable style of driving home a point. During the discourse he would suddenly stop and say "Think!" When he stopped, people would start wondering why he has stopped. He would then say, "No, I have not forgotten. I am giving you time to think. Think! Don't accept anything because I am saying it. Don't blindly accept the scriptures. Think!"

What we understand and accept is more useful for us than what we just accept. We should think carefully before accepting and not just because the teacher has said something.Only what we have understood and accepted will transform us. Knowledge is that which should transform us. The whole personality undergoes transformation when knowledge is backed by conviction. A person becomes totally different. Sometimes, certain experiences give us that intense understanding or knowledge about life or death. We often find that people faced with tragedy, an accident or some problem develop a deeper understanding of life and suddenly change. The many experiences, which we undergo in life, give us that transforming knowledge.Some do not learn from their experiences and so remain unchanged.



Advocated the path of jnana

©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

In the state of deep sleep, we experience advaita, or happiness devoid of any objects. We experience the absence of the ego, which is also experienced in the state of Samadhi.In this experience of advaita there is no dvaita, or duality.

However, this experience does not give us knowledge. When we wake up, we are again back to square one. By the blessings of a Mahatma, sometimes one may gain a deep experience of meditation. Such an experience would only be helpful if it leads to understanding. Jnanayoga is a path of understanding, of knowledge, of knowing, and discovering oneself. In fact, everyone knowingly or unknowingly is following this path. Right from childhood, till the end of life, every day we discover a little bit of ourself and the more we discover the more comfortable we become with ourself. We are very happy with ourself. A child learns to walk and when he discovers this new skill, he feels elated. One day the child discovers that it can talk.It feels so happy that it keeps on talking. The child discovers the ability to read and keeps on reading. As we follow this path of spirituality, we go deeper into our own self and discover our real Self. This discovery, this realization, this knowledge is the path. It was this path of jnana that Gurudev advocated.

OM JNANA YOGINE NAMAH

366. OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

07-05-2016

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Smt. Raja Rajeswari, Chinmaya Mission, Chennai. She is currently working for Gurudev's children at Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Virugambakkam, Chennai.

Salutations to the one who is totally satisfied with Self Knowledge.

Gurudev does not require anything other than jnana of Self to fulfill Himself. All actions that came out of Him were an expression of this jnana within.

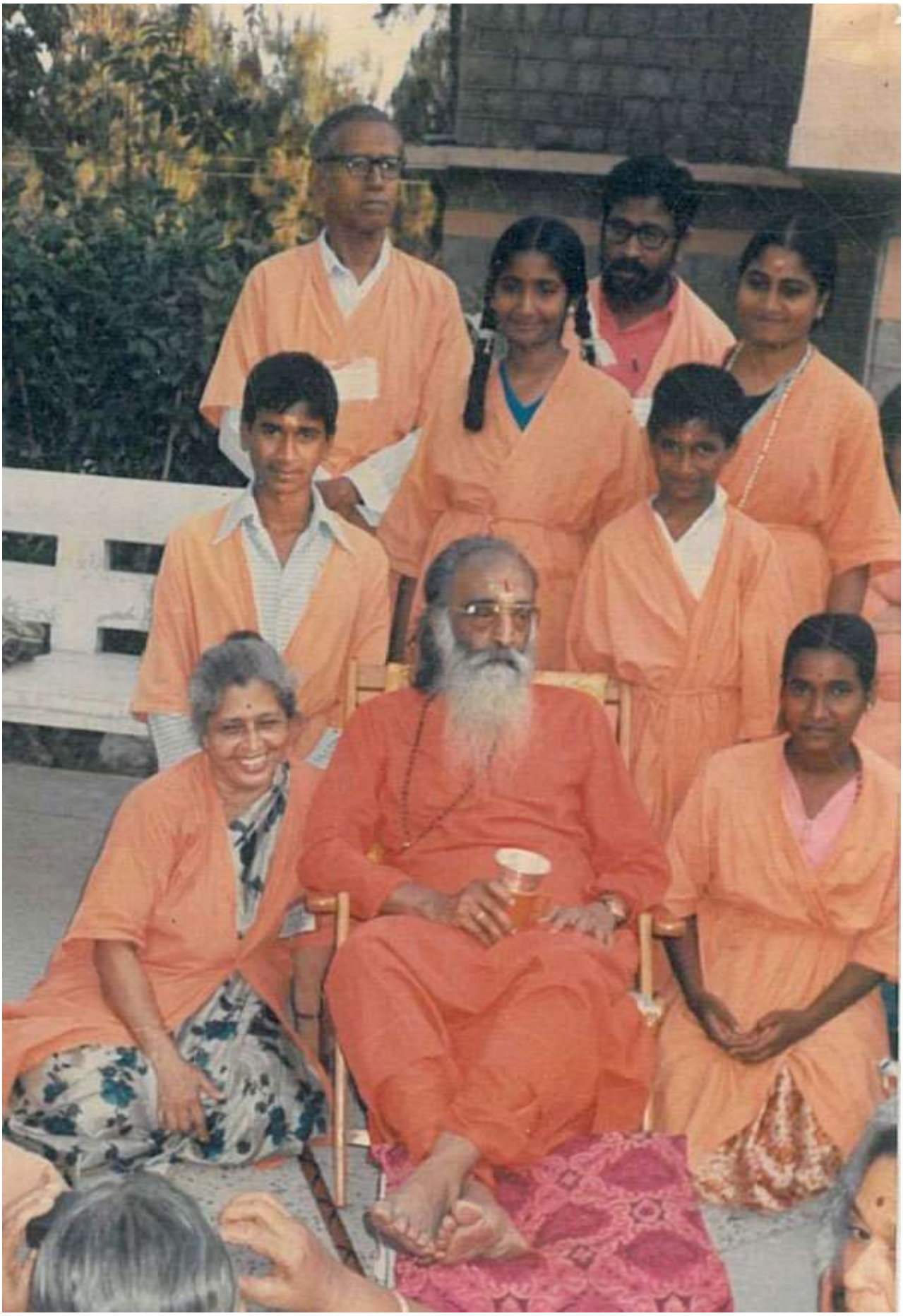
apuryamanamacala-pratisthamsamudramapahpravisantiyadvattadvatkama yam pravisantisarvesasantimapnotinakama-kami.(BG 2:70)



Receiving prize from Gurudev



Rudrakshamala from His own hands



A young Raja Rajeswari standing behind Gurudev

Just as in the ocean, waters pour in but the Ocean's magnitude remains the same, so too, objects and desires may pour in, but a Master remains undisturbed. Such a master alone is at peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires.

When waters from many rivers flow in, the ocean does not get over-flooded; It does not say enough; It's magnitude ever remains the same. Even if rivers decide not to pour water into the ocean (being depleted due to summer heat), the ocean does not lose anything. It is full in itself and is established in its stillness. With its vastness, it remains unaffected.

Also, something different from me alone can be a burden for me.

Gurudev knew the Self as the whole world. Whether they were around or not around, being established in the vastness and depth of knowledge, it made no difference to Him.

Objects and desires are also nothing other than Self. Something not different from me cannot be a burden for me.

Gurudev's life was dedicated to the dissemination of jnana. Even during the yagnas, Gurudev used to conduct competition for the participants on a topic related to the yagna. During one of the yagna's in Chennai, the topic for essay was Logic of Spirituality; I remember many listening attentively and taking down notes sincerely. It was such joy to receive a prize from Pujya Gurudev's hands. He encouraged children to memorise the Bhagavat Gita through International Geeta Chanting competitions.

I remember Gurudev with so much joy when we chanted the kaivalya Upanishad and Suktams at Sidhabari. He gave away gifts with lots of joy, encouraging us to learn more and more. Nothing other than gnana is required to make him happy.

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Bhavya Pitta, daughter of Mission members Smt. Aparna and Shri

Chandrashekar Pitta.

Chandrashekar has been a active CHYK member in Hyderabad since 1989. Today he is Member of CM Raleigh, North Carolina. Bhavya is a Balvihar student in Cary, North Carolina.



Bhavya in red with her parents Shri Chandrashekar and Aparna Pitta, and sister.

Title of the art - Pasyanthi Jnana Chakshushaha

This work depicts the metaphorical Samsara Vriksha with roots up above and branches down below - "Urdhwamulamadhasshakam"!

The light of Higher Self- Purushottama (above the roots) reflects completely on Pujya Gurudev's image capturing the essence of the 10th verse "vimudhananupasyantipasyanthi jnana chakshushaha". One with the eye of wisdom beholds the Higher Self but not the deluded jivas, depicted in dark down below (on the right). Though they are in the dark, their palms are folded indicating, if they follow the values as indicated in verse 5 - (nirmanamohaJitasangadosha .....) they

can aspire to "reach" the same state as the realized ones. (Gacchantyaamudhapadamavyayam tat)."



Bhavya's note

Krishna says -Whoever offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water -that I accept when offered with devotion.
I take pride in offering this art work (Conceptualized by my father and executed by me) on the occasion of the 100th birthday of Pujya Gurudev who is the finest representative of all that our great culture has to offer. I thank all our Acharyas and Balavihar teachers who are doing their best to carry the torch lit by this great saint.

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH!

CIF says: Please see nama 300 and 301 for two other painting-offerings from Bhavya.

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Dr. Suhasini Kambham, CM Hyderabad

In Guntur, in 1980 or 1981, during a satsang, a lady asked Gurudev, "Why are you people(sanyasins) against marriage? Is it wrong to marry?! "

He answered " In marriage---'TWO' are necessary for getting joy; for us there is no need for the OTHER, only ONE is enough for all joy!!

When 'ANOTHER' is needed for getting happiness, THEN, all 'trouble' starts!!"

And all joined Gurudev 's 'hearty laughter!!



With daughters Nivi (older) and Vilasini



Little Vilasini garlanding Gurudev aided by Dr. Suhasini

At that time I was amused at the answer, but now I understand – Gurudev was humorously indicating His inner state of fullness(POORNA), because of which, He did NOT need anything else for his happiness!

He was also indicating the CAUSE for all trouble---seeking happiness from outside--from ANOTHER!!

The Great ones, who abide in THE ONE, the only TRUTH as our Gurudev did, do not need to seek fulfilment from anything OUTSIDE.....

OM JNANATRIPTAAYA NAMAHA!!

They are full with that INNER JOY and LOVE which they spread wherever they go, to everyone around!!

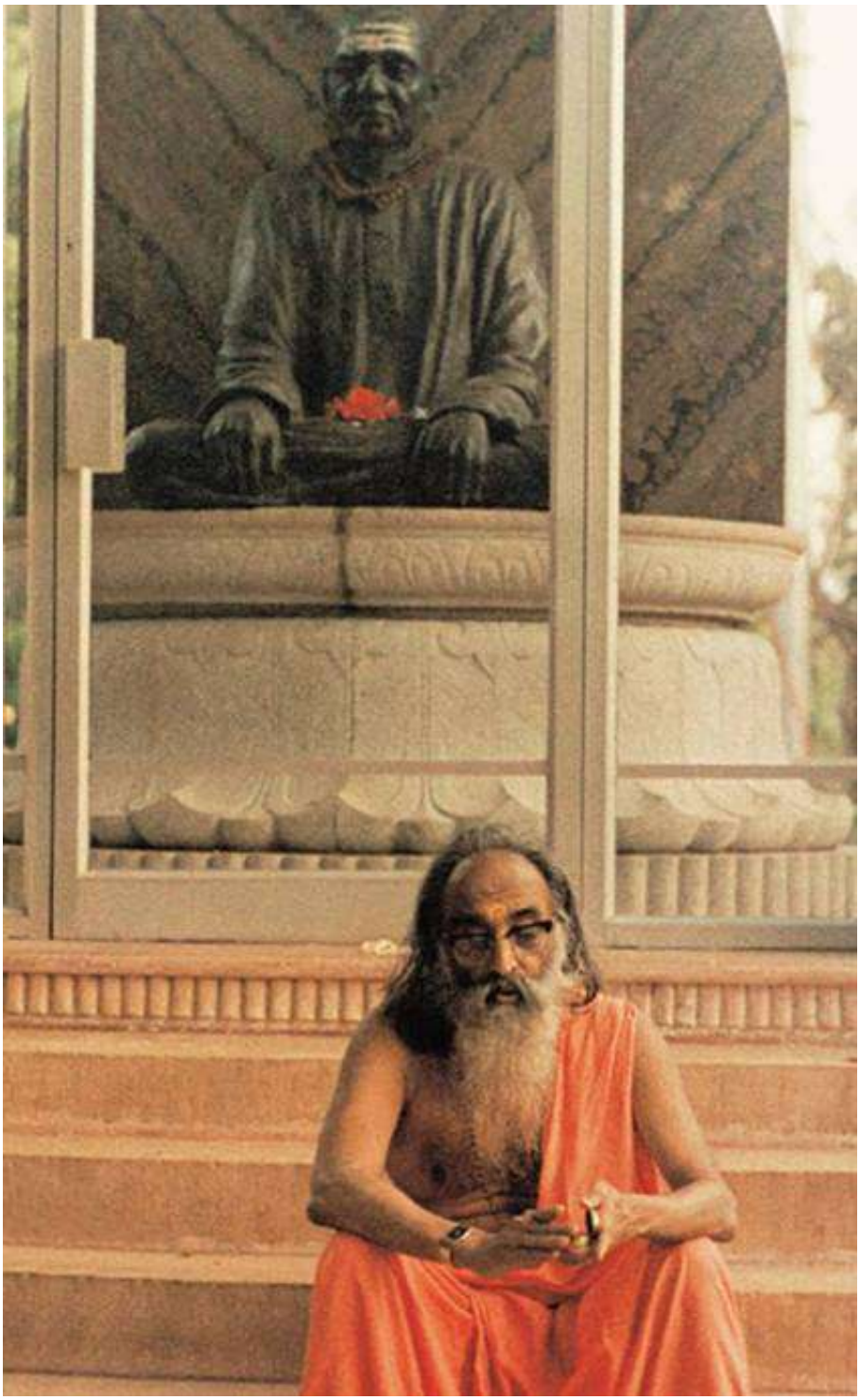
OM JNANATRIPTAAYA NAMAH

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

Tripti is satisfaction. Normally we seek this through sense enjoyments. Identifying with the BMI, we feel inadequate and to fill this we seek objects. When we get them there is a temporary satisfaction. The very fulfilment makes us seek more and more, ever keeping us in restlessness. What we want is completeness; where we seek it is in the finite world. Logically it is not possible.

Upanishad says "Na he adhruvaihidhruvamprapyate." One cannot gain anything firm through things that are not firm.



Firm and established and happy in Knowledge ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

A Gnani knowing this, always relies on the happiness which is his own nature. Gnana results in His satisfaction and Gnana itself is His satisfaction. GnanaTruptayaNamah.
Even while he goes through worldly experiences he is conscious that they are finite, and revels in his own Self.

Bhajagovindam says a Gnani wherever he is in the midst of enjoyments or in contemplation in the company or in solitude his mind revelling in Brahman ever rejoices.
Gurudev was once taking a cup of coffee and after sipping He said,'Who says there is no joy in coffee?' After a pause, He said in His own style, 'Only thing is they are finite.'
His Tripti, Satisfaction, is Infinite in the knowledge (Gnana) of His Infinite Being. Hence GnanaTriptaayaNamah.

This also means His fulfilment, His satisfaction, was in the Knowledge only. The knowledge that removes all limitations.

Vedanta page 127
A silent mind is the highest mood of prayer. When you "talk," God in you remains silent; when you are silent, He speaks. Be silent and listen. This peaceful,joyful,breathless,state of sheer excitement to realise what lies behind the mind, is the supreme State of total prayer. Bliss out the limited ego sense in you. Try to experience this state during this camp.
Love, Chinmaya

Swami Mahadevavanam of Swami Sivananda 's lineage provided this forward to a souvenir published on the occasion of the 6th National Yagna(Camp) Silver Jubilee of Chinmaya Mission Madras in 1978:

His vision extends to the very horizon,His voice reaches every nook and corner of the world,and to His Vedantika ambitions, sky is the limit. May the Maharaj,great among saints, and the Mission continue to guide the world into a Heaven of Freedom!

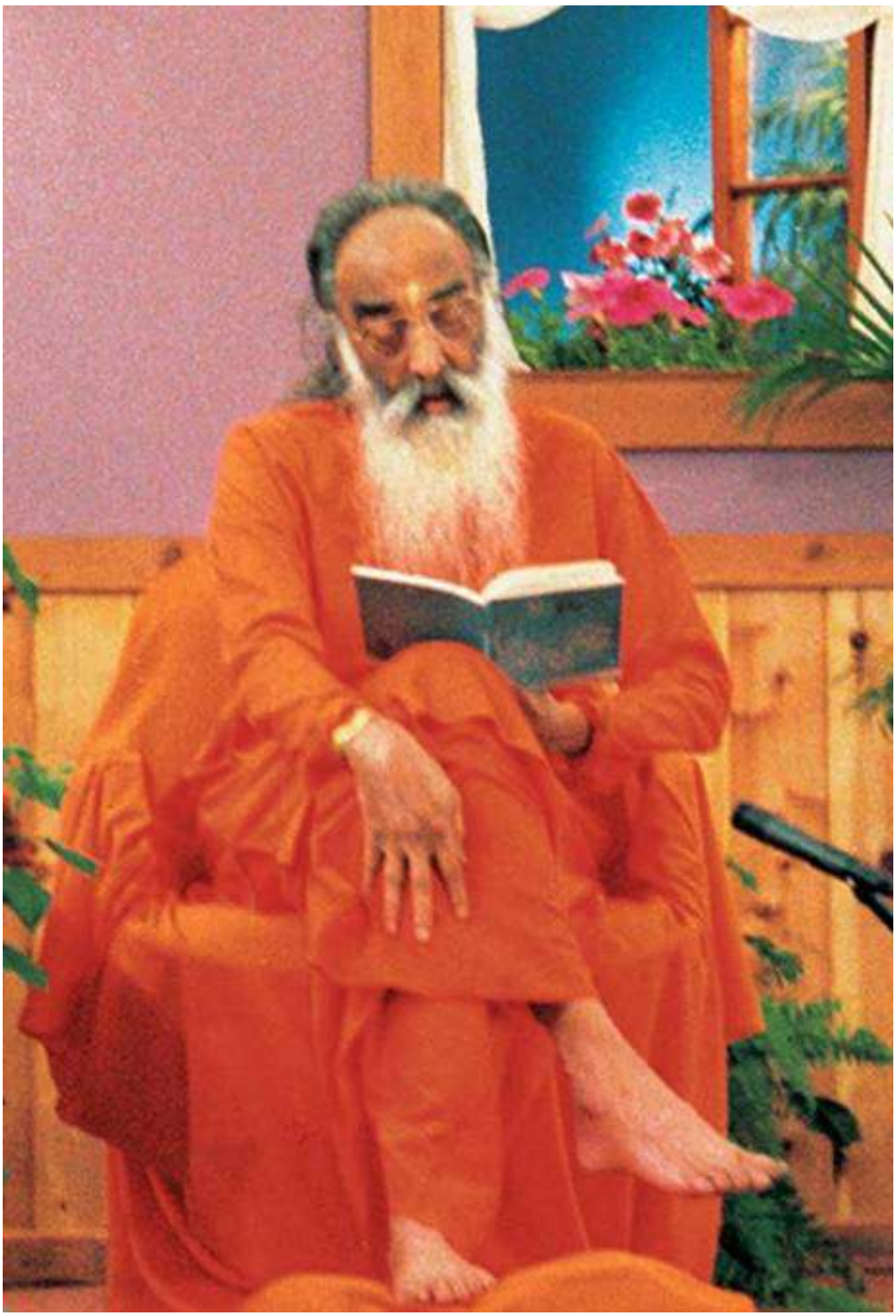
Page 227
Pujya Gurudev would make the mind available and the teachings digestible. I didn't know it then in these words, but Pujya Gurudev's mere presence was the stillness, the bliss; it was not any external or internal factor.
"The moment I saw Pujya Gurudev for the first time (before joining the course), I was 100 percent convinced that He was a Brahma Jnani Mahatma. And I always wanted to study under such a Guru "

OM JNANATRIPTAAYA NAMAH

OM JNANA TRIPTAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami NikhilanandaSaraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Jnanatripta is one who is totally satisfied in knowledge. When we eat food, we are satisfied with the food. Similarly, we may be satisfied with the wealth we have or do not have.After a few days of traveling we feel we have had enough of knowledge or information about the world.We reach a point of satisfaction but not completely. None of these pleasures give us that inner satisfaction or deep contentment.



Complete, total contentment .....©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Someone asked Sri AdiShankaracharya to define knowledge. He said, “That, which pacifies our senses, makes the senses totally content, totally satisfied, totally peaceful is called knowledge”(tajjnanam prashamakaramyadindriyanam .) Worldly knowledge makes us restless. The senses fed on this external knowledge are also as a result, essentially restless. News about a sale in the market makes us restless. Knowledge about certain things of the world agitates us. Knowledge, which gives agitation, restlessness, which makes us impure or brings a sense of incompleteness, is not the greatest knowledge. True knowledge is that, having gained which a person attains the state of tripti – complete contentment and satisfaction.

In the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavän says,

“atmanyevatmanatushtah”. By gaining Self knowledge, the person gains satisfaction in the Self. One who is completely content in Self knowledge, who feels that there is nothing more to gain or to learn is Jnanatripta.

“yajjnatvanehabhuyo'nyajjnatavyamshishyate.” The scriptures say that having known this, nothing more remains to be known. Having gained this, nothing more remains to be gained or achieved.

In the Mundakopanishad, the disciple asks, “Please teach me that knowledge, having gained which, one comes to know everything”.

“kasmin nu bhagavovijnatesarvamidamvijnatambhavatéti.”The teacher points out two types of knowledge –worldly knowledge and knowledge of the Self. The Realization of the Self alone gives that understanding by which one comes to know everything. This knowledge alone brings complete contentment.Without this no amount of learning and information will bring us that contentment, or satisfaction. Even the addition of a string of degrees after our name and wealth information will fail to give us that peace.On the path of spirituality seekers learn various texts but despite all that, there is no satisfaction or contentment.

A very puzzled MaharshiNarada told his teacher “Even though I have learnt a lot, there is still no contentment in my heart.” The teacher wanted to know what he had learnt. Immediately MaharshiNaradalisted all the various disciplines of knowledge he had studied - the Upanishads, the Vedas, the different sciences of Astrology, Astronomy, Science and Mathematics. There was no branch of study that he did not enumerate.

Completely unimpressed his teacher said, “You have only picked up words. You have not realized your Self. You have not seen the knower of all this knowledge. You

have not met your Self. You have been roaming about in this world of words and have not gained the knowledge of your Self. You need to understand your Self and only then will you be free of all grief."'taratishokamatmavit' -You will cross over all sorrow by realizing your Self.' Self knowledge gives us total satisfaction, total peace, total contentment. Only when we are able to say,'Yes, I know my Self,' can one be totally full and at peace.

In Dasabodha Samarth Ramadas Swami says, "After a long time I have met my Self and am fully satisfied and content. I have been roaming about in this world for many lifetimes, going from one loka to another gaining different experiences and roaming around. Finally, I have met my Self and I feel absolutely satisfied."This is like the peace of the travellers when they come home, after traveling from place to place, staying in a variety of hotels, eating at different restaurants and sight-seeing.After roaming the world, finally when they return home, there is peace. Pointlessly we spend time roaming the globe, in search of happiness. It is only when we come to know our Self, that we find complete and eternal peace. A tmajnanaalone gives Atmatripti and one who is tripta, content with this knowledge is called Jnanatripta.

OM JNANATRIPTAAYA NAMAH

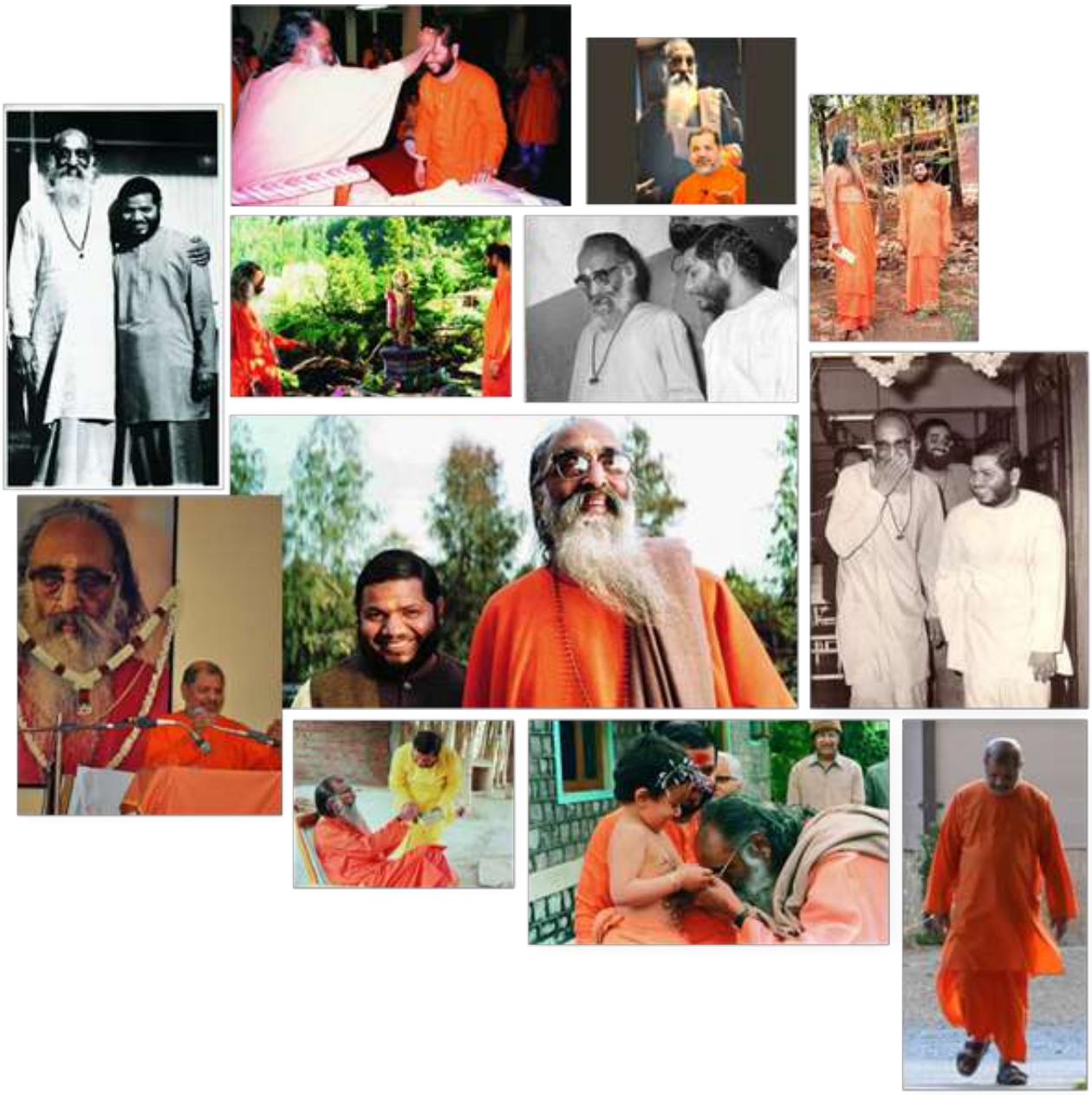
367. OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

08-05-2016

OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

A conclusion from Pujya Guruji - Swami Tejomayananda

It was in the fitness of things that the last naam and day be blessed by Pujya Guruji and he kindly allowed us to offer his explanation to the last naam, that he gave at a talk to acharyas.



Walking on His path .....

All Images, courtesy, ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Samasta Jana Kalyaane Niratam Karunaamayam

Namaami Chinmayam Devam Sadgurum Brahmavidvaram

I Prostrate to Swami Chinmayanandaji, the best of the Knowers of Brahman, full of compassion and who is ever engaged in the welfare of the world.

(The last naam follows descriptions about His jnana – as jnana moorti, jnana tripta and jnana yoginah.) The last stanza of the Nama Amrit says:

Jnana tripto nityashuddha buddha mukta swaroopaha

Evam naama arpito bhuyaa prasanno varadoguruhu

Jnana triptah means totally satisfied by Knowledge. The definition of jnana triptah is:

Jnanamritena triptasya
Kritakrityasya yoginah
Nachaiva asti kincit kartavyam asti cet
Na ca tattva vid!

One who is now contented with Knowledge, then what happens is kritakritya: total fulfilment comes in his life.

So jnana triptata is total fulfilment. He has no more duties to perform. And if he still has duties to perform then he is still not fulfilled, then….asti cet Na sa tattva vid! He is not the knower of truth. So jnana tripta is kritakrityah.

Nitya shuddha buddha mukta swaroopaha.

The word 'Nitya' should go with each of the words –

Nityashuddha – He is ever pure.

Nitya Buddha – ever enlightened!

Nitya muktaswaroopa – ever liberated!

You can also say Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha… but [the meaning to be taken is] Nitya Shuddha, Nitya Buddha, Nitya Mukta ever free, ever liberated, ever pure, ever enlightened ..Swaroopasaha.

We began (see below) this archana saying Naama pushpai poojayaama. We are worshipping the Guru with the flowers of His names. So our last line in this prayer is:

Evam naamaarchito bhuya prasanno varado Guruh! May our Guru become pleased with our archana and varam-daat, bless us. What had we wanted earlier? Abhishta phala siddhyartham bhakti praaptum visheshataha. So we worship Him for the fulfilment of our desires and particularly for pure devotion alone. So may He bless us with the fulfilment of all this.

Om Sree Sadguru Chinmayaarpanamastu!

Now this puja is offered at the Lotus feet of Gurudev. With this we complete the Chinmaya naamaarpanam.

We do the paduka Pooja and if we know the significance and import more and more, then we can perform the Pooja with greater feeling.

ॐपूर्णमदःपूर्णमदिम्पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्यपूर्णमादायपूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐशान्तःशान्तःशान्तः ॥

*** *** ***

About the Ashtottara Namavali in Pujya Guruji's words:

The text below is extracted from Guruji's talk on the Naam Amrit Stotram - stotram that Guruji composed stringing together the 108 naams of the Ashtottara:

"It was in 1981 when our Gurudev had a yagna in Lucknow. The yagna was going on in a pandal and I was outside with Swami Shantananda. We were thinking that we should conduct padukapooja of Gurudev but we did not have any namavali. So we thought why not write alphabetically?

That was how the 108 names for Pooja were composed. It was by Pujya Gurudev's grace alone that these naams have become popular and so many people use this as their upasana everyday."

A few years ago, Pujya Guruji also composed a Naam-amritstotram stringing all the naams into a beautiful garland. But what he says in the opening two verses (referred to above are crucial for our sadhana:

Yasya smaraNamaatrena bhakta shishyascha sevakaah
Prernaam praapnuvanteeh chinmayam tam vayamnumah ||1||

We bow down to our Chinmaya Gurudev. He, by whose mere remembrance bhaktas, disciples, servants, workers, wherever they are, derive great inspiration to live their life beautifully.

Once in Uttarkasi someone asked Gurudev what is the difference between bhakta and disciple. Bhakta has devotion but when he is accepted by the Guru he becomes a disciple. But that bhakta should also become a seeker of Knowledge. One who has love and devotion is a bhakta, but shishya is one who is a seeker of Knowledge. Whether a person starts as a sevak, shishya or bhakta, each one found great

inspiration by His mere name. The very name Chinmaya inspires.

But chanting of this stotram itself is puja. If you have flowers that is ok. But otherwise just chant this stotra. That itself is a great araadhana.

Naama pushpaih poojayaamah sarva bhaavena sadgurum

Abheeshta phala sidhyartham bhaktim praaptum visheshatah ||2||

We worship our satguru with the flowers of the names. Naam eva pushpam. The names themselves are the flowers. But we worship wholeheartedly – sarvabhaavena - in thought word and deed.

Why are we worshipping? For attaining the desired result – whatever is dear to you, whatever you wanted; bhukti mukti pradaataacha tasmai sreegurave namah. The Guru is one who can bless you with material prosperity, spiritual realisation, but it depends on what you want.

But here we are worshipping sadguru for pure love, nothing else.

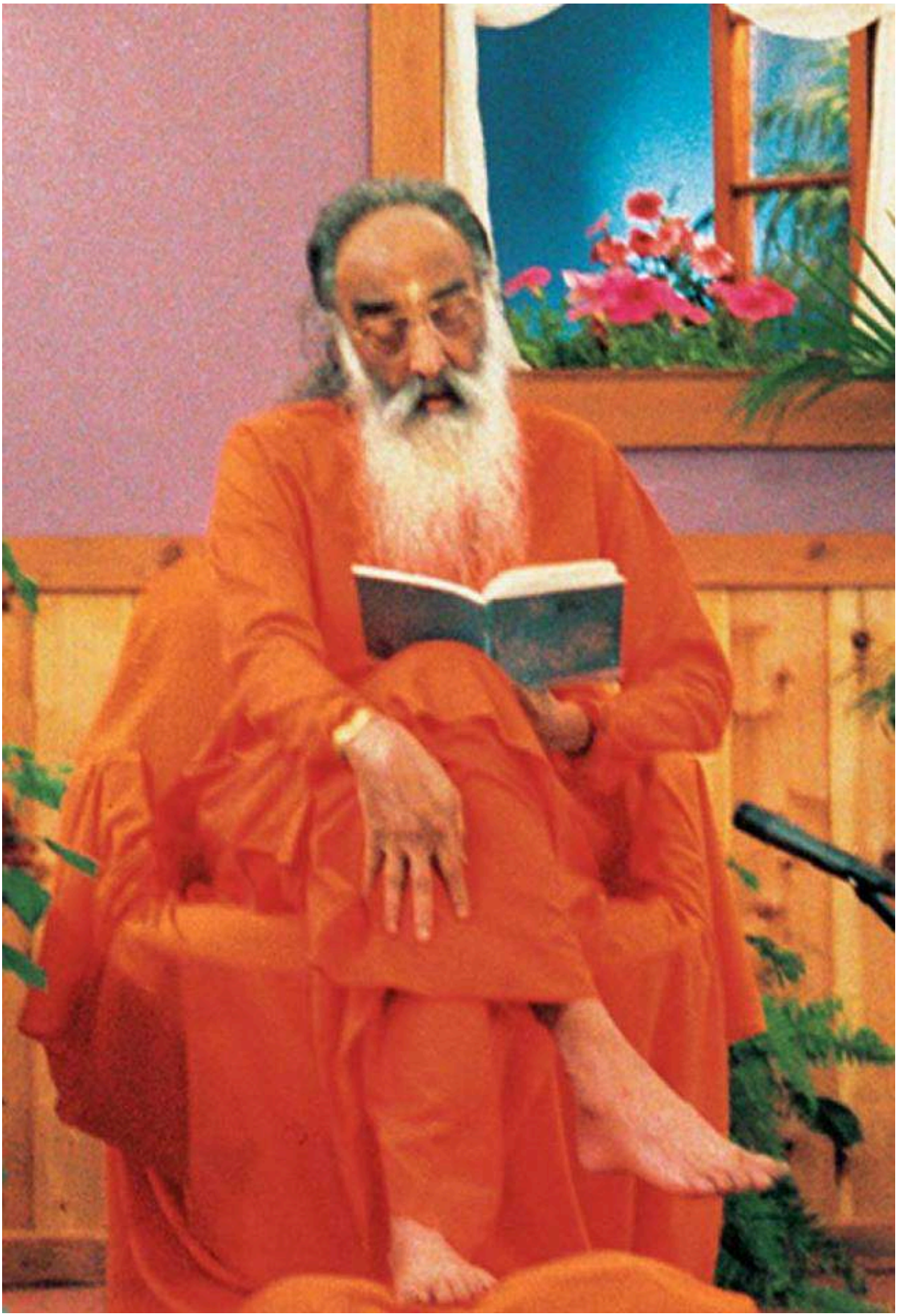
OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Shri L. Hemachandrudu, CM Chennai

This can mean Gurudev is Ever (Nitya) Pure (Suddha) Enlightened (Buddha) Liberated (Mukta). Or it can also mean He is Ever Pure Enlightened and Liberated. We are, as Gurudev puts it, "Spirit muffled in matter" or "That dressed in matter." As such we have lost our identity and come to suffer the limitations of matter due to mutual super imposition. Where there is "something other" associated with "anything," that thing, becomes impure, (mala). We are polluted by matter, prakriti, gunas and vasanas. This causes delusion and grief. We become limited.

Whereas Gurudev a Brahmagnani has ended all duality and there is nothing other than Him -- the Infinite -- hence He is Eternal (Nitya), is free from impurities being Nondual; therefore Pure(Suddha), is freed from superimposition (Adhyasa), hence Enlightened (Buddha) and Liberated (Mukta).



Nityashuddha Buddha mukta.....©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

The attributes Suddha Budha and Mukta are not obtained through any means. They are His own Nature. Nothing changes its essential nature. Thus, we cannot have cold fire etc. Hence Eternally (ever) Pure Enlightened Liberated. Nitya Suddha Buddha Mukta

Every Breath a Teaching page XVII

Prologue

Here is a statement of Sri Gurudev on a God realised soul. Gurudev being a God realised soul and also for those who knew Him this statement aptly fits Sri Gurudev.

His life itself is a scripture, His words are hymns

His actions are blessings upon the world

He is the fulfilled,the perfect.

In such an accomplished man, we watch God and His play.

These above words confirm Gurudev as Nitya Suddha Buddha Muktha Swaroopa. Who of us could precisely describe Him? In His kindness this note of Him on a God realised soul, though brief, does justice to this Avatara Purusha. Einstein said about Mahatma Gandhi "it is difficult to believe there was a man like this amidst us walking in flesh and blood " the readers may forgive me this sentence is an approximation. This statement is true of Sri Gurudev. If we see His analysis and clarity of Vedanta topics He is certainly a Nitya Buddha. If we see His unconditional love He is Nitya Suddha. If we remember His detachment from His body and all other things, He is Nitya Muktha. And all these and much more is our very dear Sri Gurudev Swami

Chinmayananda who lives in all of us (as His Gurubhai Swami Chidananda Maharaj said).

To this Lord Swami Chinmayananda our prostrations.

□□ Sri Chinmaya SadguraveNamaha.

It is His love that gave us an opportunity to think about Him continuously doing this Astothara Puja. My gratitude and prostrations to all those who were responsible for

this great grand Yagna.

Prostrations to all. Love to all. We are a family.

In Conclusion (Hemu ji says .....)

Man is, as Sri Gurudev says, his feelings and his understanding – the heart and the head. If these two are harmonised we develop a new faculty called intuition which gives us the experience of our Real Being. In Vivekachudamani, verse 254, Gurudev says: Understanding is the function of the intellect, while feeling is the function of the mind. Understanding the Truth alone will never take you to the Truth, nor is Feeling truth sufficient to realise It.
Therefore contemplation is: feeling fully what you have understood and understanding fully what you have felt.
This contemplation which is the direct means to realise the Self, becomes easier and pleasant through the Namopasana done through His grace for the last 108 days, bringing the head and the heart together.

Gurudev says this in another way too. Man is his mind. By changing the thoughts, we change. This change is brought about by continuous thinking about God or our Gurudev. Through this contemplation we become Divine like the wasp becoming the bee through contemplation.

OM NITYA SUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

OM SRI CHINMAYA SADGURAVE NAMAH!

OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Offered by Swami Nikhilananda Saraswati, Regional Head, CM Delhi & NCR

Om Nitya Shuddha Buddha Mukta Svarupaya Namah

Though the last name does not come alphabetically, it contains the essence of all the names that have gone before. Complete in itself it is a beautiful name.

Svarupaya means – ‘of the nature’. Nitya means eternal or one who exists in the past, present and future. Shuddha is pure.

Nityashuddha means always pure or the one that was never impure.

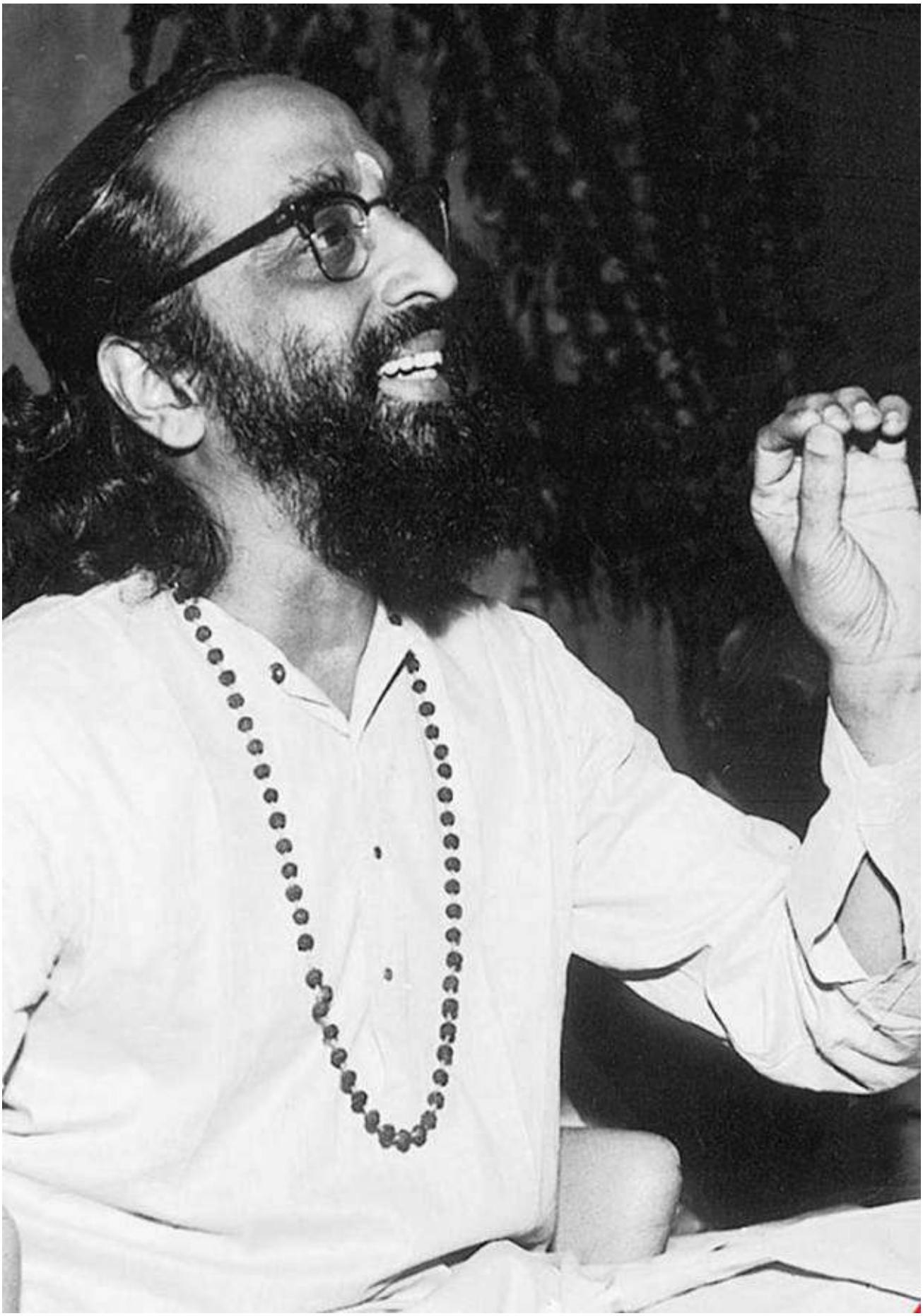
In the sadhanaavastha, one performs all kinds of rituals in order to purify oneself. Convinced that we are impure, we keep trying to purify ourselves. Our state is very much like that of Macbeth who murdered his wife. Then to purify himself he washed his hands again and again and again. Being aware of our shortcomings and wrong doings, we try to remove our sins but still remain impure because the sinner still remains. The sinner himself is the impurity. The ahamkara or the ego is the impurity. The 'ahamkartaitibhavana (the attitude that I am the doer) is the impurity. The Atman is not impure. When theahamkara is dropped, everything is dropped. I then come to realize and recognize the Self and know that I was never impure.

The Atman is like the sky, which is not affected by the dust, the clouds and the rain in it. The screen does not become impure despite the different movies being projected on it. The place is not affected by the quality of our dreams. Similarly, this Atman is nityashuddha (ever pure). The impurities of thought, body, the world or the objects cannot touch that Atman. It cannot touch 'Me.'

I am of the nature of purity; absolutely, eternally pure, nityashuddha.I am also nityabuddha, complete understanding and do not have to gain any knowledge. I am knowledge. The Atman is not ignorant.It does not have to be given knowledge. It is nityabuddhasvarupa. It is all knowing and always knowing.

It is nityamukta. It was never bound. It is beyond the concept of knowledge as well as ignorance, beyond the concept of both päpa and punya. " punya-apunya vivarjita pantha". It is different from both punya as well aspaapa.

Nityashuddha, nityabuddha, nitya mukta svarupa. He is of the nature of the eternally pure, eternally wise and eternally liberated. This is the nature of the teacher. The teacher was never bound. The teacher is identical with that Supreme Reality. Ishvara, Guru and Atman are One. That Supreme Reality itself is the teacher and is Himself the Atman only. So, one should know that the teacher is always free, always pure and always wise.



The Teacher .... Always free, always pure, always wise..... ©Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), reproduced courtesy of CCMT.

Each one of Gurudev's names indicates the Supreme Reality. Contemplation on them, along with the meaning will help in meditation. Even one name is enough to help us meditate on the Lord. Like the moon in the sky is visible to all the different people looking at it. Even if a 100 people are pointing towards it, each from a different angle, they are all pointing to the same moon. Similarly, these names all indicate the one Truth- some the nirguna or unqualified Truth and some the saguna or qualified Truth.

Worshipping the padukas of the Guru is a sublime upasana.In Chinmaya Mission, the ritual involves chanting the 108 names. As we chant each name a flower is offered at Gurudev's padukas. The flowers represent our feelings of gratitude and surrender. The ceremony also involves bowing with folded hands. This powerful mudra of bowing with folded hands creates a feeling of sharanagati (surrender).

Emotion rises in the form of vibrations; words are not required. Sitting in meditation with folded hands, brings humility and surrender in our hearts. The offering of flowers is a physical offering of love. The flowers are Bhagavan's creation, made special by the love with which we offer them. This simple yet powerful upasana helps purify our mind and identify with the Teacher.

These beautiful names indicating the form, ideals, and essence of Pujya Gurudevare to be constantly chanted and meditated upon. They should become a part of our life. Our personality should be able to identifyand develop an emotional link with them. With constant meditation, our sadhana will deepen till finally we reach the ultimate beatitude, where the Teacher, the Atman and God are One!

To that embodiment of eternal Purity, Knowledge, the One Ever Liberated Teacher, our prostrations.

OM NITYA SHUDDHA BUDDHA MUKTA SWAROOPAAYA NAMAH

Added today: Kindly also see Story 281, naam 22: Om Kaiwalyaswaroopaaya Namah for Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni's offering.

Vande Chinmaya Sadgurum

Gratitude

Hari Om.

On behalf of Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) I thank all acharyas, sevaks, devotees – the- world over – who have contributed to this yagna with such love and dedication. With your every word you enriched our collective learning, shraddha and bhakti. Needless to add, without the Guru's grace this would not have been possible.

Each and every anecdote and memory shared was precious and heartwarming as it brought us to the feet of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji. In such collective memories He is worshipped and kept ever present in our hearts.

Thank you again and again for keeping this yagna vibrant with your rich thoughts and reflections.My special word of appreciation to the Celebration team at CIF, Third Eye – the website managers and Smt. Meera Seth, Sevak from CIF -- who served this Jnana-bhakti-yajna of 'Celebrating Gurudev – A Flavour Unforgettable'

Om Sri Sadguru Chinmayaarpanamastu

In Shri Guru Smriti,

Swami Advayananda,

Acharya, CIF

Om Ajaaya Namah



Image credits: Manoj Menon, CM sourced from Swami Chinmayananda Facebook

Since 108 days we brought to mind Gurudev’s glory through the ashtottaranamavali. It is said siddhasya lakshanaani saadhakasya saadhanaani - whatever is the Gunas of a Atmajnaani that becomes the sadhana for the seekers to practise too. So it is very important for us to chant and reflect on Pujya Gurudev's 108 Naamas.

The 108 names of Gurudev is also like a Sastra for us - to do Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana on the import of these names.

Per tradition, once a prakarana grantha or a sastra text is completed we again start reading / chanting the first verse, in a manner of keeping our study, our reflection alive and continuous. Todaythe last naam/name in the Namavaliis being offered to Pujya Gurudev- Om Nitya-shuddha-bhuddha-mukta swaroopaaya Namaha. To keep our abidance perennial and steady, we resume the ashtottara namavali again by offering the first naam of Pujya Gurudev - Om Ajaaya Namaha - Salutations to one who is Unborn.



Gurudev's Birthday Celebration Invitation.

ஹரி : ஓம்.

சின்மயா யுவகேந்திரா, சேலம்.

ஸ்வாமி சின்மயானந்தர் பிறந்தநாள் விழா அழைப்பிதழ்.

நாள் : 8—5—90 செவ்வாய்க்கிழமை மாலை 6.00 மணி

இடம் : நியாராகில் சொஸைட்டி, செரிரோடு, சேலம்-1.
(சுப்பிரமணியர் கோவில் அருகில்)

தலைமை : திரு S. ஆதிநாராயண செட்டியார், அவர்கள்.

இறைவணக்கம்

வரவேற்புரை : திரு N. சந்திரசேகர்,
பொருளாளர், சின்மயா யுவ கேந்திரா.

முன்னிலை : திரு S. விஸ்வநாதன், (AKB மளிகை)
தலைவர், சின்மயா மிஷன்.

திரு R. ரத்னகிருஷ்ணன்,
ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர், சின்மயா யுவ கேந்திரா.

திரு B. நாகராஜன், அட்வகேட்.

திரு P. K. சுப்ரமணியம்,
பொருளாளர், சின்மயா மிஷன்.

குருவின் பெருமைகள் குறித்து யுவகேந்திராவினர் வழங்கும் சிறப்புச் சொற்பொழிவுகள்

தொடர்ந்து

சின்மயா பாலவிஹார் மற்றும் யுவகேந்திராவினர் வழங்கும் சிறப்பு பல்சுவை நிகழ்ச்சி

நன்றியுரை : செல்வி K. அனுராதா,
இணை செயலாளர், சின்மயா யுவ கேந்திரா.

மங்கள ஆரத்தி

K. சங்கர், யுவ கேந்திரா செயலாளர்,
சங்கர் எலக்ட்ரிகல்ஸ், 107, அம்மாபேட்டை மெயின் ரோடு, சேலம்-636 001.

Yet, we have celebrated 366 days as Gurudev's 100th birth year and we will continue to celebrate Gurudev's birthday. All this, is from our stand point. And it is an opportunity for us to show our gratitude to HIM and to rededicate our service also. But as far as Pujya Gurudev is concerned - HE is Nitya-shuddha-buddha-mukta - so HE IS AJAHA, unborn.

In 1990, the Yuva Kendra in Salem organised Gurudev's birthday celebrations and sent that invitation to Gurudev. (See the image) Rather elaborately, it said that Yuvakendra members will be speaking on Guru's glories and cultural programmes by Balavihar and Yuvakendra on the occasion of Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji's birthday celebration.

Gurudev's response went back to the CHYKs – "Unnecessary!"

To that One Unborn, who has been relentlessly reminding us He is Ajaha, our prostrations!

Added today: Kindly also see Story 281, naam 22: Om Kaiwalyaswaroopaaya Namah for Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni's offering.