

# THE VOICE from BEYOND THE VOID



## Message from Guruji

The Lord is present where there are no desires. It is said in the Upanishads that when all the desires leave you and go away, then the man becomes immortal, he reaches the highest goal and perennial happiness remains with him. We do not have to leave the desires; it is the desires that have to leave us. Desires and the Lord cannot be together. Constantly think of the Lord. Automatically desires will leave you. It is also said that “Jahan Ram hai tahan Kaam nahi”, which means where the Lord is the desires are not present and vice versa (Here Ram means the Lord or the Ultimate Reality and kaam means desires; originated from the word Kama in sanskrit). So the next question is that how can the desires leave you? Make it so hard for desires to remain. The way is to continuously think of the Lord so that there will be no space or time for any other thought or desire to act. Further desire can never coexist with God as it finds it very hot. This is an instant capsule for moksha.

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*There is no meaning in going on asking textual questions which are not relevant at all. Yes, one may ask such important questions on their own meditation and sadhana, but for the clarification of which, they are unable to proceed further in their sadhana.*

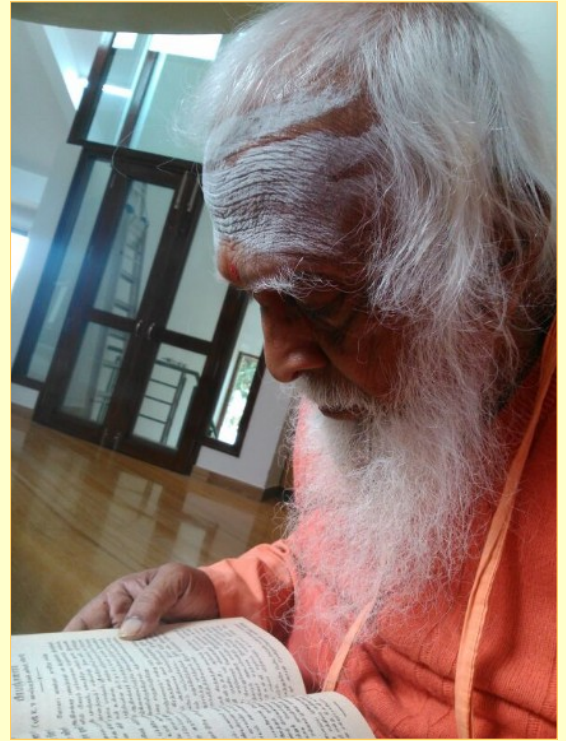
### *Inside this issue:*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| What is our Duty   | 2 |
| Gurudev's protection in danger, An anecdote on Swami Purushottamananda Maharaj | 4 |
| The miracle of copious water<br>The effect of singing poems on Bhagawan Ramana | 5 |
| Questions and Answers  | 6 |
| Memories with Gurudev  | 8 |
| What is Satchidananda?   | 9 |

## What is our duty

By Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

Before we ask the question as to what is our duty, we should first know who we are and then only the question of duty arises. The superficial answer will be, I am David, I am Ramamurty, I am Angela, etc. No that is not the fact. If I fall dead this moment, people will go and tell the people outside that Shantananda is gone. How can it be? Shantananda's feet are there, his body is there, his eyes are there, so what do you mean by Shantananda is gone? This means that we do not recognise the body as Swami Shantananda. We only consider as Shantananda the energy inside the body which enabled us to see, to hear, to walk, to talk, etc. In other words, the body was not Shantananda at all. He was a living and loving energy who was inside the body to enable the various senses to perform their respective duties. This is again at a superficial state. Let us go a little deeper. When the mother conceived me on



the second or third day I was only a gel [neither liquid nor solid] which slowly descended into the womb. This gel had no power to breathe, to lift the hand, etc. It was only a mass of flesh. It slowly descended into the womb and became big. According to the medical science, the energy came into the womb in the fourth week after this gel was formed. In other words, the energy which was me or which was you, came into the womb only after 4 weeks had elapsed since the gel was formed. This means that you are never the body but you are always the energy, a living and loving energy. For instance the electricity is a dead energy because it cannot react to my love or anger. In other words, it is dead. On the contrary, this energy known as vital elan which came into our body, it is capable of reacting to other's anger, love, etc.

Now that we know that we are not the body, the question remains as to wherefrom the energy inside came. Just as in the case of a generator from which the electricity went into all the bulbs and lighted them all, similarly, the energy from one source has gone into all the bodies which are in the place of bulbs. As there are billions of beings in this world and some more beings are going to be born within the next ten months, that energy has to be immense, infinite and boundless.

So the source from which we are born is something infinite and immense. That being the case, if only we come into contact with that infinite source, our power will be immense. Sitting at one place, we

can transform or help in our progress in spirituality and the beings lakhs of kilometres away. But unfortunately, even though we are born out of that source and in contact with it at that time, we have forgotten our source and heritage. If only we can again regain that contact with that infinite source, we will have as much power as that one infinite source out of which the entire world has been produced. As we are not aware of it, we pride ourselves after doing small things, unaware that it is a criminal underuse of our ability as we are not aware of our entire ability.

It is very clear from this that our main duty is to know who we are and to reclaim our immense heritage. Even otherwise everybody wants ultimately to have perennial happiness unmixed with sorrows, tribulations and sufferings. This immense happiness we can get only from a thing which is infinite. When we come into contact with people who have attained perennial happiness and ask them the source of their happiness, we understand that there is one supermarket for perennial happiness whose keys are held by somebody called God. That is why many of us want to please and secure and get an entrance into that supermarket by pleasing the God. When once we get into the supermarket of infinite happiness, we become merged in that happiness and we can never come out of it. This is the reason why one Supreme entity is worshipped by many of us calling him as God, Krishna, Rama, Siva, etc. and so for those people who are unable to think of a formless, immense, source of energy, the alternative of thinking of a God is prescribed as their duty.

**Why our scriptures have prescribed other things like doing service to the mother, father, Acharya, etc.? Whether this means there are many duties to perform?**

The question arises as to why looking after the mother, looking after the father, worshipping the Guru, have all been prescribed as a duty in the Upanishads. This is because a number of people are



not at all interested in spirituality and they may go much down into licentiousness, drinking, drugs, etc. Hence, a line has been drawn below which the person may not fall. When once we are aware that there are higher values in our life, our only duty is to find out who we are and make efforts to come into contact with our source.

## **Gurudev protects a devotee in danger**

### **An anecdote on Swami Purushottamananda Maharaj**

My Guruji [Swami Purushottammananda] had advised one Mr. Mathur of Lucknow not to marry at all. The moment Mr. Mathur returned to Lucknow, he married against the will of Gurudev. After giving birth to two children, the wife of Mrs. Mathur died. As Mr. Mathur was highly attached to his wife, he used to call the ghost of his wife through the medium of his eldest son. His wife weepingly told him not to call her as her way upward was blocked by that act. Finally one day he found that the ghost of a Muslim gentleman came on his son and in pure urdu told him that he was going to kill his son. Mr. Mathur became very afraid and on the advice of a priest, he performed the recitation of Ramcharita Manas and thus got rid of the ghost. Afterwards, he never called any ghost making his son as the medium.

One day, he left his sons in charge of his sister and went to Vasishta Guha to see his Gurudev. On the second day he asked his Gurudev as to what he should do. Gurudev answered mockingly that he should marry again and in case that wife died, he should marry again and so on.

On the day Mr. Mathur was to leave for Lucknow, his Gurudev advised him to stay for a day or two more in the ashram. Mr. Mathur flatly refused saying that as he was responsible for the welfare of his two children who were still small, and he cannot afford to leave them in the charge of anybody else for a long period. Mr. Mathur went back to Lucknow.

One day, Mr. Mathur was preparing some pooris (a bread made of flattened wheat flour, fried in oil) in boiling oil while in a stool next to the oven the elder boy was dancing. The boy suddenly fell over the oven and entire burning coals of the oven fell on his body. The burning oil as also the burning coals fell on his body. Mr. Mathur got frightened and after quickly wiping off the body of the child, asked that boy as to whether any portion of his body was burning due to the burning coals. The boy replied in the negative and the father was amazed.

Mr. Mathur used to go to office in a bicycle after locking his both the children in a room and one day Mr. Mathur, before locking the room took his bicycle and was going down the stairs in order to keep it down below on the road and come back. In the meantime, the second child came running headlong and fell down the staircase, rolling down on all the steps and landed with a thud at the end of the staircase. Mr. Mathur was frightened, and came running down the stairs to inquire from the child where all it got injured. The child answered, "There are no injuries anywhere on my body." The father asked the child, "Then why have you been wailing and weeping?" The child replied, "I have fallen from such a distance, should I not weep?"

A week later, when he went to Vasishta Guha, the first question his Gurudev asked him was, "Do you look after both your children well enough?" Then it dawned in the mind of Mr. Mathur that it was his Gurudev who protected both the children when they were subjected to danger.

## **The miracle of copious water**

### **The effect of singing poems on Bhagawan Ramana written by Ramaswamy Iyer**

Manavasi Ramaswamy Iyer was one of the devout disciples of Bhagawan Ramana. He had been suffering for a long time from a perennial stomach ache and could not eat any spicy food at all. One day, some visitor brought a good amount of spicy tamarind bath (a spicy rice preparation) and offered it to Bhagawan. On fearing that Bhagawan will share the dish with him, Ramaswamy Iyer hid himself behind a tree. Bhagawan Ramana opened the tiffin box and called, "O Ramaswamy Iyer, come here. Do not hide yourself."

Mr. Iyer came with all tribulation and fear. Ramana gave a sizeable quantity of the tamarind bath and asked him to eat it then and there in his own presence. As Mr. Iyer knew how his stomach would react to it, he was practically in tears but Bhagawan insisted in his taking the tamarind bath. With great reluctance, Mr. Iyer ate the entire quantity and his stomach ache vanished for ever from that moment. One day Bhagawan ordered him to begin to write poems and even though Mr. Iyer had no talents in that direction, he was able to compose thousands of songs in Tamil by the grace of Bhagawan. One of those poems was known as Saranagati regarding surrendering as an unconditional refuge at the holy feet of Ramana.

Another devotee of Bhagawan was Mr. Sunderasa Iyer, a local teacher. His daughter had learnt to sing many of the poems by Ramaswamy Iyer. His daughter was married in some place in North India where she lived with her husband and his brothers in the third floor of a house. A time came when water supply got disrupted and for weeks together there was not a drop of water coming out of the taps. A lot of dirty clothes and utensil used for cooking had accumulated as there was no water available to wash or clean them. The lady was in tears and while weeping, she sang the Saranagati song with deep devotion to Bhagawan in her helpless state. Immediately she found water flowing freely from the taps and filling up her buckets. When she stopped her song and went to the taps, the water flow also stopped. So she went on singing and was able to finish all the arrears of her cleaning work and also filled all the buckets and tubs.

When the evening came and her husband and his brothers returned home, she narrated this wonder. They refused to believe it. When she again demonstrated this by singing this Saranagati song, water started pouring from the taps and they were all wonder struck and wrote a letter to Bhagawan Ramana narrating this incident.

Bhagawan read the letter with a mischievous twinkle in his eye and told all the people around him, "See the glory of Ramaswamy Iyer. He has written such beautiful magical songs that the song could bring water even in a desert." This is the self-effacing Ramana who do not want to take credit for himself. Even now, the grand daughters of Ramaswamy Iyer who are still alive come to Ramana Asramam and sing this Saranagati song in front of Bhagwan's shrine.



## Questions and Answers

When a devotee put questions to Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj, the following responses were provided by him. They have been reproduced for the benefit of various spiritual seekers who may have similar doubts:

### How do I increase my longing for God?

- Fake love and daily say whether we feel it not, "Oh Lord, I love you so much. I love you only." A lie repeated a million times ultimately becomes the truth.
- Be with people who love God.
- Read books of holy men and their teachings and biographies of their relationship with God.

### I do breath meditation and Om. How do I go deeper?

- The vipasanna meditation of the Buddhists links meditation to breath and it stops half way and does not take so far. By observing the breath only nothing happens to you. It may give you temporary peace but may not take you to the final beatitude.
- Better to do thoughtless meditation and remain in the thoughtless state and when thoughts come tell them to go away.
- Revel in the 'Being' state like a child sleeping after all its natural instincts (hunger, thirst and urge for evacuation) have been satisfied and remain 'in Amness.'



### Do I strive and make an effort or do I go with what is natural and brings me peace?

- Revel in the 'Being' state like a child sleeping after all its natural instincts (hunger, thirst and urge for evacuation) have been satisfied and remain 'in Amness.'
- Everyone has his or her own path. There is no single path for everyone. The so called natural state has to merely come out of you. You do not know what is natural to you. It may not be your real nature. What you think as natural may not be natural and may just be a conditioning.
- One can be easily fooled that it is my nature but it could merely be a temporary conditioning. You just go as per what the Guru has told and be guided by him.
- Your nature will be revealed to you. This will come through sadhana as per the guidance the Guru has provided.

### How do I intensify my prayer life?

- Pray all the time and always talk to God.
- When you start anything, pray to God, to the divine.

**Do I need to have a schedule?**

- There is a need for a schedule in the beginning but after that the schedule is not important.
- If you have a schedule you must follow it.

**How do I change my tamasic energy in relation to spiritual life?**

- Pray to the divine for help.
- Temporarily by increasing the rajo guna of dynamism we can overcome the tamoguna. Then overcome the rajo guna too by remaining in predominant sattva guna. Ultimately a day has to come when you have to transcend all the three gunas.

**Do we all need to have certain spiritual experiences?**

- People are all different and they may not have the same experiences.
- The ultimate experience is a non experience where there is only one subject and no object.
- An experience is our reaction to the vibrations of happiness, beauty, deliciousness, etc. coming out of some object. Hence when we reach the stage where there is no outside object and you alone exist, there cannot be an experience. It is a stage of non experience.

**I get very attached to people. What do I do with these attachments?**

- Transfer attachments from people to God
- Do not worry about detachment, just have attachment to God
- Do not worry about dispassion, just have passion for God

**I have resistance to spiritual reading. What should I do?**

Do not depend heavily on reading and at a certain time you do not need to read.

It is best to read the lives of holy men, their biographies. This will automatically get you interested in spiritual reading. Some of the biographies / writings that you could read are:

- Imitation of Christ
- St. Augustine
- St. Theresa
- Brother Lawrence

And other biographies of lives of people who loved God





**Memories with Gurudev - At Tiruvannamalai**





## What is Satchidananda?

*Someone asked Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj what is Satchidananda. The following response was provided by Guruji.*

**Sat means the quality of being / presence.** Now we say that the chair is, the table is. One common characteristic of all the objects of this universe is that “they exist”. This “being” or the mere “existence” [“isness”] is the main attribute of the Ultimate Reality which may be called as God or Brahman or Atman.

The next question is, the chair is, but is it aware of its existence? You are aware, “I am” – **it is the awareness of existence of being is what is called Chit.**

Sat and Chit are our qualities.

**We are existent and we are aware of the existence.**

Your external awareness comprehends all objects of the world – they appear to have existence, like the objects in a dream but in reality they have no existence. If you add more and more items to your list of awareness of being, like food, house, relationships, etc., the pure consciousness gets adulterated. Rather, you remain in ‘**amness**’, like a child, like an angel with a smile—just remain in that feeling and enjoy the mere feeling of existence.

And if you know that much, i.e. Sat and Chit alone without bringing in any thought or object or external consciousness, you will have immense Ananda [perennial bliss]. **Ananda is the by product for remaining in awareness.** This may be roughly translated as Bliss or Supreme Peace and Joy.

If you can remain without any consciousness of the objects of the world, you live in pure Sat Chit Ananda. That is the Swarupa [the natural form] of the formless entity and the final truth.



Guruji watching Arunachala outside the shrine of Bhagawan

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