



Spiritual Journey in July

(Excerpts from the book “Spiritual Import of
Religious Festivals”

by H. H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji)



Compiled by :-
Sri U. Narayana Rao



THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O ADORABLE LORD OF MERCY AND LOVE!
SALUTATIONS AND PROSTRATIONS UNTO THEE.
THOU ART OMNIPRESENT, OMNIPOTENT AND OMNISCIENT.
THOU ART SATCHIDANANDA
(EXISTENCE-CONSCIOUSNESS-BLISS ABSOLUTE).
THOU ART THE INDWELLER OF ALL BEINGS.

GRANT US AN UNDERSTANDING HEART,
EQUAL VISION, BALANCED MIND,
FAITH, DEVOTION AND WISDOM.
GRANT US INNER SPIRITUAL STRENGTH
TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS AND TO CONTROL THE MIND.
FREE US FROM EGOISM, LUST, GREED, HATRED,
ANGER AND JEALOUSY.

FILL OUR HEARTS WITH DIVINE VIRTUES.
LET US BEHOLD THEE IN ALL THESE NAMES AND FORMS.
LET US SERVE THEE IN ALL THESE NAMES AND FORMS.
LET US EVER REMEMBER THEE.
LET US EVER SING THY GLORIES.
LET THY NAME BE EVER ON OUR LIPS.
LET US ABIDE IN THEE FOR EVER AND EVER.

--Swami Sivananda



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in July**

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Pujya Sri Swami Hamsanandaji of Shivanandashram H.Q.,
and with the noble heart of Sri Ramprasad Nitta
Orlando, USA.)

CONTENTS

1. “Tapas is burning like fire by sense-control.”
2. “The goal of life is God-realisation.”
3. Objects are external, Reality is Universal.
4. The intention of mankind is not merely to get on in life.
5. Freedom is a kind of fearlessness that comes out of the acquisition of the wisdom of life.
6. Nobody was born and nobody died—only they shifted their locations.
7. Never will this world be in dearth of great Messengers of Truth.
8. Attachment to what is not, is samsara; and entering into what *Is*, is God-realisation.
9. The daylight or activity of the senses is the midnight or slumber of the Atman,
10. Mind always longs for contact rather than communion.
11. Knowledge is supposed to be a benediction from Lord Siva Himself.
12. The path of spiritual sadhana is a mystery by itself.
13. Spiritual sadhana is an art of becoming smaller and smaller.
14. The Radhakrishna mystery is a secret, even as God Himself is a secret.
15. The melting of the human individuality is called Love of God.
16. My soul and your soul are the same.
17. Religion is the science of the soul.
18. All our desires are desires of the soul, ultimately.
19. *Kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* are the gates to hell.
20. *Mala* and *vikshepa* are the primary oppositions in our spiritual pursuit.
21. *Sattva* is like a transparent glass that is placed between us and the Truth.
22. The path of sadhana also is a cosmic effort of the soul.
23. Nobody can be as rich as a Yogi.
24. God sometimes can take incarnations of a type which we can physically observe.
25. Pain is only a refusal on the part of our consciousness to recognise the bliss of God’s creation.
26. We owe a universal obligation to all things in the universe.
27. The Vedas are scientific.
28. We are told *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* constitute the highest necessity of religion.
29. Desire is the greatest power in the world.
30. Divinity is an integrating force, while virtue is only a counter-correlative of vice.
31. How the same thing can be a friend and also an enemy?



FOREWORD

Prof. R. K. Sullerey
DEHRADUN.

With inspiration from Swami Hamsananda ji Maharaj, Sri U. Narayana Rao ji has been bringing out a series of booklets for each month of the year titled as 'Spiritual Journey' compiled from the writings of Swami Krishnananda ji Maharaj. These booklets offer a quick glimpse of the wisdom and depth of the spiritual insight of Swami Krishnananda ji Maharaj to the reader.

I met Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj first time in April, 1972. It was our chance visit to Sivananda Ashram. During our stay of couple of days, I attended talks being given for inmates in the afternoon in bhajan hall. I happened to befriend Swami Hamsanandaji during these sessions. He advised me to meet Swami Krishnananda ji Maharaj. Swamiji used to stay in Mt. Kailash kutir those days. I went there in the morning. While I was waiting for Swamiji, I was offered tea and biscuits by Shri Nagarkarji who was staying next to Swamiji and serving him. I was touched by the simplicity of the atmosphere and the way Swamiji talked to me. Next day, after Swamiji's afternoon talk, when I took leave from Swamiji, he so affectionately and lovingly asked me, "When will you come next?" The way it was said touched my heart and prompted me to visit Ashram every year.

I stayed in the Ashram for a few days in 1974. While in Ashram, I would attend the satsanga of Swamiji while he did his office work. I happened to ask him for Mantra diksha from him one day. He said, "So you want me to partake part of your *prarabdha*", but agreed to give me Mantra diksha all the same, on Guru Purnima day. But it so happened that Swamiji was down with asthma for next few days and no one was allowed to meet him. So I was not sure if Swamiji would even remember me or my name as I had met him only a few times. The Guru Purnima function was held in what is library now. There was a huge crowd.

But I was surprised that my name was called on the mike (and pronounced correctly) asking me to come forward for Mantra diksha. I realized there was no forgetting any thing with Swamiji.

Since 1976, I had been visiting Ashram regularly with my family. Swamiji was a great source of strength and support to me during hardships and vicissitudes of all kinds in my life. He was ever obliging and approachable at personal level.

As a speaker, he was mathematically precise in the use of language. He had unique understanding of not only Indian philosophy but Western philosophy as well and how to relate the two. He could also relate the modern discoveries in physics to ancient Indian wisdom. Once I was astounded to see how he could explain the concept of entropy and relate it to Vedanta. Most importantly, his life was his teaching. He was traditional, yet very open.

It was amazing to see him handle mundane matters with as much ease as highest philosophy. During his office-cum-satsanga sessions, he would be dealing with bills and visitors, and in between he would be talking on subtle matters and giving invaluable spiritual tips to devotees. To sit with him during these sessions were some of the best moments of my life.

To properly understand the writings of Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, one has to repeatedly read them again and again. I hope after getting a glimpse of his writings through this booklet, the reader would be prompted to read his books in full and repeatedly. Most of his books are available on the website.

May the blessings of Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be on Sri U. Narayana Rao ji and all those who are associated with this publication.

Om Tat Sat.

--R.K. Sullerey

16.7.2019,
Guru purnima.



Om Nama Bhagavate Krishnanandaya

PREFACE

H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji, who was one of the greatest saints of Sivanandashram in Rishikesh, needs no introduction to the spiritual world. When any devotee happens to go through a book of him, he comes out burnt and burnished, beautified and purified, because of a very graduated purificatory process which one undergoes in one's emotions and understandings. The original book "*Spiritual Import of Religious Festivals*" by **H. H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji** is a compilation of discourses delivered by the author on different occasions. The present book, "**Spiritual Journey in July**" by name, contains excerpts from this original book. This book would be useful to those readers who couldn't find sufficient time to read (original) big books, but have a strong wish to taste at least some sentences of Revered Swamiji Maharaj. I am conscious of the fact that the abridged explanations in these excerpts may somehow hamper the powerful flow of discourses by the great saint; but my intention in preparing these excerpts is only to introduce to the readers the spiritual expositions of the great saint, so that the interested readers would go in for the original volume and derive much benefit. Swami Hamsanandaji of Sivanandashram has given me a good opportunity to prepare this book for distribution as *Jnana Prasad* on the 18th Purnima Thithi Aradhana of Swamiji.

This book can be used by the Sadhaks for *Swadhyaaya* at any time (not only in the month specified). I profusely thank **Sri Dr. R.K.Sullery ji** of Dehradun for offering valuable **Foreword** for this book. Abundant benedictions would be showered by Revered Swamiji upon all the readers with Infinite wisdom and peace for their effort they put in reading this book patiently.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Yours,

Razole,

Date: 26.7. 2019.

In the Service of Gurudev,

- U. NARAYANA RAO.

1. “TAPAS IS BURNING LIKE FIRE BY SENSE-CONTROL.”



Swami Sivanandaji was known as Dr. Kuppusswamy in his purvashrama. He arrived in Rishikesh in the year 1922 when there was practically nothing in Rishikesh except a few almshouses (kshetras) and sadhus staying in isolated thatched huts. In the year 1924, he came across a great saintly person known as Swami Visvananda Saraswati, whom he met, as it is said, only for a few minutes, and from whom he received initiation into the sacred order of Sannyasa as Swami Sivananda Saraswati. This was on the 1st of June. This Swami Visvananda Saraswati is little known to the public and, perhaps, personally he was not even acquainted to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. It was a unique coming together of two personalities, as if ordained by God Himself, and Jnana Sannyasa, as it is known, was offered to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Jnana Sannyasa implies Sannyasa without ritual. The ritualistic confirmation of this Jnana Sannyasa was subsequently performed by the great Sri Swami Vishnudevanandaji Maharaj of Kailas Ashram. Thus, Swami Visvanandaji Maharaj was his Diksha Guru, while Swami Vishnudevanandaji Maharaj was his Sannyasa Kriya Guru. But Swami Sivanandaji had equal regard for both. We could gather by reading between lines that he was a combination of the heights of Vedanta philosophy and the pinnacle of austerity or tapas. He used to define tapas as “flaming like fire by sense-control”. One day he put a question to me (Swami Krishnanandaji): “What is tapas? Can you define it?” But, before I could say anything, he himself gave the definition: “Tapas is burning like fire by sense-control.” Tapas is the heat that is produced in our spiritual body by the control of the senses, as their outward movement depletes our energy and makes us the weaklings that we are. All success is the result of tapas. This is his teaching. There cannot be a saint without tapas. There is no spirituality without tapas. And tapas is the same as Sannyasa.

2. “THE GOAL OF LIFE IS GOD- REALISATION.”



“God-realisation first, everything else afterwards.” This was, is and will forever be the teaching of the saint Swami Sivananda. Everything else follows automatically from this great surging longing of the heart. There are very few who could so forcibly proclaim this most unpalatable of truths that God-realisation is the primary aim of life. Many like to dilute this concept with ‘plus world’, ‘plus humanity’ and so on. They say, “God plus world”, “God plus humanity”; but here was one who would not add anything to God or God’s Perfection to make it complete. As a matter of fact, to add something to God would be to diminish the Perfection itself. God’s presence and the recognition of Him is the primary objective of all human activity, human longing and desire of every kind. There is no such thing as adding something to God’s perfection, because God is another name for Perfection itself. Can you add something to Perfection? No, for then it would cease to be Perfection. That is Perfection, to which no addition is necessary, and also Perfection is of such a nature that one cannot subtract anything from It-- that Perfection is God. Most of his earlier writings began with this proclamation: “The goal of life is God-realisation.” When we say that the goal of life is God-realisation, we have said everything that needs to be said. Vairagya, renunciation or sannyasa, spontaneously flows from the acceptance, from the heart, of the fact that the goal of life is God-realisation. It follows as a necessary consequence. We need not make another statement about it. If the goal of life should be God-realisation, God should be the Reality, because we cannot regard an unreality or a lesser reality as the goal of life. Only that which is Real can be the goal; the unreal cannot be the goal of life, nor can a partial reality be the goal of life. It is the full Reality that alone can be the goal of life. So, God has to be the fullest of realities. And that which is fully Real has to exclude everything else that is tagged on to it externally by associations temporarily contrived by the weaknesses of the flesh.

3. OBJECTS ARE EXTERNAL, REALITY IS UNIVERSAL.



The Isavasya Upanishad says, “*Isavasyamidam sarvam, yat kincha jagatyam jagat.*” Whatever is moving or unmoving, *sthavara or jangama*, whatever is visible or invisible, all this is indwelt by the Supreme Being of God. The Upanishad also says, “*Tena tyaktena bhunjithah.*” Here is the seed of vairagya and sannyasa at the very commencement of the Isavasya Upanishad. It says, “Renounce and enjoy.” Enjoy by renunciation, not by possession. The enjoyment that comes by renunciation is more intense than the enjoyment that comes by possession of the things of the world. That satisfaction or pleasure or enjoyment which seems to come to us by the acquisition of the objects of sense is a pain that comes to us in the guise of satisfaction. But that joy which comes to us by renunciation is a real and permanent joy. Why is it so? It is because renunciation is the relinquishment of false values, which brings about a spontaneous inflow of God-consciousness and the substance of Reality into our hearts. When our substance or being commingles with our consciousness, there is a manifestation of delight, *ananda*. But, in possessing things, in grabbing objects and in coming in contact with the temporary, fleeting values of the world, we do not come in contact with Reality, rather we flee from Reality. The more we believe in the reality of objects, the farther we are from Truth or Reality. The more we come in contact with things, the more also are we unwittingly running away from the Reality of God. Contact with objects is the opposite of contact with Reality because while objects are external, Reality is Universal. So the more is the contact with objects, the lesser is the contact with Reality; and, consequently, the greater is the pain that we suffer in this life. The Isavasya Upanishad adds: “*Ma gridhah kasya svid-dhanam.*” Covet not the things of the world. Renounce all false values with this awareness that God indwells all creation, both movable and immovable. This is, in some way, the quintessence of the gospel of Divine Life which inspired the teachings and the writings of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

4. THE INTENTION OF MANKIND IS NOT MERELY TO GET ON IN LIFE.



If our search is for freedom, knowledge is regarded as an endeavour towards the achievement of this freedom. The institutions of the world are instruments for the implementation of this endeavour towards the attainment of human freedom. An investigative analysis into the structure of the human mind and its longings would certainly reveal that there is a basic similarity of character in the needs of people and the effort on their part to gain greater and greater mastery over the techniques of the achievement of this freedom. So, the increase in knowledge is, in a way, equivalent to the increase in the capacity of a person to achieve freedom. But freedom from what, is the basic question. If this question cannot be answered, we cannot also know what knowledge is, and impliedly what education is, because education is the process of the acquisition of knowledge. While all these learnings, arts and sciences, which we gain in the educational institutions of the world, are good in themselves and necessary as far as they go, since they help us to get on in life in some way or the other, we must know that the intention of mankind is not merely to get on in life, because many can get on beautifully in life on the surface level and yet be very unhappy at the core of their hearts. Our intention, in consonance with the intention of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and masters of that calibre, has certainly not been to tread the beaten track of social tradition or even personal idiosyncrasy or sentiment, but to find out some ways and means of unfolding the mysteries that seem to be at the background of the longings of mankind, and to provide them with a true *enlightenment*, which is perhaps a better word than knowledge. For this purpose, we may have to proceed from one degree of reality to another degree, gradually. Knowledge is valuable to that extent alone to which it can be accommodated in one's personal life and remains as a basic foundation for one's search for the ultimate purpose which one is apparently longing for. It is very easy to be comfortable in life. But it is difficult to be happy in life.

5. FREEDOM IS A KIND OF FEARLESSNESS THAT COMES OUT OF THE ACQUISITION OF THE WISDOM OF LIFE.



What we call institutions, academies, societies, universities, colleges, etc., are certain convenient forms introduced to educate people to acquire the true knowledge of life which will make them really free and happy even when they are absolutely alone. These institutions have utterly failed to achieve this purpose. It is no use being free to move in society with the help of an army or a band of policemen. That is not freedom. Freedom is a kind of fearlessness that comes out of the acquisition of the wisdom of life, which again is identical with the reality of life. Thus, whatever groups we form in the social pattern such as institutions, academies or universities, they are not going to serve their purpose as long as they satisfy only the instincts and the sentiments of the groups of people we call society, but do not cater to the needs of the soul. If what we learn cannot make us free and confident in our own self, that knowledge of ours is worthless. We can be rich in mind and also rich in reputation. We can be the centre or target of the applause of society, which is another way of being deceived by society. But all this is not going to help us when the last call comes. The whole purpose of the establishment of the Divine Life Society, and incidentally of the Academy is to provide an atmosphere or an environment or a suitable set of circumstances which will enable us to proceed further in the art and science of contacting Reality. How can we forget such ideas as: "I belong to the Ramakrishna Mission", "I belong to the Divine Life Society", "I am of Sankaracharya's order", "I am of Ramanuja's order"? Even great thinkers are unable to extricate themselves from these parochial ways of thinking; and these are not going to cut ice before God. Yet, we care a hoot for what God thinks about us, if only mankind is going to support us! What is death if not the anger of Nature that has come upon us on account of our disregard for her laws? The forces of Nature are very vigilant, active and intelligent. They are not sleeping. These are nothing but the ways in which God's fingers operate in this world. The awakening of oneself into this fact is perhaps the entry into the path of spiritual life.

6. NOBODY WAS BORN AND NOBODY DIED—ONLY THEY SHIFTED THEIR LOCATIONS.



One of the greatest gurus our country has known and adores even now, is the great Sage Veda Vyasa, known as Krishna Dvaipayana. There are many incidents about his greatness and power recounted in the Puranas, especially in the Mahabharata. One would not believe if one reads the narration given towards the end of the Mahabharata about a great power that he exercised on a particular occasion. When the war was over, the Pandavas were in their camp mourning over the death of their relatives. Sage Vyasa comes there and speaks a few words to the satisfaction of their hearts. “What are you grieving for?” He put these questions to the Pandava brothers, Kunti and Gandhari. The mothers said, “O, Great Master! You know my sorrow, and what desire can I have except to have a sight of these children of mine whom I have lost forever.” The Sage said, “You shall see all of them, do not be bothered.” Next morning, he entered the Ganga waist-deep, offered a prayer which brought down all the heroes from heaven. All those dead people started rising up, one by one, from the waters of the Ganga. And it is said that one complete night they spent happily together in mutual chat, as a fraternity in a single family. And the next morning, there was nobody! They had all vanished. We, today, cannot understand all these things, because these mysterious phenomena are beyond our understanding. Our brains cannot work. For these great men who could see the whole cosmos and all its realms of existence, there was no birth or death. Nobody was born and nobody died—only they shifted their locations—and so Masters like Vyasa could summon anybody from anywhere, just as one can write a letter to a person in Kanyakumari and request him to be here. There is no birth or death involved in this; it is only a change of position or location. Everybody is here and everything is just now, in one place or the other, in one form or the other; and all the heroes of ancient history are even today alive somewhere. They are not destroyed. Everything is everywhere in a most concrete form.

7. NEVER WILL THIS WORLD BE IN DEARTH OF GREAT MESSENGERS OF TRUTH.



The incarnations of God are supposed to come with a power of divinity, whereas the sages and saints are supposed to go with the power of divinity. As the one comes with Divine force, the other goes with that Divine force. This is why we lay much importance on the birthdays of Incarnations and the Mahasamadhi days of Siddhas and Masters. Divine grace gets gathered up gradually through the lives of such Masters, and they leave this world like shooting stars or blazing comets, with a trail of glories. It is this glory, the lustre of divinity which they enshrined in themselves, that keeps up the humble followers of these Masters in their spiritual pursuits. These Masters come with a commission from God, as it were, and they have their missions to fulfil in their lives. Spiritual seekers who have the blessed opportunity of serving them and receiving from them the blessings in the form of knowledge, the grace of the Spirit, are in one sense their representatives, vital links in the chain of guru-parampara, who keep flowing their spiritual message. Never will this world be in dearth of such great Messengers of Truth. They reveal themselves occasionally and withdraw themselves at other times, but this revelation and withdrawal are like the rising and setting of the sun. Whether the sun rises or sets, it makes no difference to the sun itself; for, the sun neither rises nor sets. To the eyes of the world, God's manifestations appear to come and go, exactly like the rising and setting of the sun. The radiance of God is impossible to avoid in our day-today life. It is a perpetual presence, like the energy of the sun that vitalises the whole earth, whether the sun shines in the sky or has set. The earth receives the energy of the sun all throughout the twenty-four hours, irrespective of the difference between day and night. So is the energy of God, the grace of the Almighty, perpetually charging the whole creation with its various forms of manifestations. Sometimes we call them Avataras; sometimes we call them Saints, Sages and Masters; and sometimes yogis or siddhas.

8. ATTACHMENT TO WHAT IS NOT, IS SAMSARA; AND ENTERING INTO WHAT *Is*, IS GOD-REALISATION.



Great personalities and geniuses of the Spirit have a double duty to perform—the negative and the positive. While one of their functions is to lessen and mitigate the evils in the world, to remove the darkness of ignorance by initiation into the Spirit, the other function of theirs is to reveal the greatness of God to the world. We are reformed not merely by the teachings of such great Masters, but also by their personal examples. They are themselves the embodiments of righteousness. Freedom from evils is their essential character. They have risen above sin and error, but at the same time, their personalities reveal Divinity. Goodness and Godliness are the two aspects of a saintly character. While goodness is a characteristic of freedom from error, evil and ignorance, Godliness is the positive aspect of it by which that which really *Is*, is revealed through them. While goodness and righteousness are the outcome of having arisen from that which is not, Godliness is the result of having entered into what actually *Is*. Attachment to what is not, is samsara; and entering into what *Is*, is God-realisation. So, samsara and God are the obverse and reverse of the coin of human experience. On one side, it is *aptakamatva, akamatva and kamahatatva*, i.e., righteousness or dharma is one aspect of saintly life; and on the other side, it is *Isvaratva*, i.e, Godliness, which is the concomitant factor, the invariably associated factor with this dharma or righteousness of the saintly life. So, we may safely say that though these great men may appear to belong to our own group of mankind, i.e., seeing things as we see, speaking to us in our own language and understanding our human foibles for the sake of our benefit and spiritual growth, they really belong to what is called the *Isvara Koti* or the divine group. While sadhakas belong to the *jiva koti*, siddhas or Masters belong to the *Isvara koti*. The guru expects a sadhaka to become a siddha and to realise God. Detached, unselfish service combined with an unceasing flow of God-consciousness, is the spiritual message of Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

9. THE DAYLIGHT OR ACTIVITY OF THE SENSES IS THE MIDNIGHT OR SLUMBER OF THE ATMAN,

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We have heard from narrations recorded in the scriptures like the Srimad Bhagavata, that Bhagavan Sri Krishna was born at midnight, as it was also the case with the birth of Jesus the Christ. God did not reveal Himself in daylight, but in the dead of night. The spiritual connotation of this, from the point of view of the relationship of the soul to God, is that the daylight or activity of the senses is the midnight or slumber of the Atman, and the daylight or birth of the Atman is the midnight or slumber of the senses. When the senses cease from their activity, conditions become favourable for the manifestation of God. The Atman does not manifest Itself when the senses are rejoicing in the daylight of their contact with objects. On the other hand, the birth of the Atman is a deathblow to the senses, and the slumbering of the prison guards at the time of the advent of the Lord may be, in a way, compared to the death of the senses at the time of the birth of Divinity. Kamsa represents the ego and all his menials the represent the senses. All these were put to rest at the time of birth of Lord Krishna. Hence, the Bhagavadgita says: *ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami, yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato munehy*—“the night of the ignorant is day for the sage, and vice versa, the night of the sage is day for the ignorant. The Atman is something quite different from what we regard as very dear to us, notwithstanding the fact that It is the deepest Reality in our personality. All this teaching has remained only a theory for us. We have always been pampering the senses and fondling the ego, in spite of the fact that we know that we are not the ego and the senses, but are the Atman. All this teaching is like pouring water on a rock. It has made no impression upon us. The infinite is the Fullness, the *purna*; and the finite is the *apurna*. We individuals, the jivatmans and everything in this world are *apurna*, finites, but we enshrine the Infinite in our bosom. And the manifestation of the Infinite in the finite, the birth of God in man is possible, practicable and inevitable when the obstructions to Its manifestation are obviated totally.

## 10. MIND ALWAYS LONGS FOR CONTACT RATHER THAN COMMUNION.



Any kind of inward communion is a difficult task for the mind, because of its outgoing tendency. The mind never comes in communion with anything in this world at any time. It always longs for contact rather than communion. The senses and the mind are habituated to contact with their objects. The religious invocation of worship and meditation is not an attempt at coming in contact even with a Divinity or a Godhead, but an endeavour to commune oneself with the Supreme Being. There is a difference between contact and communion. You can never commune with any object in this world, but you can only come in contact with it. What is the difference between contact and communion? In contact you really do not imbibe the characteristics of the object, and you are not really in possession of the object. In contact, again, you do not receive into yourself the power of the object, and, therefore, you cannot also enjoy that object or have control over it. This would also give an idea of the generally unknown fact that our daily efforts at coming in contact with things, including persons, with a desire to possess and enjoy them, is a futile effort. It will not bring any fruit at all, except pain. The Gita says, *ye hi samsparsaja bhogah duhkheyonaya eva te*: The pleasures born of sense-contact are wombs of pain. Every contact brings pain and suffering and ultimate ruin of oneself. But the religious aspiration of the soul does not long for contact with God, but a communion with Him. In that communion which we try to establish in our spiritual moments of worship and meditation, we simultaneously commune ourselves with the whole of creation, because creation is the cosmic body of God. Thus to worship God is to worship the whole world and to serve God is to serve humanity, and vice versa. That is why we are sometimes told, *janata janardana; manava seva madhava seva*, etc. These sayings have a great significance and a meaning behind them. *Janata* and *Janardana*, *Manava* and *Madhava* cannot be identical except in terms of the perfection or Purnata of God. Thus our communion with God is simultaneously a communion with everything in the world.

## 11. KNOWLEDGE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A BENEDICTION FROM LORD SIVA HIMSELF.



One who has *bhaga* is called *Bhagavan*. All prosperity, all wealth, all treasure, all glory, all magnificence is *aisvarya*. Entire *aisvarya* is there. *Virya* is tremendous energy, force and power. *Yasas* is fame and renown. *Srih* is prosperity. *Jnana* and *vairagya* are the pinnacle of wisdom and the pinnacle of renunciation, respectively. Knowledge is supposed to be a benediction from Lord Siva Himself. *Jnanam mahesvaradicchet*: All knowledge is to be expected from the great Siva. They say that the ocean of Siva is incomprehensible; a part of it was contained in a pot by Brihaspati, and a spoon of it was taken by Panini who is the promulgator of Sanskrit grammar. You may know the interesting story as to how Panini, the originator of Sanskrit grammar, received knowledge from Lord Siva. He was supposed to be the dullest of the students in a group that was studying from a guru in Taxila, Taksha Shila. The other boys were very intelligent. Panini was the most stupid, the least intelligent, very much belittled and made fun of by the students in the class. He was deeply hurt that he was being cowed down by other students and that he could not understand anything that the teacher said. Almost in a desperate mood of disgust with everything, he went to the forest and deeply contemplated on Lord Siva. He prayed, "O Lord! Bless me with Knowledge." It is said that Lord Siva appeared before him, danced and revolved His Dakka or Damaru fourteen times, and the following fourteen sounds were made: 1. *Aiun*, 2. *Rlrk*, 3. *Aowng*, 4. *Ai ouch*, 5. *Ha ya va rat*, 6. *Lan*, 7. *Na ma nga na nam*, 8. *Jha bhanj*, 9. *Gha dha dhash*, 10. *Ja ba ga da das*, 11. *Kha pha chha tha tha cha ta tav*, 12. *Ka pay*, 13. *Sa sha sar*, and 14. *Hal*. All this constitutes the very essence of Sanskrit grammar. These sounds, meaningless as they may appear to us, became the foundation of Sanskrit grammar and Sanskrit literature. So, God can teach us without books and without the usual medium of instruction, by a thought, a sound, a look, a touch or a benign gesture. Such a Master's son is Sri Ganapati, Sri Ganesa.

## 12. THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL SADHANA IS A MYSTERY BY ITSELF.



The philosophy behind all the traditional worships and Puranic allegories is that the path of spiritual sadhana is a mystery by itself and it is not a heroic activity of the sadhaka, as sometimes he may imagine. No heroism will work there. Even the so-called heroic attitude, which we sometimes put on, is an entry of divine force into us. Just as a child's or a little baby's walking is the strength of the mother who is holding it with her hand, whatever intelligence we have, whatever satisfaction we enjoy in this life, whatever strength we possess, whether physical or psychological, whatever security we have, whatever is worthwhile in our existence, is a modicum of the reflection of God's power. The worship of Mahaganapati, with the mantra "*Om Gam Ganapataye Namah*", is a humble submission of the true circumstance of oneself before the might of God's glory. Who can open one's eyes before God? Who can utter one word before Him? Who can boast of one's learning, greatness, etc., before Him? We would be ashamed even to present ourselves before Him. Consider the might of the Creator, the magnitude of His power, the depth of His Wisdom, His Knowledge and His Omniscience, and our present condition! Compare it and contrast it. What sadhana, what meditation, what Yoga can we do? The moment we begin to take one step in the direction of this holy movement towards God, the world pounces upon us with all its army, because the world is quantitatively larger. We live in a world of quantities. We require quantitative food, quantitative drink, quantitative physical appurtenances, and everything we require and ask for in life is only a quantity rather than a quality. The quantity of the world being larger than the quantity of our physical personality, we cannot face it. So there is this humble acceptance of submission and a prayer to the great Almighty as manifest in Ganapati. We will not worship Lord Siva or Lord Narayana without first worshipping Ganapati. "*Om Gam Ganapataye Namah*", is a mantra to propitiate Ganapati. He is also called *Vighnesvara*, the God who is not merely the Ganapati or the ruler of the hosts or Ganas, but also a Remover of all impediments on all paths.



### **13. SPIRITUAL SADHANA IS AN ART OF BECOMING SMALLER AND SMALLER.**



The spiritual path is itself a great secret. The little japa that we do, the scriptures that we read, the audience that we hold and whatever we appear to be doing, is only an outer crust of the mystery of life. We ourselves do not know who is goading us to think in this manner. If we recognise this mystery within us which mystifies even our intelligence and our efforts, we will be humble, simple and small before God, because spiritual sadhana is an art of becoming smaller and smaller. It is not to become bigger and bigger. A person becomes smaller and smaller as he approaches God, just as a candle flame becomes dimmer and dimmer as it goes nearer and nearer to the sun; and just before the sun, it is not there. We cannot even see its existence. It vanishes. Likewise, when we approach God we become smaller and smaller, humbler and humbler, littler and littler, until we become nothing. In this nothingness, we will find God Himself filling us. When there is total emptiness created by an abolition of ourselves, in this emptiness or vacuum created, God fills it Himself. "Empty thyself and I shall fill thee," said Jesus Christ. The Mahaganapati Purana, the Ganapati Atharvasirsha Upanishad, the Ganesa Gita and several anecdotes occurring in the Mahabharata and the other Puranas glorify this aspect of the Supreme Almighty which requires our submission at His feet and expects us to recognise Him as the sole power that can remove all obstacles on the path of the spiritual seeker towards the attainment of Godhead. This seems to be a part of the meaning hidden behind the holy worship of Bhagavan Ganapati or Sri Ganesa or Mahaganapati. A dread enters our minds when we think of His Name on account of the feeling that any displeasure on His part may be doom to us. After all, we are human beings who are ruled more by sentiments and feelings than by our reason or our so-called understanding. This psychology of the human being is taken advantage of by the writers of the epics and the Puranas to instil faith in our hearts through the stories. This is a little tribute to the glory of Maha Ganapati.

## 14. THE RADHAKRISHNA MYSTERY IS A SECRET, EVEN AS GOD HIMSELF IS A SECRET.



Sri Radhashtami is a joyous occasion observed throughout the country, especially in the North, bringing to one's hallowed memory the advent of Radha. But, there is nothing in religious history which is so little understood as the particular spiritual significance which is the theme of the observance of this sacred day, the eighth day in this bright half of the month of Bhadrapada (August/September), the birthday of Radha. The word 'Radhakrishna' is a reputed compound name, and devotees generally run into mystical contemplation and even fly into ecstasies in their moods in an attempt to understand the relationship between Sri Krishna and Radha. But, as is the case with almost everything in the world, this relationship, which is deeply spiritual and mystical, is hard for the human mind to understand because God, and everything that is connected with God, cannot become an object of human understanding. The human mind is not expected to understand God, and to 'understand' Him would be a blasphemy on the part of the human reason. But the specific significance that is attached to the relationship between Sri Krishna and Radha is the supernal love that operates in this mysterious relation between God and the world. The world is ruled by love, which is the quintessence of God. The Radhakrishna mystery is a secret, even as God Himself is a secret. What can be a greater secret than God's Existence! We cannot know where God is, or what God is doing, or why God has created the world. We cannot say what His relation is to us, or what our relation is to Him. Thus it is that when we read the Srimad Bhagavata Purana, the Brahma-Vaivarta Purana and certain other texts where such extreme forms of divine relation are expounded, we retrace our steps and turn back dumbfounded. *Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*: Speech and mind turn back from that which they are not supposed to express or understand or think. The reason behind this difficulty is that we are, as human beings, not prepared to shed the human way of thinking.

## 15. THE MELTING OF THE HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY IS CALLED LOVE OF GOD.



The term 'Love of God' may mean either love that a devotee evinces in regard to God, or the love that God has for a devotee. But we are always men and we can think only as men. We are women, and we can think only as women. Apart from the idea of male and female, there are other shackles by which we are bound to this earth, all of which are, as it were, steel chains with which we are bound to our own personalities and prejudices, which have to melt into a liquefied form before God, the all-encompassing, superlegalistic Existence, super-relational Being. The very thought of it will melt the human individual. This melting of the human individuality is called Love of God. Even in ordinary intense forms of worldly love, our individuality tends towards a melting, though it does not actually melt. We rarely experience intense love in our lives. Often we are like broken glass pieces with no worth or value in us. We are empty shells parading, with no substance in ourselves. This is human life today. But this will not work before the realities of life. We can never entertain true affection and true love in regard to anything in this world, because we are mostly hypocrites. We are never true to ourselves and, therefore, we can never be true to others. This predicament is a tremendous danger before man's future. And this illness has come upon man right from the very beginning of his birth itself, and attaches itself to him wherever he goes in every incarnation. Perhaps this is the original sin that people speak of in theological circles. Unless we shed this completely and stand naked before the glory and fire of God as pure Spirit and not as men and women, we cannot understand, appreciate and feel what divine love is. This is why we cannot understand the relationship between Radha and Krishna, in the Radhakrishna compound. The other aspect of this mystery is what is called the *Rasalila*, very magnificently, gloriously and touchingly described in the *Rasa Panchadhyayi* of the *Srimad Bhagavata*, odious to impure minds but glorious to pure minds.

## 16. MY SOUL AND YOUR SOUL

### ARE THE SAME.



We are dissimilar in every respect. We speak different languages, and we have different ideals in social life. We eat different kinds of food, and we have differences in every respect. But, there is one thing which keeps us together, and that is what we call the soul of man. Bodies are different, languages are different, houses are different—everything may be different, but the soul cannot be different. My soul and your soul are the same, and they speak the same language. Though verbally I may be speaking in a vernacular of India or in the English language, and somebody else may be speaking in French or German, the soul in all speaks in a single language. The language of the soul in the West is the same as the language of the soul in the East. The language of the soul of a man is the same as the language of the soul of a woman or that of a child, for the matter of that, because the soul is indistinguishable in its characteristic. While the characteristics of personalities may differ, the characteristics of the structure of the soul do not differ. So, here is a common ground for a real unity among all people. You remove your soul from your personality, and let us see what you are. You will simply disintegrate into smithereens the moment the soul is withdrawn from your personality. You may wonder why it should happen. The soul is not a spark of light or a centre of gravity that is situated in a location of your personality, as ordinarily you may wrongly conceive. The soul is not any such thing. It is a peculiar ‘something’ which is difficult to explain in language. It is like electric energy. You cannot say where electricity is. Is it inside the body or outside the body? Is it inside the powerhouse? It is in every speck of creation. In every atom of the world is electricity present. Likewise, the soul is present in every nook and corner of this creation. It is not sitting inside the body like a small insect or a flame of a candle inside a pot. To conceive it as being located somewhere would be a very peculiar and childish notion.

## 17. RELIGION IS THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL.



The soul is that integrating ‘something’ which brings the cells of the body together into a bodily form. It is the force which brings together the various thoughts of your mind and enables the harmonious functioning of anything that you can call as yourself. If, therefore, the soul is to be withdrawn, you will not exist any more. That which you call the ‘you’ or the ‘I’ is the soul. It is not something different from what you are. What you yourself are, that is the soul. And if the soul is removed, you yourself are removed. So what is left there? Nothing. You do not ‘have’ a soul; you yourself ‘are’ the soul. Do not say, “I have a soul inside me.” This is a peculiar baby’s idea of the soul. What you yourself are, that is the soul. So, minus you, what is the soul; and minus the soul, what are you? They are identical. You are the soul; the soul is you. Religion is the science of the soul. It is not Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc. These are not religions. These are only the shapes that religion has taken in social relationship. Religion is the character of the soul made manifest in outward conduct and activity. There is no such thing as a life without religion. That would be like your living without a soul. That would be, again, to live without your own self. That is an absurdity of the first water. This is a very difficult thing to conceive in the mind. People had a very wrong notion of spirituality, of religion, of God even, of creation, of social relationship, etc. To set right these errors of thought in mankind in general and to show a path to the whole of humanity, Masters such as Swami Sivanandaji were born. The philosophy and the religion of Swami Sivanandaji is the philosophy and the religion of mankind. He did not come to preach Hinduism. He did not belong to any particular religion. He did not even act as a human being. He acted as a super-personality and as a representative of God, the Almighty, who cannot be regarded as a prerogative of any particular creed or cult. God is an impersonal existence, whose representation was this Master and Masters of his kind.

## 18. ALL OUR DESIRES ARE DESIRES OF THE SOUL, ULTIMATELY.



The aspiration of the human being is really the soul's longing for freedom. All our desires are desires of the soul, ultimately. Though they look like sensory desires, mental desires, intellectual desires, social desires, etc., they are, at the bottom, the longing of the soul of the human being through the operations of the mind and the activities of the senses. Varieties of longings and multitudes of enterprises in the world can be collected into a single focus of the soul's aspiration for liberation. And this aspiration for liberation is not merely the longing of the human being, but of all that is created anywhere on earth or in heaven. Whether it is the plant or the animal, whether it is a man or a celestial, the aspiration is this much. All longings can be boiled down into the quintessence of the longing for liberation, freedom from all sides and an ultimate supremacy over one's own self in the realisation of this freedom. The Devi-Mahatmya describes to us the epic of the march of the human soul to its destination—the realisation of this freedom—is the dramatic aspect of the great worship of the Divine Mother during these nine days of Navaratri, or Dassehra. The march of the soul is dramatic. It is not a lagging or a crawling but a beautiful, sonorous, musical advent, we may say. This is the beauty of the Devi-Mahatmya. The Devi-Mahatmya, which is a part of the Markandeya Purana, contains thirteen chapters known as the Prathama Charitra, Madhyama Charitra and the Uttama Charitra. The march of the soul is graduated into three major steps. While we have to rise through various rungs of the ladder of evolution, we come to three points where there is a complete transformation of outlook, attitude and constitution of our being. These threefold transformations of the spiritual being of the aspiring soul are dominated or presided over by three deities known as Maha-Kali, Maha-Lakshmi and Maha-Sarasvati. These three presiding forces are representative of the powers of the spirit within manifesting themselves in an upward ascent towards freedom ultimate.

## 19. *KAMA, KRODHA AND LOBHA ARE THE GATES TO HELL.*



There are three stages of transformation described in the three sections of the Devi-Mahatmya. The first one is where Adi-Sakti awakens Maha-Vishnu who was asleep, so that He may destroy or overcome the original demoniacal forces, Madhu and Kaitabha. The second stage is where the same Sakti manifests Herself as Maha-Lakshmi and overcomes Mahishasura and Raktabija. The third one is where Sumbha and Nisumbha are destroyed by MahaSarasvati. The nine days of worship are referred to as Navaratri. The final victory is called Vijaya-Dasami, the tenth day. That is the day of Victory, where you master the forces of Nature completely and your goal is reached. When you step over nine, you enter into Infinity. Numbers are only nine; you do not have ten numbers. All the arithmetic is within nine numbers only. The whole cosmos is within nine. But when you transcend the nine, you have gone to Infinity, which is beyond cosmic relationship. The lower powers of Nature are like dirt. We call them *mala*. The Madhu and Kaitabha, two Rakshasas (demons) are supposed to have come out of the dirt of the ear of Vishnu. The lowest category of opposition is of the nature of dirt, *mala*; this dirt is in the form of *kama*, *krodha* and *lobha*. These three are the gates to hell. They are regarded as dirt, because they cover the consciousness in such a way that it appears to be not there at all. It is like painting a thin glass with coal tar. You cannot see the glass. It is all pitch-dark like clouds. This has to be rubbed off with great effort. When this *mala* or dirt is removed, you get into another trouble. There are many more things that philosophy cannot comprehend. *Kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* are not the only enemies. There are subtler ones, more formidable than these visible foes. As a matter of fact, the subtle invisible enemies are more difficult to overcome than the visible ones. Sometimes an angry man is better than a smiling person. A smiling person is more dangerous than an angry one, because he can have a knife under his armpit.



## 20. *MALA* AND *VIKSHEPA* ARE THE PRIMARY OPPOSITIONS IN OUR SPIRITUAL PURSUIT.



Mahishasura and Raktabija represent the *vikshepa Sakti*, the tossing of the mind. Every minute the mind changes its forms which multiply in millions. You read in the Devi-Mahatmya, how Mahishasura changed his form. Now he is an elephant, now he is a buffalo, now he is something else. If you hit him in one form, he comes in another form. His energies are incapable of being exhausted. However much you may try to oppose the *vikshepa sakti*, it will manifest in some form or other. This is described in the form of the demon Raktabija, whose drops of blood were seeds of hundreds and thousands of demons like him coming up. There was no end to it. If you cut off one or two desires, the desire is not over. Unless the root is dug out, there is no use of merely severing the branches of the tree. So what did the Devi do? She asked Kali to spread her tongue throughout the earth, so that there is no ground at all for the Rakshasas to walk over. Chariots and horses and demons and everybody entered her mouth. She chewed all chariots into powder. Likewise, we have to adopt a technique of sucking the very root of desires and not merely chop off its branches. Otherwise, desires will take various forms like Mahishasura. Their very essence has to be sucked, because a desire is not an outward form or an action; it is a tendency within. You may do nothing, and yet you will have desires, because desire is not necessarily an activity. A desireful person can be sitting quiet, doing nothing, saying nothing, and yet be full of desires because it is a tendency of the mind, an inclination of consciousness. That can be inside, even if there is outwardly nothing. This is the *vikshepa sakti*—distraction, tossing and the chameleon attitude of desire—which attacks us, when, with herculean efforts, we try to destroy or gain control over *kama* and *krodha*, Madhu and Kaitabha. After Madhu and Kaitabha, we get Mahishasura and Raktabija. Thus *mala* and *vikshepa* are the primary oppositions in our spiritual pursuit.

## 21. *SATTVA* IS LIKE A TRANSPARENT GLASS THAT IS PLACED BETWEEN US AND THE TRUTH.

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Ancient masters have told us that while *mala* or dirt of the psychological structure can be removed by Karma Yoga, by unselfish and dedicated service, *vikshepa* or distraction of the mind can be removed only by worship of God, by *Upasana*. We may have a third trouble, namely, *Ajnana* or ignorance. Distraction and direct sensual desires are the outer expressions of a subtle ignorance of Truth—*Avidya* or *Ajnana*. Why do we desire things? Because, we do not know the nature of Truth. Why does a strong wind blow? Because, the sun is covered over with clouds. When the Atman is covered over by ignorance of its nature, the winds of desire begin to blow, and they come like violent storms. All the powers of Nature get focussed in a desire when it manifests itself, whatever be that desire. So the whole of Nature has to be subdued. You are not to subdue only your individual nature, but the cosmic Nature itself is to be subdued. This is what is depicted in the epic of the Devi Mahatmya. It is the subdual, overcoming, transformation of the cosmic Nature in the form of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. While *mala* represents *tamas*, *vikshepa* represents *rajas*. *Sattva* is also a *guna*, unfortunately. We always praise *sattva* and regard it as a very desirable thing. But it is like a transparent glass that is placed between us and the Truth. You can see through it, but you cannot go beyond it because though the glass is transparent, it can obstruct your movement. It is not like a brick wall, completely preventing your vision, as *tamas* does; it is not like a blowing wind which simply tosses you here and there, as *rajas* does; it is a plain glass, through which you can have vision of Reality, but you cannot contact Reality nevertheless. Even *sattva* is a subtle medium of obstruction, which acts in a double form—as complacency or satisfaction with what has been achieved, and an ignorance of what is beyond. These two aspects of *sattva* are indicated by the two personalities of Sumbha and Nisumbha. They have to be dispelled by the power of higher wisdom, which is Maha-Sarasvati.

22. THE PATH OF SADHANA ALSO IS A COSMIC EFFORT OF THE SOUL.



Action, contemplation and knowledge are the three stages through which we have to pierce through the veil of Prakriti, or the three *gunas*. We are not individual pedestrians on the path. There is no individual movement here. It is all a total movement of everything connected with us, and no item in the world is really disconnected from us. Every thread in a cloth is connected with every other thread. When you lift one thread of a cloth, the whole cloth comes up, because of the interconnection of the warp and the woof of the cloth. Likewise, there is an internal interconnection of beings, which prevents any kind of individual effort for the sake of salvation. That is why salvation is universal, it is not individual. When you attain to the Supreme Being, you become the Universal Being. You do not go there as a Mr. So-and-so or as a Mrs. So-and-so. The path of sadhana also is a cosmic effort of the soul, a subtle secret which most Sadhakas are likely to forget. It is not a small, simple, private effort of yours in the closet of your room, but a dynamic activity of your essential personality, internally connected by unforeseen relationships with everything in the cosmos. When you enter the path of the spirit you have also, at the same time, entered the path of cosmic relationship. A Sadhaka is, therefore, a cosmic person. A spiritual seeker, an aspirant is a representative of cosmic situation. His sadhana is not an individual effort. It is much more than what it appears to be on the surface. In sadhana, in spiritual effort, you are face to face with your Maker. The Maker is universal. He is not in one spot, hiding himself in one corner. So, the dance of the cosmic spirit, in its supernal effort at self-transcendence, is majestically described in the beautifully worded sonorous songs of the Devi-Mahatmya, where we are given a stimulating description of what Maha-Kali did, what Maha-Lakshmi did and what Maha-Sarasvati did in bringing about this evolution, transformation of the whole range of Prakriti from *tamas* to *rajas*, from *rajas* to *sattva* and from *Sattva* to Supreme *Vijaya*, mastery in the Absolute, God-realisation.

23. NOBODY CAN BE AS RICH AS A YOGI.



Through the worship of Maha-Kali, Maha-Lakshmi and Maha-Sarasvati, we worship Mula-Prakriti, Adi-Sakti in her cosmic dance-form of transformation, prosperity and illumination. In the beginning, what happens to a sadhaka? There is a necessity of self-transformation. It is all hardship, rubbing and cleaning, washing, sweeping, etc. That is the first stage through the worship of Maha-Kali, who brings about a destruction of all barriers. Then what happens? There is tremendous prosperity. You become a master and a progressive soul commanding all powers, getting everything that you want. This is the second stage. In the first stage, it looked as if you were a poor person, having nothing, very weak. But, when you overcome this weakness by removing the barrier of *tamas*, you become prosperous. Nobody can be as rich as a Yogi. He can command all the powers. By a thought he can invoke all things, and this is Goddess Maha-Lakshmi working. When Maha-Kali has finished her work of destruction of opposition, Maha-Lakshmi comes as prosperity. A great Yogi is also like a royal personality, because of his internal invocations, though unconsciously done, of cosmic powers. When prosperity dawns, it looks as if the whole universe is heaven. In the first stage, it looked like hell. Afterwards, in the second stage, it looks like heaven, when Maha-Lakshmi begins to work. But this also is not sufficient. Knowledge should dawn. It is not heaven that you are asking for. You want the realisation of Truth. Maha-Sarasvati will come to help and a flood of light of Truth will be thrown, and you will see things as they are. There is no enjoyment, prosperity, richness, wealth, or any such thing. It is Truth unconnected with yourself in the beginning, but later on inseparable from yourself. Thus, from opposition to prosperity, from prosperity to enlightenment, and from enlightenment to Self-realisation do we proceed. So, these are the truths esoterically conveyed to us in the mantras of the Devi-Mahatmya. This is also a great mantra-sastra. Every sloka, every verse of the Devi-Mahatmya is a mantra by itself.

24. GOD SOMETIMES CAN TAKE INCARNATIONS OF A TYPE WHICH WE CAN PHYSICALLY OBSERVE.



There has always been a perpetual, unceasing emanation of light, heat and warmth from the sun, ever since ages. So is God's manifestation in the world as the Incarnations. The spiritual forces are the messengers of God. This divine manifestation is not limited to places, times and persons. These manifestations are sometimes too subtle to be capable of being perceived by human eyes. We have various gradations of frequency in light rays and sound waves, but the higher frequencies are not capable of being perceived by the eyes or heard by the ears. Inasmuch as our senses work under a low frequency of operation. Different frequencies of energy in the cosmos work in different realms for different purposes. And this is one of the reasons why we are unable to come in contact with super-physical forces that operate even now under our very nose. Hell and heaven, the seven worlds are existent even here and now. But we cannot contact them, just as we cannot see with our physical eyes the x-rays and the cosmic rays. Hence, often, manifestations of God and supernormal Avatars, which take place nevertheless, remain incomprehensible to human perceptions. Sometimes, the invisible rays get grossened into visible forms, such as the sun's rays—then we begin to see them. We see a physical world before us because the physical particles of nature that we see with our eyes are of a similar frequency as the constitution of our own sense-organs. That is why we can see *bhuloka*, but not *bhuhariloka*, *svarloka*, *maharloka*, *janaloka*, *tapoloka* or *satyaloka*. We also know why we see only human beings and not the Devas, gods and celestials. We cannot see them, because they are in a higher level of frequency of consciousness. Likewise, God sometimes can take incarnations of a type which we can physically observe and sensorily cognise, enjoy and be benefited by. Then, the frequency comes down to the level of our cognitions and perceptions, but they are limited in their operations when they come to a specific frequency of revelation.

25. PAIN IS ONLY A REFUSAL ON THE PART OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS TO RECOGNISE THE BLISS OF GOD'S CREATION.

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Mortality, vicissitude, transience, materiality, externality, pain and death are all limitations of consciousness brought about by an error of perception, and they do not exist by themselves. They have no existence as such, but they are only processes tending towards the Supernal Being. In the wondrous phenomenon called the *Rasa* dance, the Spirit is dancing with its own manifestations. As a child plays with its own reflection seen in a mirror, so did the Lord play with the eternal devotees of *Vrindavana*. He did not play with personalities, even as a child does not play with anybody when it looks at its own self through the mirror. This is the interpretation given in the Srimad Bhagavata itself in the *Dasama Skandha*. So it is God playing with God, like a child playing with itself or the Original dancing with its own reflections, connoting the spiritual dance of the cosmos, the attraction of the part towards the Whole, man's inseparability from God, and the soul's agony on account of its bereavement from the Supreme. The restless adventure of the soul in respect of its Original, of which it is an integral part, nay is It Itself, is the quintessence of the dance called the *Rasa* Dance. 'Rasa' means quintessence. "*Raso vai sah...*", says the Taittiriya Upanishad. It is Ananda that is manifest everywhere in the world. It is Bliss and not pain that we see in the world. Pain is only a refusal on the part of our consciousness to recognise the bliss of God's creation. *Ananda* is the reality. Pain is not the truth of existence. So it is the *ananda*, the Supernal Beatitude, Beauty, magnificence and the lustre of God that has revealed itself in the historical epic movement of the Supreme into the temporal realms as Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Impossible it is for the human mind to understand what the *rasa* means, because it is not meant for man to understand. It was God dancing to His own tune. This is the eternal *Tandava* or cosmic dance which is connotative of all the manifestations—personal, social, political and spiritual. It is the remedy that is administered to the soul of man to cure him of the illness of *samsara*.

26. WE OWE A UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION TO ALL THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE.



Our obligation is not merely to our parents, brothers and sisters, not merely to the government of our country that protects us, not merely to the planet earth on which we live, not merely to the solar system which gives us light, heat and energy. Because we are not able to fulfil all these obligations in a short span of life, we are reborn. Otherwise we need not be reborn. If we have fulfilled or discharged all our duties in this very life itself, why should we take a next birth? But, life is short, and also we have not got the least concept of what obligations we bear or owe to the universe outside. Even when we are ninety years old, this knowledge will not come to us. So, naturally we die with ignorance. And because of this ignorance we are not able to discharge our duties properly. Because of the non-discharge of our duties and obligations properly, we are hurled into transmigration. And so long as we do not understand the meaning of the sacrifice that we are expected to perform and fulfil the obligations that we owe to the conditions of our existence, we cannot avoid undergoing this process of births and deaths. What are the conditions of our existence? Parents are a conditioning factor. They have given birth to us; they feed us, take care of us and educate us. Society is another conditioning factor. We know how much we owe to society. Though it may not be visible outwardly, invisibly society protects us, takes care of us and helps us in many ways. The nation and the international system help us. The stellar systems also help us. In short, the whole cosmos helps us. Therefore, we owe a universal obligation to all things in the universe. When we discharge one obligation, we will find that another obligation has not been discharged. We cannot have an integral vision of things. We are partial, short-sighted people. We have a very narrow vision of things, and it is this narrow vision that is responsible for our birth and death.

27. THE VEDAS ARE SCIENTIFIC.



The ancient masters, the Seers saw with their premonition, intuition or foresight that people cannot contain the Vedic knowledge in their heads. *Ananta vai vedah*: Vedas are endless or infinite, which means to say, knowledge has no limit. People in this *Kali Yuga*, especially, are so feeble physically, morally and intellectually that this truth has to be instilled into their minds through some other manner. This is why Vyasa wrote the great epic Mahabharata. He found out that the Vedas are of no use to poor human beings in this *Kali Yuga*. Whatever the Vedas say would not enter our heads, because they contain impersonal scientific knowledge. We are all ignorant, rustic villagers in our way of thinking. Subtle, universal, scientific thinking as is contained in the Vedas is far from us. When I say the Vedas are scientific, I am not making a joke. Masters like Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, who founded the *Arya Samaj*; Sayana, the great commentator of the Vedas; Aurobindo, of our own times; the Puri Sankaracharya; the late Bharati Krishna Tirtha—they all have struggled to point out that every science is contained in the Vedas. Even subjects such as aeronautics, shipbuilding, mathematics of the highest type in differential calculus, infinite calculus—everything is in the Vedas. Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha has written a book called Vedic Mathematics, and it has been published by the Benares Hindu University. The Veda Samhitas contain the highest reaches of mathematics. Many think that the Vedas are only some foolish chants of the cowherds of Punjab, as British historians tell us. The Aryans were regarded as cowherds grazing their cows in Punjab and blabbering something and that became the Vedas. This is the British interpretation of our culture, which has gone into our heads! The Vedas are not any kind of blabbering. They are intuitional revelations of ecstatic souls who had the vision of the Absolute. So the master Vyasa, Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, wrote the Mahabharata and the Puranas to explain these very impersonal scientific truths of the Vedas in personal Epic style.

28. WE ARE TOLD *YAJNA*, *DANA* AND *TAPAS* CONSTITUTE THE HIGHEST NECESSITY OF RELIGION.



The epics and Puranas follow an indirect way of instructing the truths. But the Vedas directly tell the truth, openly. This is scientific. Science always plainly tells the truth as it is, without any camouflage. The epics and the Puranas do not say directly that you must be a good man. They say, “Yudhishtira was a good man. His virtue was so immense. His conduct was so adventurous that as a result he got so many things.” One who hears this feels, “Oh, I see. Then I must also do like that.” These texts are called *Suhrit-Samhitas*, while the Vedas are known as *Prabhu-Samhitas*. The latter command, like a master. Science always commands on principles. The Puranas and epics give stories, ancient history and make us think scientifically in an indirect manner, as though with a sugarcoated pill. That is why it is said: *Bharatam panchamo vedah*. While the Vedas are supposed to be four, the Mahabharata is the fifth Veda. Whatever it is, when knowledge gets adulterated through intense sensory activity, weakness of will and lack of moral force, the understanding of Dharma also falls. So we must have a whip to goad us to the path of Dharma, spirituality and God-consciousness. The culture of India has instituted many occasions for bringing home to our minds the facts of our eternal glory and our duties to God, the world and mankind. We owe three kinds of duties which are mentioned in the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita: *Yajno danam tapas-chaiva pavanani manishinam*. They are *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*. *Yajna* itself contains in its meaning all possible knowledge and the mandate on ethics. Still we are told *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* constitute the highest necessity of religion. While *tapas* is the duty that we owe to our own selves, *dana* is that which we owe to others, and *yajna* is that we owe to God. *Tapas* is austerity. We must be austere. We must live a very restrained life. *Dana* is charitable feeling, charitable nature and charitable act in respect of others, while *yajna* is the self-dedication we make of our own self, wholly and totally, to the Supreme Being.

29. DESIRE IS THE GREATEST POWER IN THE WORLD.



There is a perpetual conflict between god and devil, as the theologians sometimes tell us. The ruling divinity of the universe and the forces of darkness fight with each other. A noble and sublime instance of this epic event that is supposed to have taken place aeons back in the history of the cosmos, is the Skanda Shashthi Festival. The great hero of this cosmic drama which is described in the Skanda Purana, and in certain other scriptures like the Mahabharata, is Skanda, the great War-god of India. Oftentimes, westerners compare Him with Mars, the generalissimo of the celestials, the angels in heaven. In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna, the spokesman of the great poem, identifies Himself with Skanda among the generals: *Senaninam-aham Skandah*. The religious history of this event commences with a magnificent portrayal of the great God Siva absorbed in meditation and deeply immersed in Samadhi, oblivious of what we may call darkness, evil or the centrifugal forces. God's absorption in Himself in the 'I am that I am' is the total cosmic opposition to the multifarious dark activities of the urges in the direction of the senses whose leader is the ego and whose colleagues are desire and anger. The greatest forms which this impulse of externality can take in us are these three. The ego is the centrality of the urge, the central dynamo, as it were, which pumps the energy necessary for the movement of this impulse outwardly. And, desire and anger are like the two arms of this adamantine centrality of individuals. Desire is the greatest power in the world. Of all the powers, desire is the strongest, because nothing can move without desire. Hence desire should be regarded as the impulse for any kind of movement, in any direction. The nature of desire is so complex that in a poem called the *Kama Gita*, in the Mahabharata, we are told that desire laughs at people who are trying to conquer it. Because, the attempt to conquer desire itself is a desire. This is the reason why it laughs. Sri Krishna sings this *Kama Gita* to illustrate the difficulty of conquering desire of any kind, unless proper means are employed.

30. DIVINITY IS AN INTEGRATING FORCE, WHILE VIRTUE IS ONLY A COUNTER-CORRELATIVE OF VICE.



Virtue is supposed to have power to overcome vice. But often we feel that the virtues of the world are incapable of confronting the vices of nature. Virtue does not seem to succeed. The gods were virtuous and the demons were vicious. But, the gods could not face them, just as the virtuous ones in this world are unable to defeat the vicious. The virtuous people are suffering and the evil ones are thriving. The truth is that while virtue is generally understood as the opposite of vice, we forget the fact that it is also the counter-correlative of vice. So, it has not got the strength to confront the vice. Vice or evil can be overcome by a power which is transcendent and not merely ethical and moral. The evils of the world are not afraid of mere morality and ethics. Mere goodness will not do. There should be Divinity in our personality, and Divinity is far superior to mere goodness in the form of an ethical behaviour and a moral conduct. Divinity is an integrating force, while virtue is only a counter-correlative of vice. There cannot be virtue unless there is vice. Because, if there is no evil at all, there cannot be any such thing called goodness. But Divinity is a different thing altogether because it transcends both the good and the evil. So, when the forces of darkness began to assault the angels, the Purana tells us that the forces were threefold. They are named, in the Skanda Purana, as *Surapadma*, *Simhamukha* and *Taraka*; and in the Mahabharata as Duryodhana, Kama and Duhsasana. Angels are good enough and they are far superior to humans in virtue, in goodness, in knowledge and in everything conceivable. But they could not stand this vicious force. They had to invoke God Himself. Lord Siva, the great Master of Yoga was the only succour and the source of hope to the gods and angels. He is always in a state of Samadhi. The force, the energy, the militant expression of Lord Siva is the only answer to this problem. When everyone starts crying, He cannot bear it anymore. This was the condition before the birth of Skanda.

31. HOW THE SAME THING CAN BE A FRIEND AND ALSO AN ENEMY?



The Bhagavadgita gives an answer to the interesting question, how the same thing can be a friend and also an enemy. In the sixth chapter, we are told that the Self is the friend and the Self is also the enemy. Desire is a friend and also an enemy. The world is a friend and also an enemy. By means of the instrumentality of *Kamadeva*, the Divine Force of Siva was roused up into action, which is otherwise Omnipresent. In the Vedanta philosophy, a distinction is drawn between two types of consciousness, known as *sahaja-jnana* and *Vritti-Jnana*, which can be translated as a universally present impersonal, featureless consciousness and a directly operative consciousness acting in some given way, respectively. Or, to give a grosser example, the impersonal fire which is present in all the five elements around us, is to be distinguished from the concrete fire with which we cook our meal and light our lamp. Energy in action is the fire that is burning through the cooking stove, and the energy that is merely existing in an impersonal manner is like the fire present in all the five elements. So, the force of Siva was impersonal in the samadhi state and it had no concern with good or bad, or anything that is taking place anywhere; but when it had to be employed as a weapon to counteract the evils of creation, it had to manifest itself and could not merely remain as an impersonal featureless Samadhi consciousness. So, the energy burst forth from Siva's third eye which is the power of Knowledge or *Chit-Sakti*. Only the energy of Wisdom can counteract the evil of creation and not any other power, not anything that we do in the form of charity, goodness or our so-called religiosity. So we have in this great epic of Skanda's incarnation, the '*Kumara Sambhava*', the mighty portrayal of the adventure of the Spirit through the processes of sadhana, spiritual practice, wherein we commune ourselves with the highest power that is conceivable, the energy of God Himself. We have to draw that energy forward and harness it to face this world. Then the power of externality gets transformed into the peace of universality.

Shrimannaaraayana Naaraayana...

Shrimannaaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Lakshmi Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Badri Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Surya Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Satya Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Hari Om Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Gaavo Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Japo Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Maataa Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Pita Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Bandhu Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Sakhaa Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Guru Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Sarvam Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.

Shri Hari Naaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana,
Bhaja Mannaaraayana Naaraayana Naaraayana.



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Swami Krishnanandaji has more divine qualities than are mentioned in the Gita. Who knows how many Sankaracharyas have gone into our young Swamiji? Only if you have performed hard Tapasya in hundreds of previous births, will you be able to sit at the lotus-feet of Jnanis like him and learn the Vedantic truths. Talking with him is like talking with God. He is our Dakshinamurti. The celebration of his Birthday is the worship of Brahman. Such celebrations are very necessary.

- Swami Sivananda

THE MAHA-MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA

“Om Tryambakam Yajamahe
Sugandhim Pushtivardhanam;
Urvarukamiva Bandhanan-
Mrityor-Mukshiya Mamritat”

Meaning :-

Om – “We worship the Three-Eyed one (Lord Siva), who is fragrant (with energy), and who nourishes well all beings. May He liberate us from death for the sake of Immortality even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage (to the creeper)”.

This Mantra wards off all kinds of accidents, bestows health and long life and ultimately confers Immortality.



SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN JULY



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