



Spiritual Journey in May

(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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Compiled by :-

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**MADHAVA DIVYA DHAM,
TAVEREKERE, BENGALURU.(South).**

2018

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First Print : November, 2018

Copies : 1000

For Free Distribution.

Publishers :

MADHAVA DIVYA DHAM,
TAVEREKERE, BENGALURU.(South).

Printed at :

Sri Chakra Off-Set Printers,
T A T I P A K A - 533 249.
Mobile : 98669 52350

Price : Devotion to Gurudev, who is none other than God.

(This book was published with the blessings of
Pujya Sri Swami Hamsanandaji of Shivanandashram H.Q., Rishikesh
and with the noble heart of Smt. Ramani Jayaram, Taverekere,
Bengaluru)

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FOREWORD

Divya Jyoti

Hans-Joachim Schroer,
Kopenhagener Str. 40, 30457
Hannover, Germany.

In 1993 I met Swami Hamsananda Maharaj for the first time. He was on a trip throughout Europe and visited Hannover. He gave lectures at our Yoga classes about meditation and scriptures. I planned to visit the Sivananda Ashram for many years, but up to this time it was somehow not possible. I wanted to find and meet the authors/interpreters of so many wonderful books of spirituality, like The Bhagavad Gita, The Upanishads etc., which I studied for many years.

Swami Hamsanandaji Maharaj opened a door, he was the key. A few weeks later I travelled to Rishikesh. Many visits followed in the next years. The morning after my first arrival, I had to go to *Darshan* with Swami Krishnananda Maharaj in the hospital wing. Many visitors were there sitting on the floor. No space left in the crowd. Swamiji sat on an arm chair. At his left a small table, telephone on top, on the other side his assistant, writing. He asked new-comers of their names, where they came from etc. Beside that he gave lectures, interrupted by people who asked for signatures, interrupted also by telephone calls, office-work and lectures.

There was something else, which is difficult to describe. It was with him. It vibrated with his speaking, talking and advices. It was spirituality alive! You could feel it, hear it. He was not only a representative of spirituality, but spirituality himself. I was little bit afraid of such a great personality. I could hardly open my mouth, when I had to tell my name and where I came from. I was astonished. At last he said: "Stay as long as you want". I was accepted to stay under the spiritual umbrella of Sivananda Ashram for two weeks.

You never knew how talks with Swamiji may end. Once I went to the cash-office to give donation for food. In the cash-office, one Swami was very helpful, organized everything. Finally a permission had to be signed by Swamiji Krishnananda. I had no choice, had to go to his office to see him. Of course, he was well informed. When I arrived at his desk, he asked: "Do you like our food?" "Yes, Swamiji !" I replied a bit helpless. "How long do you stay? Two weeks?" he continued. I only could confirm. Now something curious happened: "Well, then I have enough time to prepare also a special lunch as long as you are here," he said friendly and smiled. Somehow I understood. Silently I took the signed papers and left his office. So all residents, guests, sadhus etc. had two wonderful meals (lunch) within two weeks. Thank you Swamiji.

Regularly Swami Hamsanandaji invited me for tea in the afternoon. Guests were always in his post-office. They came from different places in the world. The cookie box was never empty, because there were many wonderful secret suppliers. He taught Sanskrit, read scriptures in Sanskrit with students, answered letters in different languages, prepared books. Some visitors served him by stamping letters.

Why do I write this? Because you also find this atmosphere of spirituality in this wonderful compilation at the following pages. It is a composition of sayings, ideas, philosophy by Swamiji Krishnananda who becomes alive with every headline and sentence in this booklet of the "**Spiritual Journey in May**". Nowadays people have no time. But you need not to read much, only one excerpt a day will remind you at your own spiritual journey.
OM TAT SAT

May God and Gurudev bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Hannover,
September, 2018.


Divya Jyoti



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, the devotee 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 May**" by name, contains excerpts from this original book. This book would be useful to those readers who couldn't find sufficient time to read big books, but have a strong wish to taste at least some sentences of Revered Swamiji Maharaj. I know very well that the abridged explanations in these excerpts may somehow hamper the powerful flow of disquisitions 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 an opportunity to prepare this book for distribution as *Jnana Prasad* on the 17th Purnima Thithi Aradhana of Swami Krishnanandaji on 15.11.2018, the Gopastami Day.

This book can be used by the Sadhaks for *Swaadhyaaya* at any time (not only in the month specified). I profusely thank Ms. Divya Jyoti, Hans-Joachim Schroer, Kopenhagener Str. 40, 30457 Hannover, Germany, 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: 25. 5. 2018.

In the Service of Gurudev,

- U. NARAYANA RAO.



1. “RELIGION IS THE DUTY OF MAN TO THE UNIVERSE.”

In a broad way, religion may be regarded as pure common sense. It is not a compulsion or an imposition that is inflicted upon one by people from outside. It is something which we cannot avoid. As long as we are in this world, there is religion. We shall be always in some world, which is a name we give to the universal atmosphere in all its planes or levels of expression. If we know what religion is, we will also know what meditation is, because meditation is nothing but the contemplation of the fact of religion. So, when religion is known, meditation also is known. The duty that we owe to the Universe is our religion. Can there be, then, many religions in the world? This question also is automatically answered in this small aphoristic answer: “Religion is the duty of man to the Universe.” Can there be many kinds of duty towards the Universe? This query can only be answered by an analogy. There is a family consisting of many members—father, mother, brother, sister, children, and so on. Each member of the family owes a duty towards every other member of the family. Now, does this duty vary from member to member, or not? It varies, and it does not vary. Both answers hold good here. It varies in the sense that the capacity of each person is different from that of the other persons. It does not vary in the sense that it is the duty of each member of the family to work towards the fulfilment of the common purpose of the family. One member may wash the vessels every day. Another member may wash the clothes. A third member may go shopping. A fourth may receive visitors and guests, and a fifth may cook dinner. Now, these are all different functions which each member of the family performs. But, what is the purpose behind all these different activities or functions? It is to keep the solidarity of the family and to keep the family alive as a ‘whole’, and not to keep each individual member alive separately, like unconnected bricks in a heap.

2. RELIGION IS A CEMENTING FORCE IN HUMAN SOCIETY.

The family is not merely its members, but it is something more than each individual member, just as a government is not any governmental official, merely. Every official is a part of the government. Yet no single official can be said to be the government, as such. The government is invisible to the eyes. You will only see persons, and yet, all these persons put together do not make the government. It is the 'principle' behind the operations of these people. The 'principle' is not seen, only the people are seen. You can see the President, you can see the Prime Minister, you can see the Ministers, and many others. All these people put together, as different individuals, also, do not constitute what you mean by government. The officials are the limbs of the organism or the body called the government. In a similar manner, we may conceive and understand religion. So is also any kind of organisational setup—a society, for instance. An organisation is not people and buildings. Rather, it is a 'principle' which everything else has to subservise. There is a principle operating behind all the things that you see. This principle is the law, the nation, the cultural cohesion of kindred aspirations. This is government. This is society. This is organisation. This is family. This is religion, wherein the principle of organisational living reaches its cosmical climax. There is also a principle operating behind the variegated duties that you owe to the Universe. This principle is to be the object of your meditation. When you know what religion is, then you know what meditation is. Meditation is the contemplation on the foundational principle of religion. Religion is a principle. It is not a cult or a creed, or an action or an activity of individuals. It is a cementing force in human society, even as the governmental system cements the officials as well as the citizens. Hence, going to the temple, offering worship, reading the scriptures, doing charitable work, and rolling the beads—all these, while they look like religion, do not make religion as such, because religion is more a state of consciousness, outlook, feeling and attitude than a mere form bereft of this inner significance.

3. THE LAW OF LIFE IS COOPERATION AND NOT COMPETITION AND EXPLOITATION.

You stand together as one force when you say "I am from this family". Just as you have an integrated force called the family and another integrated force called the nation, you have an integrated force called humanity or mankind. When you speak of humanity, you speak of all mankind. Just as there is a force called mankind, a force called nation or family, there is a force called the Universe. This is essential to understand. Now, to understand this, you need not go to the scriptures for reading. Pure common sense alone is enough. You cannot say that you are outside the Universe. You are in it and you know what bounties you enjoy from it. You cannot live without the resources of Nature. Does each member not owe an obligation to the family which supports him? Likewise the Universe sustains us with food, water, air; the very breath that we breathe and our very existence is determined by it. Suppose there is a collision of the planets, you can imagine what would happen to us. No such thing happens, and everything is wonderfully maintained. There is a system in the cosmos which protects us. It gives us training and education and enables us to be alive here. Do we not owe an obligation towards it? That is our religion. Now, this obligation cannot vary in its spirit. Though your functions may vary, the spirit behind them cannot vary. The child's attitude towards the family is the same as the attitude of the big father towards the family, though their functions are different. Likewise, you must look upon the Universe as a single family, where you owe an attitude of cooperation, collaboration and non-exploitation in respect of everyone. You cannot exploit the family; that is not becoming of a member of the family. You should try to sustain it. Similarly, we should not exploit the world, or Nature as a whole. We should not exploit even God. That is not proper. Exploitation is always bad, wherever it is. The law of life is cooperation and not competition and exploitation. "We should not take what we have not given," to put it in simple language. Religion, in its highest form, is this great principle or policy.

4. RELIGION IS THE GREATEST SCIENCE.

Whenever you take something from the world, please consider whether you have given something equally, in any form, to the world. If you have given nothing, take nothing. Otherwise, the Universe will set up a revolt against you. When the Universe revolts against you, you know what will happen to you. You will not be there, for you will be pounded. Unfortunately, the Universe has already set up a revolution against us. That is why there is birth and death. The series of births and deaths is nothing but the punishment meted out to us by the law of the cosmos for infringing its principles. You always regard the Universe as something outside you, as a foreigner, as a stranger, and you want to exploit it—nay, conquer it. You always talk of conquering Nature as if it is an enemy. Do you talk of conquering the family to which you belong? Never, is the answer. Then why do you talk of conquering Nature? Poor Nature, it is your own. Why do you want to conquer it? You are a part of it. Know this and act accordingly. Then, like a loving mother, Nature will come and take you on her lap. The Universe will sustain you. There is no fear in this world. Fear is unknown to the one who cooperates with the world. But, for the one who exploits, there is fear everywhere, and such a man cannot exist without fear and anxiety for a moment. If you are a good man, you will not exploit any person or individual, any facility that is provided to you, not even Nature and God. Religion is this conscious attitude of yours towards the Universe, philosophically, and in principle. And in practice, it is following the instruction: “Do not take more than what you give. Do not exploit, but cooperate”. Feel that you belong to the Universe, which is your family. Just as there is a head of the family, there is a Head of this Universal Family. You can see Him when you cooperate with His laws. The law will take you to Him. It is a scientific principle that operates in the Universe. Religion is the greatest science.

5. ALL THIS WONDERFUL EARTH IS NOTHING BUT A PART OF THE SUN.

Do you know what the earth contains? You have there gold, you have diamonds, you have mineral resources lying under different parts and bowels of the earth, you have gas and petrol and what not; and where do you get this energy from, for the sake of the living beings on earth? The trees vigorously rise from the earth, sucking energy from the bottom of the earth, and they seek energy from above—from the rays of the sun. When we geologically and physically look into the structure of this earth, and chemically examine its contents, biologically investigate into its resources, as a pure scientific mind, we will realise that the earth is not dead matter. It is energy-embodiment, on whose bounties we are alive here. From where do we get the food? From the earth. If energy is to come from food, naturally the source of it must be full of energy. The earth cannot be inanimate, as we generally dub it to be. It is not inorganic; there is something organic and living, meaningful and significant in it, and even many millions of years ago the earth had been declared to be a part of the solar constitution. As our wise men tell us, once upon a time a mighty gigantic star happened to rush by the side of the electromagnetic field of the sun—some light years away from the sun, of course, not merely a few miles. The impact of this upon the orb of the sun was such that it broke off a little piece of the sun. That little piece, being a flaming, diverging, powerful energy-block, rushing from the sun, boiling with the flame of what the sun is, is supposed to have come down after thousands of years, cooling down gradually from the flaming condition in which it was to a cooler condition, and from the cooler condition to a still cooler condition, then from that condition into the gaseous condition, from the gaseous to the liquid condition, and from the liquid condition to the solid condition that we see today. So, all this wonderful earth is nothing but a part of the sun, and its greatness can be traced back to the greatness of the sun.

6. THIS IS THE LIBERATION THAT WE ARE ULTIMATELY SEEKING.

The more you move inward into yourself, the more you will also see the inner mystery of the world. When you go to the vital body within you, you can see the vital body of other people seated here. Because you are now in the physical body, you see the physical body of others. When you enter your mental body, you can see the minds of other people, and when you enter your intellectual body, you can see the intellects of other people seated here. And when you enter your spiritual principle within, you can see the spirituality in the world and the spiritual principle in the whole cosmos. In the physical realm you are different, the world is different and God is different. There is no connection apparently between one and the other. When you go deeper, the three principles come nearer and nearer to one another. The world is absolutely isolated now. You have no control over it; it threatens you every moment. You are afraid of the world. Why? Because it is physically isolated from your physical body. And so God is also a transcendent something of which you have no concept today. But when you go inwardly by a power of concentration and meditation, you simultaneously, as a parallel movement, also enter into the subtler realms of the world outside, so much so that the outsideness of the world becomes less in proportion to the internal experience that you have in your own self. The more you are inwardly conscious, the nearer is the world to you. And when you reach the divine principle within you, the world does not merely remain as a friend but becomes an inseparable experience of your own. The world ceases to be an outer phenomenon. There will be no world as such. The thing called the world ceases to be the moment you enter into the spiritual principle within you, which is the same as the spiritual principle within the world, which is also the same as the spiritual principle of the universe. It is only here that God, world and the soul become united. This is the liberation that we are ultimately seeking.

7. LIFE WITHOUT SPIRITUALITY IS A MISNOMER.

*T*o be spiritual, to enter the realm spiritual, is not to enter into an order of life as people mistakenly imagine. It is not shifting from place to place, or changing the mode of living in this world. This is not spirituality. What is really meant is to enter one step inward into your life rather than move outwardly, diametrically. It is not a horizontal movement but an inward gesture of the soul towards its own centre. Spirituality is not a kind of life that you lead. It is the inner meaning of all kinds of life in the world. It is not isolated from other types of life. It is the meaning and significance behind every kind of life, whatever be your profession or the duties you perform in the world. There are people who imagine that spirituality is for the later period of one's life. It has nothing to do with 'doing'. It is the significance behind what you are and what you do. So you cannot fix it for a period of time—tomorrow or the day after. The meaning behind existence and activity is what is meant by the spiritual. If there is any worth in what you are and what you do, that is spirituality. This is what the Upanishads and other scriptures like the Bhagavadgita speak of. They speak of the interpretation of God in the world. There are three implications, three meanings, three significances or three hidden realities—the one within ourselves, the second in nature outside, and the third which is implied in the relation between ourselves and the nature outside, which is called God, invisible to our physical perception. The spiritual reality, finally, is the significance behind what anything is and what anything does, whatever we are and whatever we do—which means to say, there is no life without spirituality because life without spirituality is a misnomer; it is meaningless; it is absurd. This is the kind of life that every individual being has to endeavour to live.

8. HOW DO YOU REPRESENT GOD AS AN EMBODIMENT OF *VAIRAGYA* (DISPASSION)?

How do you conceive Siva as an austere Yogin or a renunciate? The all-pervading Almighty, what has He to give or abandon? Here is the secret of what renunciation is! It is not renunciation of anything, because there is nothing outside Him; renunciation does not mean abandonment of object. If that had been the definition of renunciation, that cannot apply to God. God does not renounce or abandon any object, because all objects are a part of His Cosmic Body. Then how do you represent God as an embodiment of *vairagya* (dispassion)? Bhagavan, who is endowed with ‘bhaga’ or glories of a sixfold nature, is also embodiment of *vairagya*. We cannot know what goodness is, we cannot know what evil is, we cannot know what virtue is, unless we refer all these values of life to the concept of God in His Perfection. The only standard of reference for us in all matters of life’s values, is the existence of God. So, the concept of renunciation, which has been very much misused, also gets rectified, clarified and purified when it is understood with reference to the existence of God whose special manifestation, in this context, is known as Lord Siva. God does not renounce anything. Then, in that case what is renunciation in this context? It is the freedom from the consciousness of externality. This is called *vairagya*. All things are there in front of you, like trees in a forest or stones in the jungle. There is nothing like abandonment of things, because they are internally related to you. Nobody can renounce anything, because everything in this world is connected to everything else. *Vairagya* is not renunciation of any object; it is impossible. Everything clings to you. But the idea that things are outside you, makes you get attached to them. This false attachment is *raga*, and its absence is *viraga*. The condition of *vi-raga* is *vairagya*. As God has no consciousness of externality, because everything is embodied in Him, there cannot be a greater renunciate than God. And in as much as this Consciousness of God is the highest form of Wisdom, He is the repository of jnana.

9. THE SATARUDRIYA OF THE YAJURVEDA IS A HYMN TO LORD SIVA.

In the famous Rudra-Adhyaya or the Satarudriya of the Yajur Veda, we have a majestic, universalised description of Lord Siva. It is one of the most powerful prayers ever conceived by the human mind. It is filled with a threefold meaning. According to the culture of this country, everything is threefold—objective, subjective and universal. Everything in the world, from the smallest to the biggest, has an objective character, a subjective character and an universal character. Objectively you are something, subjectively you are another thing and universally you are a third thing. When you objectively interpret a thing, it looks like one thing; when you subjectively analyse it, it is another thing; and from the universal point of view, it is a third something altogether. Likewise, this mantra, the Satarudriya of the Yajurveda, a hymn to Lord Siva, has an objective meaning, a subjective meaning and a divine, supreme, supra-mental, universal meaning. Objectively, it is a prayer for the control of the forces of nature. Subjectively, it is a prayer for self-control and the rousing of the spiritual consciousness. Universally, it is a surge of the soul towards God-Realisation. It has an Adhiyajnika, Adhibhautika, Adhidaivika and Adhyatmika meaning, as we usually put it. It has a tremendous meaning. *Ananta vai vedah*: Infinite is the meaning of the Vedas. The meaning of the Vedas is infinite. It has no end at all. It is mathematics; it is chemistry; it is physics; it is Ayurveda; it is psychology; it is metaphysics; it is philosophy; it is spirituality; it is meditation; it is love; it is ecstasy. You will find everything in every mantra of the Veda. All depends upon how you look upon it, how you feel it. A person may be a father, he may be a brother, he may be a son, he may be a friend, but all the while he is one and the same person. Attitudes are different on account of the various relationships. So the Rudra Adhyaya is a majestic prayer for world peace, international peace, subjective peace, universal peace and God-consciousness.

10. GOD SEEKS THE WORLD AND THE WORLD SEEKS GOD.

With moderate behaviour in every manner in your spiritual life, you will attain success. As the Bhagavadgita beautifully puts it, “Moderate in your eating, moderate in your activity, moderate in your speech, moderate in your sleep”—form the golden mean, the via-media, the golden path. God is the harmony of all powers in the universe. Harmony means the middle course—neither this extreme nor that extreme. As Buddha said, ‘Nothing is’, is one extreme; ‘everything is’, is another extreme. God is in the middle. Truth is in the middle.” So, the middle path is the best path, which is the path of austerity with understanding. This is the characteristic of the middle path. When there is understanding without austerity, it is useless. When there is austerity without understanding, that is also useless. There must be austerity with understanding and understanding with austerity, knowledge with self-control and self-control with knowledge; that is wisdom. Knowledge with self-control is called wisdom, whereas knowledge without self-control is mere dry intellectuality. That is of no use. Lord Siva is not merely an austere Being but also a repository of Knowledge. All worshippers of knowledge also worship Lord Siva, as He is the God of all students, scholars and seekers of wisdom and knowledge. Mahasivaratri is a very blessed God-sent opportunity for us to pray to Lord Siva with all your heart, with all your soul. God is bound to come. The powers of the cosmos are everywhere and they can be invoked at any time by us, provided we are strong enough in our will and in the method of invocation. We are blessed because we live in the Kingdom of God. We are blessed because we are seekers of Truth. We are blessed because we are disciples of a great Master. We are blessed, thrice blessed, four-times, five-times blessed because we are seeking God who also seeks everything in this creation. God seeks the world and the world seeks God. This is the mystery of creation, the subtlety of the spiritual path and the glory of the meditative life. Jnana and vairagya combined is Lord Siva, who is worshipped on Mahasivaratri day.

11. PERCEPTION IS AN UNNATURAL PROCESS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The Sanskrit word ‘Sivaratri’ means ‘The night of Siva’. On this holy day we are to fast during the day and keep vigil during the night. You may be wondering why Siva is connected with the night and not with the day. Siva being connected with night has a highly spiritual and mystical connotation. If you study deeply the Upanishads and such mystical texts of high spiritual significance, you will realise that the Supreme Being, the Absolute, is designated in its primordial condition as a Supreme Darkness due to excess of light. When you look at the sun directly for a few minutes and then look elsewhere, you will see only darkness. It is said in the Mahabharata that when Lord Sri Krishna showed the Cosmic Form in the court of the Kauravas, everything was dark, as it were. The intensity of the light was such that it looked like darkness to the eyes of man. There is the hymn of the Veda called the Nasadiya Sukta, wherein it is said, *tama asit tamasa gudhamagre*: Darkness there was; at first concealed in darkness. According to us, light is perception of objects, and therefore non-perception of objects is regarded by us as night, because knowledge or consciousness unrelated to the perceptual process is unknown to the human mind. Generally, to know is to know an object; and if it is not to know an object, it is not to know anything at all. For example, take the state of deep sleep. Why do we fall asleep? Where is the necessity? The senses cannot always continue perceiving objects, because perception is a fatiguing process. The whole body, the whole nervous system, the entire psychological apparatus becomes active in the process of the perception of objects. And without our knowing, the senses get tired. Why should they not be contemplating objects of sense throughout the day, all twenty-four hours of the day? The reason is that perception is an unnatural process from the point of view of consciousness as such. Perception of an object is the alienation of an aspect of our personality through the avenue of a particular sense in respect of its object. This is a highly psychological secret.

12. YOU ARE LOOKING AT YOUR OWN SELF AS IF YOU ARE A DIFFERENT PERSON.

Consciousness is indivisible. This is a simple fact. Many of you would have heard about it. Consciousness is undivided; it is incapable of division into parts. So it cannot be cut into two sections—subject and object. On the basis of this fact there cannot be a division between the seer and the seen in the process of perception. To make this clear, let us see what happens in dream. In dream we see objects like mountains, rivers, persons, etc. But they are not there. Things which are not there become visible in dream. Now, did the mountain you saw in dream exist? It did not. But did you see it? Yes, you saw it. How did you see, when it was not there? Is it possible to see a non-existent object? How can non-existent things be seen? It is contradictory statement to say that non-existent things can be seen. What do you see when things are not there? You will be wonderstruck! What happens in dream is that there is an alienation of the mind into the objects of perception; and the mind itself becomes the mountain there. There is tension created due to the separation of a part of the mind into the object and a part of it existing as the perceiving subject. That is why we are restless in dream. We cannot be happy. It is neither waking nor it is sleep. It is very difficult to be happy in this condition because a tense situation of consciousness is created. What happened in dream, the same happens to us in the waking condition also. Just as the mind in dream divided itself into two sections—the perceiving subject and the object that was seen—in the waking state also, it divides itself into the subject and object. It is like a divided personality. It is as if your own personality has been cut into two halves, of which one half is the ‘seer’ and the other half is the ‘seen’. It is as if one part of your personality gazes at another part of your own personality. You are looking at your own self as if you are a different person. You are objectifying yourself; you alienate yourself. What can be more false and undesirable than this situation? It is a mental sickness.

13. THE WORLD THAT WE SEE BEFORE US IS GOD HIMSELF.

When you perceive an object, you call it waking. When you do not perceive it, it is darkness. Now in the waking condition—the so-called waking world—you see present before you a world of objects, as you are intelligent. In dream also there is a sort of intelligence. But in deep sleep there is no intelligence. What happens? The senses and the intellect withdraw themselves into their source. There is no perceptual activity, and so the absence of perception is equated to the presence of darkness. The cosmic primeval condition of the creative will of God, before creation—a state appearing like darkness, or night—is what we call the condition of Siva. It is very important to remember that the state of Siva is the primordial condition of the creative will of God, where there is no externality of perception, there being nothing outside God; and so, for us, it is like darkness or night. It is Siva's night—Sivaratri. For Him it is not night. It is all Light. Siva is not sitting in darkness. The Creative Will of God is Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence—all combined. Sometimes we designate this condition as Isvara. The Supreme Absolute, which is indeterminate, when it is associated with the Creative Will with a tendency to create the Cosmos, is Isvara in Vedantic parlance, and Siva in Puranic terminology. This is the very precise condition described in the Nasadiya Sukta of the Veda as *tamas* or darkness. This is, to repeat again, darkness due to the excess of the Light of the divine Absolute. If you look at God, what will you see? You will see nothing. The eyes cannot see Him because He is such dazzling light. When the frequency of light gets intensified to a very high level, light will not be seen by the eyes. So if you see God, you will see nothing. As a matter of fact, we are seeing God even now. But we are not able to recognise Him. The world that we see before us is God Himself. There is no such thing as the world. It is only a name that we have given to the Supreme Being. The world is only a name that you give to a distortion created in the perception of your consciousness due to its isolation into the subject and the object.

14. THE WORLD IS COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

The mountain that you saw in dream was not a mountain; it was only consciousness. There was no mountain. But it looked like a hard something in front of you, against which you could hit your dream head. You see buildings in dream. It was consciousness that projected itself into the hard substance of bricks and buildings, mountains and rivers, persons and animals, etc., in dream. The world of dream does not exist. You know it very well, and yet it appears. What is it that appears? The consciousness itself projects itself outwardly, in space and time created by itself, and then you call it a world. Likewise, in the waking state also the Cosmic Consciousness has projected itself into this world. The world is Cosmic Consciousness. The Supreme Divinity Himself is revealed here in the form of this world. As the dream world is nothing but consciousness, the waking world also is nothing but consciousness, God. This is the essence of the whole matter. So you are seeing God. I am right in saying that. What you see in front of you is God only. It is not a building. There is no such thing as a building. But you call it a building due to an error of perception, due to ignorance and due to not being able to analyse the situation in which you are involved. We are caught up in a mess, in a paradox, in a confusion; and the confusion has entered us, entered into the bones, as it were, into the very fibre of our being and made us the fools that we are today. It is to awaken ourselves from this ignorance and to come to a state of that supreme blessedness of the recognition of God in this very world, that we practise sadhana. The highest of sadhanas is meditation on God. The wise see God in all His effulgence; and that does not exist for the ignorant. While the wise see God, the ignorant do not see Him; and while the ignorant see the world, the wise do not see it. When we see sunlight, the owl does not see it. That is the difference. The owl cannot see the sun, but we can. So, we are owls, because we do not see the self-effulgent sun—the Pure Consciousness. And he who sees this sun—the Pure Consciousness, God—is the sage, the illumined adept in Yoga.

15. WE HAVE NO OTHER CULTURE HERE EXCEPT THE CULTURE OF THE SPIRIT.

It is not to be taken as a surprise that the culture of Bharatavarsha is a culture of the Spirit, so that anything that is said and done or believed in, is directly or indirectly connected with the march of the Spirit towards the recognition of its Perfection. We have no other culture here except the culture of the Spirit. A connecting of the visible phenomena with what underlies the phenomena is the significance of the epics. And the two masterstrokes of genius given to us by Valmiki and Vyasa, in the form of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, give us the religion of India. There were some over-enthusiastic orientalists in the West particularly, and sometimes in the East also, who began to believe that the culture of India is in the Vedas and the Upanishads. But, if we bestow a little thought on the actual situation, it will become clear that if the Vedas and the Upanishads were the sole basis of the culture of India, the Indian culture would have been wiped out like the cultures of Egypt, Greece or Rome. These cultures are only names to us now. They vanished in the process of time on account of their inflexibility, their rigidity of character and their emphasis on a particular aspect of human life. If, as people often believe, the dicta of the Vedas and Upanishads alone were to be taken as the foundation of Indian culture, there would have been no Indian culture today. It would have gone to the winds, because what we have in the Vedas and the Upanishads are 'principles' like theorems of geometry or algebra, which are wonderful enough, and which are the basis of all scientific approaches and discoveries. Nevertheless, they are principles, and the masses do not live on principles. We work with the peculiar manifestation of our personality which is spontaneous in its nature. Principles somehow have the aroma of fixity and rigidity. They cannot be changed. But, emotion seeks a spontaneous expression of itself and this feature, this peculiarity of human nature, was taken notice of by the sages of the Vedic times themselves.

16. WE THINK OF THE EPIC GOD ONLY AND NOT THE UPANISHADIC GOD OR THE VEDIC GOD.

In the Srimad Bhagavata, one among the eighteen Puranas, at the very commencement itself we are told that Vyasa felt the necessity of composing the Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavata. And for a similar reason was the Ramayana composed. We believe what we see with our eyes, what we hear with our ears, what we perceive with the other organs, and what we feel from our hearts. We are incapable of believing anything else. Pure principles, though they may be eternal facts, are incapable of evoking the emotion of man. Hence, even the elite and the intelligentsia of mankind today think of God in the epic parlance, and not in the Upanishadic parlance. When you and I think of God, we think of the epic God only and not the Upanishadic God or the Vedic God. The meaning is that we think of a humanised relationship between ourselves and the Creator. When we de-humanise the Creator or take Him above what the human mind is capable of conceiving, the relationship between man and God gets snapped, and the vast majority amongst us, excepting perhaps the very few spiritual heroes, fall down to a level lower than that of the human being. So the need was felt to bring home to the mind of man that concept of Perfection and Divinity which can be contained in the human mind, in the form of human perfection, animated by the force of that which is superhuman. Such was the personality of Sri Rama, the superhuman element infusing a personality of a human being. It is difficult to understand this peculiar blend, just as it is difficult to understand masters, sages and adepts in yoga and even spiritual life. This is because they are a blend of what we see and what we cannot see. What we see is the form of their lives and what we cannot see is the essence, the meaning and the significance of what they live.

17. THE TEACHING OF THE EPIC (THE RAMAYANA) IS THAT THROUGH HUMANITY WE REACH DIVINITY.

In the Ramayana, we have such a contradictory picture of the personality of Rama, presented by Valmiki, where we are asked sometimes to look upon him as the perfected man and sometimes as a perfection of Divinity itself manifest. It is in the Yuddha Kanda of Valmiki's Ramayana, for the first time, we have a proclamation of the divinity of Rama, where Mandodari in deep sorrow over the death of Ravana, her husband, exclaims that it is Narayana that has come as Nara which fact is unknown to Ravana and due to his ignorance, he has mistaken Rama for a human being. The contradiction which Valmiki brings out is that while he puts these words in the mouth of Mandodari, he puts a different type of statement in the mouth of Rama himself. When the whole theme is over, the drama played out, Brahma comes and speaks to Rama, "Thou art Lord Narayana, Thy play in this world is over, and we seek Thy entry back into Vaikuntha." And Rama says in reply, "What are you speaking? I do not know anything. Am I Narayana? I think I am only a man—*atmanam manusham manye*. Whatever you may think or speak about me, I think I am a man, I am a human being." These are the words of Rama himself. While Rama himself thinks that he is only a man, Brahma speaks of Him as Narayana and wants Him to go back to His Abode, as His drama in this world is over. These interesting dramatic contradictions are brought into play by the genius of Valmiki, deliberately, to fulfill the purpose of the epic. Otherwise, there would be no meaning in the play itself. It was not at all given to Rama to proclaim Himself as Narayana. That was not the purpose of the Avatara at all. It was to defeat the purpose of Ravana who had a poor opinion of human beings. This contemptuous attitude of Ravana towards aspects through which God could manifest Himself and does manifest Himself, was the occasion for God Himself to teach humanity that He can work miracles even through the lowest of His manifestations. And the other side of the teaching of the epic is that through humanity we reach Divinity.

18. “WHAT AM I IN THE EYES OF GOD?”

One of the central questions in your spiritual diary should be, “What am I in the eyes of God?” But this question is never put and you do not want to know the answer. You always wish to know, “What am I in the eyes of people, in the eyes of my neighbours, in the eyes of the public? What does the country think about me? What do the vote-givers think about me? What is the international opinion about me?” Never for a moment do you think, “What does God think about me?” Let this be your contemplation. The moment you begin to know what God thinks about you, you will not speak afterwards; your mouth will be hushed. It will be hushed for two reasons. One reason is that you would look so small and insignificant, a nothing, and all your importance vanishes in toto when you compare yourself in His light. The other reason is that you would feel lifted up into a state of joy that the time has come for you to realise your true duty as a human being, which is nothing but realisation of God. This is what Sri Rama teaches us in the Rama Gita, as His final message—how the soul should come out of the cage of flesh, like a lion breaking its boundaries and roaring in its majesty or power. The moment you begin to recognise your true status in this world, you become powerful, not because you possess large wealth or you have a seat in the Parliament or in the cabinet, but because you have a seat in the constitution of the universe. When this seat is given to you, you become a member of the government of the cosmos. And here the powers are not given by votes or by plebiscite. People do not raise hands to make you a member. Something else—mysterious and miraculous—takes place. Your cells become revitalised. They get charged with a power totally unknown up to this time. From where does this power come? It does not come from anywhere. You keep yourself open to the powers that are and allow them to enter into you, while up to this time you were preventing them from entering into you.

19. OUR BIRTHRIGHT IS TO IMBIBE THE GRACE OF THE MASTERS.

The forces of the universe are just here, within this hall—wherever we are. They are not far away in the skies. You can keep yourself open to them or keep yourself shut to them. Thoughts which are directed to the body and to the centre of the personality called the ego, prevent the entry of universal forces into our personality, so that the more important we look in our own eyes, the more impervious we are to the entry of the forces of the cosmos. The bigger we are in the world, the worse we are from the point of view of spiritual strength and knowledge, because this self-importance, self-assertion, *ahamkara*, personality-consciousness, body-consciousness, social-consciousness and status-consciousness—all these put together act as psychological barriers which shut off the forces of the cosmos from entering into us. These forces of the cosmos are not absent. They are just here, and the moment we think in terms of them, they enter into us. When we think in terms of our own personality, they run away from us. So contemplation on the Masters and Incarnations and the recognition of the forces of divinities which manifest as incarnations and sages are the ways in which a sadhaka should observe Ramanavami, the day of God's incarnation or a celebration of a birthday of a superhuman Master. Our birthright is to imbibe the grace of the Masters, to assume the contour and personality equal to theirs, to attain *sarupya* or equality of personality with them, to become like them and to imbibe their characteristics by meditation on them. So the epic of Ramayana is a long meditation on the superior manifestation of God in the form of Sri Ramachandra. Terror was Rama, thunderbolt was Rama—says Valmiki. But butter was Rama, a rose petal was Rama, all compassion was Rama—says the same Sage Valmiki. Such is the mysterious combination, a terrific manifestation of divinity combined with most perfect humane characteristics and features that we see in Sri Rama.

20. TO BE A MAN OF GOD IS TO BE A FOOL IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC.

Honesty of conscience is the watchword of a sadhaka. Many times we may look honest, but we are not really honest in the deepest core of our feelings. What our conscience speaks is our spiritual voice. The pressure of society, the needs of the body and the weaknesses of flesh are such that it is difficult to be true to one's conscience. It only means that it is difficult to live the spiritual life, to have divine characteristics imbibed into our personality, and to be a devotee of God. In short, it is difficult to realise God. For this purpose the remedy is to contemplate on the lives of saints. To be a man of God is to be a fool in the eyes of the public. This seems to be a necessary outcome of turning one's face towards God. *Yasyaham anugrihnamī tasya vittam haramyaham.* "When I want to shed My grace on any person, I deprive him of all his pleasure centres," is a famous statement reported to have been made by Lord Narayana Himself as recorded in the Srimad Bhagavata. We have only to read the lives of a few saints of the past. We can read even the life of such a recent personality as Swami Sivanandaji. While it is easy to think that we believe in God, it is really difficult to be true to the salt. "Die to live," as Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say. If you want to live in the Eternity, you have to die to the temporal, which means to say that you should die to all that you regard as beautiful, meaningful and valuable in this world. Who can do this? No ordinary man is prepared for this. No ordinary mortal can have the courage, the power and the strength to face the weaknesses of flesh, the foibles of human nature and the impetuosity of the human ego. "The fear of the Absolute," said Plotinus, a great saint of the West. Entering the Absolute is like entering a lion's den, from which you cannot come back. Fierce is the ocean, fierce is the lion, fierce is the conflagration of fire, fierce is the love of God. No one can love God, unless one is prepared to die, wholly and totally, to the so-called good, beautiful and pleasant in this world, to this body and to the ego. Difficult is the task! God's grace is the only saving factor.

21. ONCE WE MAKE A MISTAKE, WE DO NOT STOP WITH IT. IT GOES ON MULTIPLYING.

We have slowly drifted away from the original intention of the Veda Mantras by the degeneration of the time process—the advent of Treta, Dvapara and Kali Yuga, or whatever we may call it. So, the emphasis got completely shifted from the universal to the external, material, and even prejudiced way of thinking. The offerings in the yajnas or sacrifices meant to propitiate the gods that are many, were in the beginning holy articles such as clarified butter, certain grains and pulses, wood from sacred trees like *Asvattha*, *Palasa* and so on, gruel cooked out of rice, *Payasam*, *Charu*, etc. But once we make a mistake, we do not stop with it. It goes on multiplying, and there is an aggregate of errors. Mistake after mistake began to be committed with the pious intention of propitiating the gods; all kinds of offerings were poured into the sacred fire. Well, it came to a climax when even living beings were mercilessly offered because of the belief that a particular Devata would be pleased. There were occasions, which we can read in the Puranas, when people who had no children prayed to the gods for bestowing upon them a child, on the condition that it would be offered again to the Devata as a *Balidana*. This practice continues in some parts even today, even in this fag end of the twentieth century. *Narabali*, and yajnas such as *Gomedha*, *Asvamedha* were instituted for acquiring material gain—increasing earthly prosperity—side by side with a conviction that the gods would be pleased thereby. We have not only gone away from the centre of truth, but we have also now begun to interfere with the welfare of other people in the world. This is naturally intolerable to the very law that operates in the universe. Where is that original intention of the Veda Mantras which was only a consequence of the great Divine experience of the Supreme Being by the great sages, and where are we now, utilising these mantras for offering oblations into the sacred fire for propitiating the multiplicity of gods for earthly suzerainty and sensory satisfaction!

22. THE FIRST HISTORICALLY KNOWN REFORMER IN OUR LAND WAS GAUTAMA, THE BUDDHA.

Gautama, the Buddha, was born in this country. When anything goes to the extreme, the other extreme is set up. While there was a deep feeling and conviction that there are many gods guarding the quarters of the cosmos, who are our well-wishers and without whose satisfaction we cannot be happy in this world—these very gods, who were regarded as our very life, were denied by Buddha. He said that they did not exist at all. This is the other extreme. You say, the gods are protecting you; I say, they do not exist at all and it is your mind that works. So, from the spiritual realisation and mystical experience of the sages of the Veda Samhitas, we came down to a worship and inner adoration of the multiplicity of gods. Then we came still further down to the time when we began to make physical offerings to the sacred fire for the satisfaction of the gods, without any feeling or compunction in offering living beings—even human beings—in the sacrifices. There was such a thing called *Narmedha* or the offering of a human being in sacrifice. If the gods themselves do not exist, where comes the sacrifice? It has no meaning. So, the first historically known reformer in our land was Gautama, the Buddha. He was a reformer in the sense that he put a check to the further growth of this externalising tendency of ritualised devotion to an imagined set of multiple of gods. But for him, it would have landed people in a catastrophe. We do not know what would have happened. This tendency was checked by the psychological philosophy of Buddha, and the divinities were completely ignored. Now, the divinity, if at all there is one, is the thinking principle in the human being himself. The world is made by the mind; it is purely psychological. It is a projection of ideas. It is a notion in our minds that is this world and even these gods. This was a beautiful psychological analysis made by the Buddha, which was an ethical idealism which he propounded in contradistinction to the ritualistic ceremonialism of the Brahmanas which succeeded the Veda Samhitas.

23. THE ADVENT OF SANKARA WAS TO RECTIFY THE EXTREMES.

The followers of the great reformer (Buddha), began to interpret his teachings in their own way—even as it also happened with the followers of the Vedas, who interpreted the mantras in their own way and landed themselves in ceremonialism, ritualism and mechanised sacrifices. That the world is only an idea, and that the gods do not exist—which was one of the predominant teachings of the Buddha—received special emphasis in certain schools of Buddhism. And Buddha's philosophy did not end with the death of Buddha. It continued, but in a ramified form, not as a single stream. Lastly we had what has been called Nihilism, *Sunyavada*, or the *Madhyamika* doctrine which was the view of there being nothing at all in reality. So this controversy was another kind of catastrophe that got introduced into human thought. The intention of the originators of the great thoughts and the sages of divine experience were all wonderful. But, time has its own say in every matter and things slowly get diluted as time passes on. The pure gets adulterated until it loses all content, meaning and reality. So all these good thoughts which are necessary as reformations in the history of man, got distorted by the passage of time and people began to argue in various ways, positing realities according to their own whims, fancies and predilections, and there was again another chaos. The next step was the advent of Sankara to rectify this extreme that was brought about in human thought by the adulterated forms of Buddhistic idealism. They had some truth in them, but they were not the whole truth. For example, it is not true that the world is created by our ideas, and yet it is true that our ideas have some say in the projection of the forms of objects. It is not true that the objects are physical in their nature, yet it is true that they have some physicality in them independent of human thought. It is not true that nothing exists, as the Nihilists say, but yet it is true that things do not exist as they appear to the senses. All these aspects of truth had to be brought into relief by a new method of approach altogether which was the purpose of the mission of Acharya Sankara.

24. JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING IS THERE BEFORE OUR EYES, IT NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE THERE.

Sankara's thought is a logical consequence of all the thoughts that preceded his coming into being. There were systems of thought called the *Darsanas*. You must have heard of the schools of thought known as Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and certain other mystical and ritualistic philosophies which were in minority, of course, yet prevalent during the time of Sankara. We know very well that just because something is there before our eyes, it need not necessarily be there, because certain things can present themselves before our eyes yet they may not be there really. Yet uncritically we accept everything that is visible to the eyes. Now, this philosophy of uncritical acceptance of everything that is visible or everything that is sensible, to put it more generally, became the incentive behind the systems of thought called the Nyaya and the Vaisesika, whose conclusion is that things are physical and psychological. 'Nyaya' means logic. It is, therefore, a logical system of pluralistic realism. It is logical because it is syllogistic. It is pluralistic because they accept the multiplicity of physical entities. It is realism because the world, according to them, is external to the human mind and it is not a part of the process of human thinking. What about God? Is there a place for a Creator in this scheme of things? Yes, this school of thought does accord a place. But He is like a potter making a pot, a carpenter making a table, an engineer or a mechanic constructing a machine. What does this imply? The potter can make the pot, or not make it; and he can break the pot, if he likes. The pot has nothing to do with the potter; it is completely outside him. By a similar analogy, God was regarded as an extra-cosmic being, outside the cosmos. The potter is outside the pot and cannot be inside the pot. Likewise God cannot be in the world, and He is outside the world, because if He is in the world, how can He create it? So the logical realism of the Nyaya and the Vaisesika, which are brother systems, concluded that God is beyond the world and outside the world.

25. THIS WAS WHAT SANKHYA TAUGHT.

According to Sankhya School, it is not true that there are many physical entities or realities as the Nyaya and the Vaisesika thought. All these manifold objects could be boiled down to certain fundamental essences or principles which are the building bricks of the cosmos. While the Vaisesika and the Nyaya thought that there is earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, soul and so on, all independent of the other, though in their finer essences as atoms, etc., yet the multiplicity was accepted. But the Sankhya thought out this matter more deeply, and felt that it is not true that there are five elements. They are only five degrees of the intensity of one element. One element or principle, one being or stuff has modified itself into various densities. This was what Sankhya taught. There are not five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Even the mind is not an independent entity. It is also a modification, in a particular form, of the very same stuff which is the substance out of which the cosmos is made. And if at all we have to accept more than one reality due to the exigency of experience and thought, we can at best accept only two entities: consciousness which sees and that which is seen, the experiencer and the experienced, the seer and the seen—or, to put it more precisely, consciousness and matter. These are the only two things that exist anywhere, and not more. We do not have five elements, many souls, etc., absolutely independent in their inner structure. So, there was a logical development of thought from the Nyaya and the Vaisesika, when the Sankhya philosophy developed its conclusions in regard to what is called Purusha and Prakriti. It is this Purusha and Prakriti that we generally call God and the world, in popular language. Why should we accept two entities? Who told you that there is a Purusha and there is a Prakriti? How do you know that there is consciousness and there is matter? Can you prove this? Can you substantiate this thesis? Yes, was the answer of the Sankhya.

26. THERE IS NO PROVISION FOR GOD IN THE SANKHYA SYSTEM.

No human being can escape noticing an object outside in the world. You may try your best and stretch your imagination to its farthest limits, but you cannot escape the recognition of an object outside. It is there. It may be this or it may be that. But something is there outside. That is what you call matter. Matter is that which is other than consciousness; it is that which consciousness recognises, sees or comes in contact with. That which has not the characteristic of consciousness is matter. The distinguishing feature of that which is different from consciousness is that it is non-intelligent and, therefore, it cannot think. This is a wonderful philosophy. And as a matter of fact, Vedanta is nothing but an amplification of the Sankhya. The seed of the Vedanta was sown by the Sankhya itself. We have to give enough credit to the thinkers of the Sankhya for having paved the way for the onward march of later thinkers like Sankara. Well, there is something very interesting to note in this philosophy of the Sankhya again. Is this satisfactory? The Sankhya thought that for certain obvious reasons the Nyaya and the Vaisesika were not satisfactory, especially in its theory of God. The liberation, the nature of the soul and such other conclusions of the Nyaya and the Vaisesika were almost preposterous. No thinking mind would accept them. So, the Sankhya came forward and proclaimed that liberation is a fact. There is such a thing as liberation or salvation. But, salvation is nothing but Purusha resting in himself, consciousness resting in itself, thought merging into its source. It is self-illumination of consciousness, independent of its contact with matter. This is Kaivalya, Ekatva, Absolute Independence. Thus there is no provision for God in the Sankhya system. This is not necessary at all, because we can get on in the world even without a God. Why not? The world and the world experiences are nothing but the contact of Spirit with matter. And liberation is nothing but separation of the Spirit from matter. We have explained the whole of experience here and hereafter with these two principles alone—Purusha and Prakriti, consciousness and matter.

27. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN INDIA, GOD, WORLD AND SOUL, ALL THREE, WERE POSITED BY MAHARSHI PATANJALI.

There is a small difficulty caused by the acceptance of the law of Karma which is recognised even by the Sankhya. Karma is nothing but the reaction that is set up to an action. It is the nemesis that follows every action that an individual or Purusha does. Merit is rewarded and demerit is punished. But who does this? Does Purusha reward himself for the merit he does, and does Purusha punish himself for the sin he commits? This would be a very absurd conclusion, obviously. Who would like to punish oneself? Even if I do a wrong, I would not like to be punished. But there is nobody else who can punish the Purusha for the wrong that he does. Prakriti cannot do it because it is unintelligent, and Purusha will not do it because he himself is the doer. So, this is no good. The need for someone to dispense justice was felt by the yoga system of thought which came after the Sankhya. The Yoga School was systematised—not originated, of course—and logically presented by Patanjali later on. Yoga said that an Isvara is essential. Otherwise, we cannot escape this difficulty of the Law of Karma. Reward and punishment will be meaningless on the basis of the law of Karma if a Supreme Dispenser of justice does not exist. God exists, said Patanjali. But this God is only like a judge in a court with whom we are not directly connected except when there is a case. When the case is over, we do not care for the judge. We go away homeward. Such was the God mentioned in the Sutras of Patanjali—very essential, very necessary, yet not organically connected with our life. He hangs loosely in the system of Yoga. So, for the first time in the history of philosophical thought in India, God, world and soul, all three, were posited in a manner satisfactory for all practical purposes, in the system of Yoga propounded by Maharshi Patanjali.

28. SRI SANKARA CAME FORWARD AS A GENIUS OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT.

According to Yoga, God-realisation is not the goal, because this God is necessary only for the sake of dispensing justice to the Purushas. The goal of life is self-withdrawal. Consciousness or the essence of the Purusha resting in itself is liberation and the final goal of life. It has nothing to do with Isvara who is also, after all, one of the Purushas, though He may be a special Purusha Purushavishesha. What is the internal relationship among Purusha, Prakriti and Isvara? There is no proper answer. Unless there is a relationship among entities, how can we posit the entities? It is logically inadmissible and it is an untenable thesis. The very fact that we know that there is a God and a world and there are Purushas, shows that we who make this judgement have intrinsically something, some principle which seems to transcend the limitation of these three posited principles. Here we have an introduction to the Vedanta philosophy. God is there. Yes, it is wonderful. World is there. Yes, we see it. The Purushas are there. Yes, we do experience them. But what is the internal connection among these things? This could not be answered by either the Sankhya or the Yoga. With this introductory remark on the inadequacies of all the earlier systems of thought, Sri Sankara came forward as a genius of philosophic thought, as a Master who could solve with one stroke all the problems of life with his mighty system of psychology, wondrous system of metaphysics, his master technique of Yogic meditation and his soul-enrapturing ideal of the realisation of Brahman as the goal of life. Such was the significance, chronological as well as logical, of the great mission and work of Acharya Sankara in Bharatavarsha, which has done mighty good not only to the citizens of this country but also to all seeking souls throughout the world.

29. SRI SANKARA CAME TO GIVE TO MANKIND A GOSPEL OF HEALTHY LIVING.

Religious teachers and prophets came to specify the goal of human life, the ultimate purpose behind all the activities of mankind. And they differed from one another in their concept of the relation of the individual to the cosmos. So we have schools of thought—Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta, known as the orthodox schools of philosophy; the Charvakas, the Jainas, the Vaibhasikas, the Sautrantikas, the Vaijnanikas and the Sunyavadins among the heterodox ones. Even in the Vedanta, we have various sections—the Advaita, the Visishtadvaita, the Dvaita, the Shuddhadvaita, the Dvaitadvaita, Achintyabhedabheda, Saiva Siddhanta, the Sakta school, and so many other schools. This was the condition of the human mind in its philosophical level when Sankara's advent took place on this earth. Hundreds of cults and dogmas prevailed. Pasupatas, Saivas, Bhairavas, Kapalikas were all rampant during his time. Sri Sankara came to give to mankind a gospel of healthy living. Advaita is not a system opposed to other systems, but a method of interpretation of values by which we can healthily coordinate the existing systems of thought and construct a system of philosophy according to which we can live happily in every stage of our life. The Vedanta of Sankara came as a remedy to the diversified ways of thinking which created an unnecessary conflict even in daily practices of human beings, and this he did without going contrary to the injunctions of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Scripture and reason were the two aids in the arguments of Sankara. He was a tremendous logician, the like of which it is difficult to imagine ordinarily, who based his arguments entirely on the principles of logic, but without contradicting the intuitional revelations of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Every argument was logically precise, culminating in an irrefutable conclusion. But it was based on the evidence of the scriptures like the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita and the Samhitas of the Vedas.

30. BRAHMA SAKSHATKARA IS THE SAME AS ANUBHAVA OF THE SUPREME BEING.

*I*ntuition is not opposed to intellect, was what Sankara proclaimed. Nor can we say that intellect is complete in itself. The conclusions of the intellect have to be corroborated by the revelations of the Srutis. Sruti, Yukti and *Anubhava*—scripture, argument and experience—have to go parallel along a path leading to a single goal. Scripture is the support for the argument, while argument supplies the strength for the exposition of the scripture, both of which lead to the direct experience or *anubhava*. Reality is experience. Brahma Sakshatkara is the same as *anubhava* of the Supreme Being. Unfortunately, today we have no proper expositions of the Vedanta philosophy. They are all in bits and tracts, here and there; a complete philosophy of Sankara is not available in any single book. We may read any book written anywhere, but we will not find a complete presentation of his philosophy. This is unfortunate; but this is understandable, because it is not easy for a single man to write or to touch upon all the aspects of this single, all-comprehensive philosophy. The Upanishads themselves are all-comprehensive and an exposition of them, which is the system of Vedanta, has naturally to be many-sided. We cannot read any particular textbook and say we have understood Vedanta, because all textbooks deal with certain aspects—the theory of perception, or the logical part of it alone, or only the sadhana aspects of it and so on, are touched upon. We have masterly expositions of Advaita Vedanta given in such books as the *Khandana Khanda Khadya* of Sriharsha or the *Tattva Pradipika* of Chitsukha or the *Advaita Siddhi* of Madhusudana Saraswati, but we will not understand the spirit of Vedanta even after reading all these books, because they are only arguments leading to certain conclusions of Advaita, but not the entirety of it. Even if we read the Brahma Sutra Bhashya of Sankara, we will not know or understand the entire teaching of it. It requires study under a guru to have a complete view of the entire perspective of Sankara’s teaching.

31. ALL GREAT VEDANTINS ARE DEVOTEES.

It is really interesting that the fate of the Advaita Vedanta later on, in the passage of time, was similar to that of Buddhism. It was misrepresented. As Buddha was misrepresented, and Christ is being misrepresented, Sankara was also misrepresented. So to counteract the misrepresented attitudes, there came other Acharyas like Ramanuja, Madhva and others. One cannot wholly and satisfactorily explain the subtle relation of the soul to God. Though many schools of philosophy have come up, they are like dismembered bodies, and not a complete whole. Just because we have limbs cut off and thrown everywhere, it does not mean that we have a complete human system. Unfortunately, we have only such limbs cut off—Dvaitins, Advaitins and Visishtadvaitins, etc. Sankaracharya's works must be studied not merely for the philosophical depths of his writings but also for the beauty of his language. *Vakyam prasannagambhiram*—his sentences are very smooth-flowing, very deep and beautiful. They are very simple, but full of depth and literary beauty which we will find only in such poets like Kalidasa. Of course, Sankaracharya mostly wrote his commentaries in prose though he has also written poems of various kinds. They are so simple, so sonorous and so beautiful. For the beauty of the language of Sanskrit, and the depth of philosophical wisdom and the help they can offer us in our practical life, his works have to be studied. There is a beautiful poem by Sankara known as *Prabodha Sudhakara*. It is a very beautiful work because it combines Bhakti and Vedanta. Sankaracharya was also a devotee. All great Vedantins are also devotees. It is very mysterious. Madhusudana Saraswati was an utter Vedantin but he was a devotee of Lord Krishna. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was a great admirer of Adi Sankaracharya, and in his teachings we will find the spirit of Sankara. If we can understand Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj properly, we can understand Sankaracharya also. So let us study their works and try to live a practical life of Vedanta and Bhakti.

RUDRAASHTAKAM

Namaamishamishaana Nirvaana Rupam,
Vibhum Vyaapakam Brahma Veda Svarupam,
Ajam Nirgunam Nirvikalpam Niriham,
Chidaakaaramaakaasha Vaasam Bhajeham .

Nirakaaramonkaara Mulam Turiyam,
Girajaanaana Gotitamisham Girisham,
Karaalam Mahaakaala Kaalam Kripaalum ,
Gunaagaara Samsaarapaaram Natoham.

Tushaaraadri Sankaasha Gauram Gabhiram,
Mano Bhuta Koti Prabhaa Svat Shariram,
Sphuranmauli Kallolini Chారు Gangaa,
Lasatphaala Baalendu Kanthe Bhujangam.

Chalatkundalam Shubhranetram Vishaalum,
Prasannaanam Nilakantham Dayaalum,
Mrigaadhisha Charmaambaram Mundamaalam ,
Priyam Shankaram Sarva Naatham Bhajaami.

Prachandam Prakrishtam Pragalbham Paresham,
Akhandam Bhaje Bhaanu Koti Prakaasham ,
Trayishula Nirmulanam Shula Paanim,
Bhajeham Bhavaanipatim Bhaava Gamyam.

Kalaatita Kalyaana Kalpaantakaari ,
Sadaa Sajjanaananda Daataa Puraarih,
Chidaananda Sandoha Mohaapahaari,
Prasida Prasida Prabho Manmathaarih.

Na Yaavat Umaanaatha Paadaaravindam,
Bhajantiha Loke Pare Vaa Naraanaam,
Na Taavatsukham Shaanti Santaapa Naasham ,
Prasida Prabho Sarva Bhutaadhivaasah.

Na Jaanaami Yogam Japam Naiva Pujaam,
Natoham Sadaa Sarvadaa Deva Tubhyam,
Jaraa Janma Dukhaugha Taatapyamaanam ,
Prabho Paahi Shaapaannamaamisha Shambho.

Rudraashtakamidam Proktam,
Viprena Hara Tushtaye,
Ye Pathanti Naraa Bhaktyaa,
Tesham Shambhuh Prasadati.

About Swami Krishnananda

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj took birth on the 25th April, 1922, in Puttur, Karnataka, as the eldest child in a highly religious and orthodox Brahmin family well versed in Sanskrit, and was named Subbaraya. Reading from the Srimad Bhagavata that Lord Narayana lives in sacred Badrinath Dham, the young boy believed it literally and entertained a secret pious wish to go to the Himalayas, where Badrinath is located, and see the Lord there.

Swami arrived in Rishikesh in the summer of 1944. When he met Swami Sivananda and fell prostrate before him, the saint said: “Stay here till death, I will make kings and ministers fall at your feet.” Swami Sivananda initiated young Subbaraya into the holy Sannyasa on the sacred day of Makar Sankranti, the 14th January, 1946, and he was named Swami Krishnananda.

In 1957 Swamiji became the Secretary especially concerned with the management of finance, which continued until 1961 when Sri Gurudev nominated him as General Secretary of the Divine Life Society, which position he held until 2001.

Swami Krishnananda was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. “Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda,” said Sri Gurudev. Swami Krishnananda, the embodiment of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, lived in the state of God-consciousness and guided countless seekers along the path of self-realisation. Swamiji attained Mahasamadhi on the 23rd of November, 2001.

THE MAHA-MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA

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

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SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN MAY

*THIS BOOK HAS BEEN OFFERED
AT THE LOTUS FEET OF
H.H. SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDAJI
MAHARAJ
ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS AUSPICIOUS 17TH PUNYA TITHI
ARADHANA
ON 15.11.2018 (GOPASHTAMI)*



MADHAVA DIVYA DHAM,
TAVEREKERE, BENGALURU.(South).