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H.H.

SRI SWAMI

VENKATESANANDA

*29.12.'21 - 2.12.'82*

MAY HIS LIGHT SHINE IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.



*Swami Venkatesananda*

*Swami*

*Venkatesananda*



*S*wami Venkatesananda was born in the Tanjore District of South India on December 29, 1921. As a young man he worked in Madras in Civil Defence during the war and later with the government in Calcutta, then Delhi. There was only admiration and praise for his work and promotion was most rapid.

But his government career was short for in 1944 he met Swami Sivananda and though the meeting was brief, the effect was penetrating. From the age of twelve Swamiji had practiced yoga postures, pranayama and meditation, studying books by Swami Sivananda and Swami Vivekananda. He practiced seriously and largely alone. The spiritual hunger grew and in 1937 he wrote to Swami Sivananda offering his service. But the Master advised him to wait and continue his practices at home: "I have no ashram; I myself live on kshetra bhiksha." (alms)

The time was not ripe. But in 1945 the moment came and Swamiji left for Rishikesh, Himalayas and Swami Sivananda, never looking back, for he had left nothing behind, or rather the reality of what was behind had evaporated in the fire of renunciation. In September 1947 he entered the swami order as Swami Venkatesananda. For seventeen years he remained in Rishikesh, ever close to his Master, editing and publishing his books, serving him in every capacity and absorbing his teachings until

he became them. He was the ideal disciple, and indeed it was this ideal of perfect discipleship that remained his touchstone throughout his life. No higher compliment could be bestowed than these words of his Master: "Great jewel of my Mission, the resplendence of my work- will I ever see any one shine brighter than he, Swami Venkatesanandaji? Surely none have I seen so far."

In 1961 Swamiji was invited to South Africa and Australia. The quiet swami began to speak and his attraction was magnetic. He shone, he sparkled and everywhere the response was enormous. It was three years before the visit ended. Invitations followed from Madagascar, Mauritius, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Israel, Europe and North America and as the years passed, it became clear that his home was his residence of the moment and his family the hundreds who were drawn to him seeking direction, peace and truth.

As his travels widened, so his writings grew: a biography of his Master, a series of books on the various aspects of yoga practice and philosophy, a comprehensive book on yoga, a daily guide to the Bhagavad Gita, Daily readings drawn from the essentials of Swami Sivananda's teachings, and original translations from the Sanskrit of the Srimad Bhagavatam, the Ramayana, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Yoga Vasistha and treasures from Buddhist scriptures. Numerous smaller books appeared in response to questions and needs of friends and seekers and his lectures have been published in many countries and several languages. In all a total of more than eighty titles.

This dynamic spiritual energy vitalised those whose lives he touched. Informal groups sprang up, housewives and business men discovered that they were yoga teachers, and gradually a number of yoga centres and ashrams were born in his name. Swamiji is Patron of the Sivanda Yoga Ashram, Swami Sivananda Road, Rose Hill, Mauritius; the Sivananda

Ashram, P.O. Box No.2, South Fremantle, West Australia, 6162; The Seven Hills Ashram, Gooderham, Ontario, Canada; Ananda Kutir Yoga Assn./Trust, Ananda Kutir, 24 Sprigg Road, Rondebosch East, Cape Town, South Africa, and the International Yoga Teacher's Association. In addition the Chiltern Yoga Trust, P.O. Elgin, 7180, Cape Province, South Africa, was formed to publish his books. Branches have now been formed in several countries. Apart from these formal organisations, many small groups, yoga schools and satsangs hold Swamiji as their heart and inspiration. A yearly schedule of invitations kept Swamiji circulating around the world, lecturing, conducting seminars - wisdom ever flowing from that still centre that is his true home.

These are the facts of Swamiji's life, but what is their significance? What is the unique impact that made Swamiji's very acquaintance unforgettable? The secret is the same for all Masters. The secret is pure spirit, unfettered by the ego, by convention, totally new each moment- a free flowing channel of the divine.

We have an image of a yogi- but pure spirit may not fit. Purity, goodness, power cannot be moulded into even the loftiest of images. The impact is totally unexpected. The surprise is breath-taking and in the shock some of those ineffable qualities may penetrate to the level where there is recognition, the startling recognition of a mirror-image in which self recognises self and those very same qualities vibrate deep within. It is the most blessed reunion.

In only such subjective words can one describe Swamiji, because objectively he may be nothing- nothing that one could pin down as this or that. He has been a transparent window through which one might glimpse truth, the most highly polished mirror in which you recognise that truth as yourself.

Moral and spiritual advice is easily available- there is a supermarket choice in the world today. But where could one find knowledge that is direct, silent

and inexpressible? Only in the presence of a Master like Swami Venkatesananda. This knowledge cannot be taught and therefore Swamiji was not a teacher in that sense. The process of discovery is not even 'a doing'; it is a happening without reference to the ego. Nothing is imposed, nothing is done but in Swamiji's presence a non-violent revolution took place; the idea of the self was toppled from its throne and peace ensued. Such is a Master. Such is Swami Venkatesananda.



On the night of December 1, 1982, a full moon shone over Johannesburg and the vortex of energy that we called our beloved Swami Venkatesananda began to flow back to the source. At 13:50 on December 2, the vessel that had been offered to Swami Sivananda in 1945, lay still.

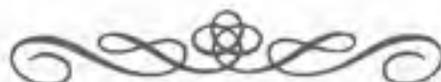
When he walked with us, when he laughed with us, his supreme brilliance was often veiled from our eyes, though for each one who knew him there were moments of profound vision. Now that the gossamer cage is broken, the beloved is ever free to dance in our hearts.

We called him Swami Venkatesananda but universal energy cannot be named. We say that he was born and died, but infinity may not accept the parameters of time. What he was, that he is - and THAT THOU ART.

-Tat twam asi-

Swami Sushila  
( Susan Thomas )

8 December, 1982.



Beloved Friends,

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA!

The lamp that illuminated our lives has not been extinguished, but now shines in our innermost heart. We must only shift our vision. We are blessed- whereas before the majesty of our beloved could divert our attention from the stillness of the master, now our vision will be drawn ever inward.

Perhaps it will be of comfort to know some details of his passing. For those present it was very real - a reality that was neither grim nor macabre but part of the mystery of Swamiji's sojourn with us.

Swamiji was nearing the completion of his programme in Johannesburg where his hosts, Jyotsnamata and Bharat van der Veeke had showered him with loving care. On Sunday morning, November 28, Swamiji went out to lunch and satsang to the home of his dear friends Bhikkubhai and Jayantibhai Naik. That evening he gave

9 Sprigg Road,  
Rondebosch East,  
7700.  
Cape Town,  
Rep. South Africa.  
December 9, 1982.

a superb lecture at Yogiraj Mani Finger's School of Yoga. It was a cool evening and he chose to walk there and back. By bedtime he was not feeling at all well and took some medication. Later he asked for more medication. He had been receiving treatment from two beautiful spiritual healers- Ian and Helen- and as he would not see a doctor, Jyotsnamata and I phoned them and they came to the centre immediately. Swamiji apologised for not being able to sit up to receive them properly. They gave treatment and as they left he gave them sweets and said: " I thank whatever God sent you here tonight." He had been feeling pins and needles and a crawling sensation in the chest and right arm and felt somewhat relieved after treatment. He insisted on being alone though I checked on him several times during the night. The next morning his blood pressure was very low, his pulse fast, and he had a slight but persistent fever. In retrospect he must have had a heart attack on that Sunday night.

He slept on Monday but that evening he summoned phenomenal energy and gave a beautiful lecture. Five minutes before he had been barely able to raise his head and yet he poured out wisdom and humour. When he returned to his room I asked: " What happened? I saw a body on a bed, then the swami beaming energy and wisdom?" He said: " So you see it was not me." Later there was another healing session with Ian, Helen, Latifa ( a devoted

friend who is both a homoeopath and medical doctor) and Haj, an expert in acupuncture.

On Tuesday morning he insisted on going to his old friend Kasiben (his Johannesburg mother) for satsang and breakfast. On returning he stayed in bed until the afternoon discussion when he could not be dissuaded from coming downstairs. His blood pressure remained very low; his fever persisted. That evening he said: " His holiness has come to a dreadful decision. We must go to Cape Town on Friday morning." (We had been booked for Saturday mid-day.)

The following day, Wednesday, he again rested until 15:30 when Latifa and Haj came to give treatment. The acupuncture strengthened and regularised the weak pulse. He felt better and again conducted the afternoon discussion. But even while the acupuncture session was in progress, Swamiji was most concerned that the doctors be given tea, immediately. After the discussion he was exceptionally warm with his friends and went out for a walk to a nearby park. But walking did not suit him and when he returned to the centre he felt unwell. That evening, one after the other, his old and dear friends turned up and he insisted on receiving everyone. Later a remark was made about thinking and he said something to the effect: " There is no more thinking. It is too late for all that."

At 3:30 am. Thursday morning Jyotsnamata heard him coughing and woke me. He asked for medication every half hour. His breathing remained difficult throughout the night. I gave him more acupuncture and Jyotsnamata and I tried to make him comfortable. Erica Leon, a pharmacist and beloved friend in Cape Town, was phoned and she suggested a cough preparation that eased him considerably, though there was still difficulty in breathing. He continued to refuse a doctor and later in the morning refused all medication, though he took a little milk and honey.

About 11.00am. his blood pressure reading was barely credible and his pulse was racing and irregular. All morning Jyotsnamata and I tried to reach Latifa, the only doctor we thought he might see. At noon we managed to contact her and she was prepared to come immediately from Pretoria, but Swamiji said: "No, not yet. Not until after 4.00 pm." At about 12:30 Ian came to give healing but Swamiji asked him to send help from the next room as: "The body may want to sleep." We knew he was preparing to leave the body and offered him Ganges water but he said: "Only when I die." At about 13:30 he finally agreed to a doctor but said: "Hindi, Hindi." When he began to gasp I put Ganges water in his mouth and placed his scarf from Tirupati over his chest. Kumbhaka followed, then his face went slack. It was 13:50. Jyotsnamata, Kasiben and I were present. Two

minutes later Brother Chotubhai, a dear friend and community leader arrived, and after twenty minutes the doctor arrived to sign the death certificate - cardiac failure - no question.

We covered him with his shawl, placed his impression of Gurudev Sivananda's footprints on his head, his picture of Gurudev next to him and lit lamps. As friends arrived they joined in Hare Rama kirtan. A prayer meeting was held that evening and perfect calm prevailed. All were conscious of an immense strength and the chanting was powerful and clear. Lakshmi and Sanah Pather and Swami Shankarananda arrived from Durban just before midnight and the shanti mantras were recited. The body was then taken to a Hindu mortuary. Meanwhile friends around the world had been contacted - our love and unity was palpable and we longed to be together physically to share our strength.

As legal proceedings and necessary permits to transport the body to India for immersion in the Ganges, proved very lengthy and difficult, the decision was made to cremate in Johannesburg. This was in accord with a communication from H.H. Swami Chidananda, President of the Divine Life Society, who was in Rishikesh at the time. The body was washed and anointed and at 13:00 on Saturday afternoon it was laid in the Rameshwara Temple. As the hundreds of

devotees entered the temple, many were overcome with emotion, but as they stood beside the coffin, offering a last flower and viewing the peaceful features, calmness prevailed. The atmosphere was pervaded with a harmony, strength and love which was Swamiji.

We were all moved and deeply grateful that the four great Swamis who were in South Africa at the time travelled specially to Johannesburg to pay tribute to their respected brother. The presence of Swamis Sahajananda, Nisreyasananda, Shakarananda and Shivapadananda and Father Dominic, a Catholic monk and long-time friend of Swamiji's, was a comfort and inspiration to us all. Padmavathy Mudge, Kalyani McAlister, Radha Hoare, Erica Leon, Doreen Black and Bhikku Kassar had all flown in from various parts of South Africa. Father Dominic led the devotees in a moving prayer: "Thank you Lord for giving us the privilege of sharing your love, your joy and your enlightenment through Swamiji." Kirtan continued until 15:30 when the revered Swamis, Erica, Padmavathy and myself did arati and the casket was carried out. Milk and flowers were strewn before the coffin. We proceeded to the Hindu crematorium, situated in a beautiful park. The procession moved slowly behind the hearse singing Hare Rama for nearly one-quarter mile. Then the coffin was placed on a

trestle in the garden and the four Swamis, Father Dominic and Bharat van der Veeke spoke a few choice and appropriate words - nothing sad, no eulogies - rather everyone emphasised the sparkling humour that lightened our hearts. Here in brief is the essence of their words for us to cherish.

Swami Sahajananda: They say he died of heart failure, but his heart never failed him. He always delighted us with his stories of Gurudev.

Swami Nisreyasananda: In the midst of all his travels and lectures he had the immense concentration to translate and condense the most subtle and challenging of the scriptures, so that others need only spend five minutes each day to imbibe their essence.

Swami Shankarananda: Nothing more can be added to Gurudev's tribute: "Crest Jewel of my Mission, the resplendence of my work - will I ever see any one shine brighter than he, Swami Venkatesanandaji? Surely none have I seen so far." Swamiji also related: Each morning Gurudev went first to Swamiji's room and gave him work for the day. At the close of the evening satsang others would approach Gurudev, but when Swamiji came he would clear the path, receive the work of the day and send him off quickly with more ...knowing that his precious gems would be ready by morning.

Swami Shivapadananda: Only two groups have reason for grief - those who knew Swamiji for a long time, heard him, but never responded and those who have just met him. For the others there is only joy.

Father Dominic: He came to speak at our church. We were a poor parish and had prepared a rickety table for him to sit on, so that all could see. But his humility soon had him off the table and onto the floor - at one with the people.

Bharat van der Veeke: We are deeply grateful for the privilege of having hosted Swamiji at the Sivananda School over the past many years. His humour and wisdom will never be forgotten. His laughter and smile will be with us always.

I wished to add that only two weeks before, Swamiji spoke of his death and said: "I have done all that needs to be done, everything I wanted and a little more. There is no frustration, no regret, I am ready to go."

The casket (a simple wooden box with OM stickers on it) was carried into the crematorium and the shanti mantras chanted. Ghee and scented oils were poured over the body and the coffin entered the fire.

We returned to the Sivananda School for satsang with the four Swamis and Father Dominic. Swami Nisreyas-ananda spoke on the Mahasamadhi of a sage. In very

brief: The sage is in perpetual samadhi. Each day he ascends to the Lord. The Lord checks his book. If there is work for him that day, a one day permit is issued. One day he ascends and there is nothing written in the book. The heat is switched off and the elements return to their source. The mind and spirit which formed a vortex in the cosmic energy, dissolve back into the infinite.

And then Swami Shivapadananda sang: "Brahma here, Brahma there, Brahma Brahma everywhere. Guru here, Guru there, Guru Guru everywhere."

Lakshmi and Sanah Pather have carried the ashes in a copper vessel to the Ganges for immersion. Even now they may be engulfed in the Mother, Ganga Rani, beside whom Swamiji lived his most joyous years with his Master.

Swami Sushila  
(Susan Thomas)

FOOTNOTE: At a time like this 'thank you' seems superfluous and shallow, yet we can never express our gratitude to the friends in Johannesburg, the brother sannyasins and many friends who throughout these days of distress have offered only compassion and understanding, arranging painful details with immense taste and dignity. May we especially mention

Brother Chotubhai, Brother Rajnikant Masters, Brother Desai, the Naik family, Kasiben and Jyotsnamata and Bharat van der Veeke, whose open hearts and open home were a strength to us all.



SWAMI VENKATESANANDA - THE YOUNG SANNYASIN.

gurur brahma gurur vishnu gurur devo maheshvarah  
guruh saksat parabrahma tasmai sri gurave namah  
dhyanamulam guror murtih pujamulam garoh padam  
mantramulam guror vakyam moksamulam guror krpa

ANANDA KUTIR  
CAPE TOWN.R.S.A.  
December 1982.

Dear Friends, Hari Om!

It was Thursday 2nd. December. Swamiji was to have arrived on the 4th and had agreed to open the new Yoga Centre on Sunday 5th. Dec. Cardboard boxes stacked with books and household goods littered the floor of the Yoga Hall. There were curtain rails to put up and a lot of sorting out and unpacking to do. But the thought of Swamiji's radiant face and imminent arrival spurred us on.

In the midst of all this, two of our friends arrived looking very shocked and strained. Their expressions revealed the message they were going to impart: "Swamiji has gone." ( Sushila could not phone us herself as she did not have our new phone number.) After contacting Sushila in Johannesburg we heard that Swamiji had been desperately trying to reach Cape Town, even suggesting that there should be oxygen on the plane and putting forward his arrival by two days! Swamiji knew that all of his friends were eagerly awaiting him and he evidently did not want to disappoint us.

Candle lights were kept burning for three days. Some fifty of us gathered together from 2.30pm on the afternoon of the funeral in Johannesburg. We chanted the Hari Rama mantra until just before 5 pm. Friends from the Divine Life Society in Durban attended and were most supportive and Sri Madusingh, secretary of the D.L.S. in London led the Shantipaath prayers. Many people said that they felt Swamiji's presence.

The following day the opening ceremony took place as planned originally. Before Swamiji passed away he blessed " prasad" (food which has been blessed) espe-

cially for the opening ceremony, and Robin Featherstone who had been with Swamiji in Joburg, brought it back with him for distribution. About 120 people attended, many being students who had stuck to us through thick and thin during the past 16 months and who had been keenly looking forward to meeting Swamiji. The atmosphere was as joyous and peaceful as though Swamiji were there. How fortunate are some of us who have received his blessings for nearly 20 years! Such Grace is strong enough to inspire us for the rest of our lives. Even the new devotees felt the impact.

We held Satsangs nightly at 'Ananda Kutir' until Sushila, Erica and Kalyani returned from Joburg. Then the Satsangs continued at 9 Sprigg Rd., where Swamiji was to have stayed.

Brother Gopi Mansook conducted a memorial service at the new Mitra temple-hall, under the auspices of the Sri Kshatriya Hindu Mitra Mandal Society. The Indian ladies had chanted daily for the previous 10 days. Once again Swamiji's energy seemed to permeate the prayer hall.

On the 14th Dec. a memorial service was held at the home of Taraben Gheewala, a devoted friend of Swamiji. He had attended many wonderful Satsangs there and it was very easy to imagine (?) that he was sitting beside us.

Swamiji always reminded us every time he was about to leave: "Everything that has a beginning must have an end." But when something ends there is a new beginning. For Swamiji it was a glorious union with his beloved Master Swami Sivananda, unfettered by the bonds of an ailing, physical body. For all of us there is much glorious work to be done, inspired by Swamiji through his books, his tape recordings and above all, his Love!

YOGESHWARI

TELEPHONE MESSAGE FROM THE SIDDEHA YOGA DHAM ASHRAM  
INDIA, VIA NEW YORK. 3.12.'82.

From Swami Chidvilasananda and Swami Nityananda:-

"Both Nityananda and I are sad at the demise of Swami Venkatesananda. We know how much he loved Baba and all of us. His love will always be in our hearts. He has been such a support to all of us, that we know it is a great loss. But all his work and teachings will guide everybody."

PART OF A LETTER BY SWAMI SHANKARANANDA OF THE  
SIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA SOCIETY, S.A. TO MRS. JAYA VAN  
ALPHEN, PRESIDENT OF THE I.Y.T.A. IN S.A.:

2.12.'82.

P.S." I had completed this letter some two hours before Swamiji breathed his last in Joburg. I returned to Pietermaritzburg to complete the postponed programmes. Swamiji was given a very Royal Funeral attended by more than a thousand mourners. The mourners were packed to beyond capacity in the hall and they overflowed onto the street. At exactly 17.00 hours on the 4th, Swamiji's mortal coil was consigned to the fire element reabsorbing his loaned physical constituents. Early next morning we collected the ashes. This morning Sanah and Lakshmi Pather of Reservoir Hills have especially left for Rishikesh for the final rites to be performed by the Ashram on the holy banks of the Sacred Ganga and by all the Swamis and the inhabitants of the Ashram. It was a great grace that I could have the privilege to recite all the sacred mantras in the mortuary where the body of Swamiji was being prepared for the cremation. Each time I looked at Swamiji's beautiful countenance he appeared to be asleep. There was no sign of life being absent. That proves that Swamiji was not distracted even though the body was beginning to fail him. He bore the overpowering physical affliction with an unflinching smile and humour. He was no doubt great. A true son of the Spirit!"

TELEPHONE MESSAGE FROM MR. PRANJIVAN TAILOR,  
BRISTOL, ENGLAND.  
20.12.'82.

" Lakshmi and Sanah Pather arrived in Rishikesh on the evening of Thursday the 9th December. Swamiji's devotees chanted Hari Rama in the Samadhi shrine the whole night.

On the morning of the 10th at 9am ceremonies began in the Samadhi Shrine- speeches etc. Then they went to Gurudev's Kutir and chanted for 15 minutes.

At noon they went to the Ganga bank in front of Gurudev's Kutir and Pranjivan performed the puja. At 12.30 , Pranjivan performed the immersion in Ganga."



## *Gathering the Honey of Knowledge*

(TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE)

by SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

(Lecture given at the Yoga School of Yogiraj  
Mani Finger on Sunday, Nov., 28th 1982)

They say that it is only the human being that is endowed with an intelligence that distinguishes it from other living creatures. But does it? How much of that intelligence is awake? How much of our own daily life is utilised in other than what we superciliously call animal activities - eating, drinking and so on? In what way are we better than those living beings who are considered inferior, or is it merely presumption? If we have intelligence, is it awakened? Are we leading exactly the same life as other animals, with an added burden called an intellect? Are we even aware of where we are going or what we are doing?

There is a great caution administered by the sages: Three things are extremely rare. They are earned by divine grace and they lead you to divine grace - both ways. What are these three? First, to be human. Who wrote this? A human being who was talking to other human beings. It is not because human life is something extraordinarily wonderful, but to be alive is wonderful. The sage who gave us this formula, first said that it is a blessing to be born human. Then he said: "You must strive to liberate yourself." Liberate yourself from what? Liberate yourself from even being a human being. To experience this longing for liberation, the yearning for liberation is also very rare.

The body, the mind, the emotions, the senses, the life-force seem to impose a whole lot of limit-

ations upon us. They seem to draw our energies and enslave us. One has to experience as a fact that we are being enslaved by some unknown forces, maybe within ourselves, maybe outside. The mind cannot be seen and yet this thing called 'mind' enslaves us so thoroughly it is disgraceful. How to be free from the tyranny of the mind? It is this question that is considered to be "longing for liberation".

Liberation is liberation from the mind. When we come into this field of finding freedom from this mind or the ego (both mean exactly the same thing) how do we go about it? In other words, who is seeking this freedom from whom? Is the seeker also the mind? Does the mind want to gain freedom from the mind? What does it mean? In answer to this question philosophers have invented all sorts of theories. We are not concerned with whether all these theories are true or not. All that we are concerned about is: are we getting any closer to clarity?

Unable to answer this question, unable to find a door, we go to the master. Therefore, the sage says: "It is blessed to be born human; it is blessed to experience the longing for freedom from the tyranny of the mind; and thirdly it is indeed a rare privilege and bliss to enjoy the company of the holy one." So, in a spiritual desert (which the world is fast becoming today), to enjoy the company of a holy one, if only for a little while, is like an oasis.

It is strange that we should consider ourselves far superior to what are called sub-human species. If you contemplate the relationship between the bee and the flower, you will probably understand a lot more about this expression 'company of the holy one', than anyone else can teach you. There is a longing in the bee for nectar. The flower blossoms and the bee goes straight to it - a bee-line. Then, watch; this is something very beautiful. The bee alights on the

flower. How sweet, how soft the landing is. And it takes just the nectar from the flower. Just that, nothing else. Nothing else of the flower is disturbed. And, in the meantime, it carries the seed from this flower and brings about cross-pollination.

That is what these holy ones would call guru dakshina or guru seva - service to the guru. You are not a parasite. You get something from the holy man, do a little service to him also, but without disturbing anything. Without in the least affecting the health, the sanity or the sanctity of the flower. I think, for a human being, with all this arrogance built in, it is almost impossible to imitate the bee. The bee's relationship with that flower is like the company of the holy one. Having got the nectar, go on, build your own honeycomb.

Another important factor and truth which is explicitly stated in one of the religious texts called the Bhagavatam is: like a bee, gather honey, gather knowledge, gather inspiration from every source you have access to. If your spiritual aspiration is keen and if you have experienced that bee-flower relationship with a holy one, you will know that you can derive inspiration from many and yet build one honeycomb from where-ever this nectar is brought. All these saints teach us the same message, and they blend into you. If they don't, it is your fault, not their's. Remember this very carefully. If you are a bee, you will know how to collect and gather honey and not make a mess of it. Serve each one from whom you have received some knowledge and generate that honey within yourself. The honey itself is the knowledge. That is the greatest service you can render to the master himself. The master is thrilled. He is happy that you turned out to be a first-class student. Naturally you would never compare one master with the other. The bee does not do it.

It is when you are bothered by this thing called loyalty or disloyalty that you indulge in this most regretful thing that distinguishes the human spiritual aspirant from the bee - criticism. The bee sings and the human being stings. And the stinging is directly attributed to the fact that you feel some loyalty problem. Any guru worth the name would love and encourage the seeker to find the truth, like the bee, from which ever source is within his reach. May we become the bee and gather this honey, the honey of knowledge, from any source that we can.

If you are too greedy, if you hang on to this flower and keep sucking it dry, then you may yourself be consumed. This lesson is important. When we go to these holy ones, do we seek their company in order to find an answer to the question that has been bothering us, the question being, how to be free of the tyranny of the mind? Or, do we go to this person to develop some other sort of relationship? The disciple and the guru can have so many types of relationships, some liberating, leading us towards this freedom from the mind, and some leading us exactly and precisely in the opposite direction. Therefore, one has to be extremely cautious.

What happens between the disciple and the guru? Paradoxically, enigmatically, ironically, self-knowledge is so simple that it has to be taught. It is not so mystifying, it is not even so enigmatic. If there is some dirt just below your eyes, it is quite possible that you can't see it. You have to seek someone else's help to find this dirt. That, perhaps is why we go to the guru. The problem is so simple and yet it sticks to our fingers. Krishna gives us three hints: go and surrender yourself to the guru. This is a spiritual thing, just like the bee alighting upon the flower. Fall at the holy one's feet - basically, morally, spiritually - symbolically surrendering the innermost being with this feeling: "I have looked

but I can't find an answer to the question, 'How shall I be free from the tyranny of the mind? So I surrender to you. Please, help me.'" If the surrenderer is there, you would question in order to learn and not question in order to argue.

When we go to a guru we don't argue. This is a hypothetical presumption: supposing the bee alights on some kind of a flower which doesn't have nectar. What does it do? Take off. If you go to some holy person and you cannot relate to that person, take off. Find another open flower which is waiting for you. No problem. Humbly approach the teacher, serving in whatever manner you can. It is not the teacher, that is in need of your service, it is through that service that you tune in. The entire trick lies in tuning in to the teacher, tuning in to the holy man. It is then that the knowledge begins to flow. Unless you are on the same wave-length you won't receive the message.

But, even if you are on the same wave length, another difficulty arises. The holy one's experience cannot be transplanted. So, when you are on the same wave length with the guru, he guides you in such a way that you seem to be close to the truth. Be very careful here. The guru points out the truth as if it was very near to you. If you have been with someone as enlightened as, for instance, my guru Swami Sivanda, you will appreciate this. In the presence of this master you feel that the truth is here. But, go away and what happened to it? It's gone!

This spiritual reality is not a substance which can be transferred from one to the other. The guru, who has walked this path and therefore who knows it, is capable of bringing you close to it or enabling you to feel that you are close to the truth. If you are aware all the time that it is still his realization, his experience, not yours; that you are still

impressed by the tyranny of the mind while he is free; that he has shown you that the truth is so close; then you are aware that you must be very cautious in the handling of it. You realise, "I must endeavour to get into that stream without disturbing the environment. I must sit there with intense awareness, concentration, contemplation, humility, love and affection for the teacher, for the truth, for the reality, for God or whatever it is. With all that intense love at heart and intense yearning, I must surrender myself to that knowledge, to that wisdom, so that..." You cannot complete that sentence - it does not become yours, perhaps you become part of that knowledge. The only thing that you may experience is that the mind is no longer capable of terrorising you. As long as the body exists and the mind functions, there has to be this extraordinary vigilance, alertness, and that is part of what is called enlightenment.

The touchstone or the characteristic of enlightenment itself is that it never sleeps, it is never taken unawares. The price of freedom is this unwinking vigilance - in the words of my guru Swami Sivananda, 'eternal vigilance'. Eternal vigilance, in the beginning, looks like a discipline. But, once you have found the key to this whole spiritual movement, eternal vigilance is natural. Until this freedom from the tyranny of the mind becomes natural, one needs company of saints and holy ones, which is regarded as supreme blessing. If you and I could appreciate this blessing that has been showered upon us, I am quite sure that we would instantly transform ourselves into so many bees and imbibe the nectar - and become honey.

(Editor: Erica Leon)



SWAMI VENKATESANANDA WITH GURUDEV, SWAMI SIVANANDA.

## *Gurudev is Within*

So the ringing voice is silent. The majestic form has vanished. We shall no more see the gigantic figure clad in orange, shod in canvas shoes stride with measured long steps, bags in hand, ready to distribute fruits, wisdom and work to us, his beloved children. That childlike giggling, with the big tummy quaking with convulsions of joy - a laughter so wholesome that tears of joy bedimmed the sparkling eyes: a laughter that radiated the bliss of God to all, can be heard no more.

But the Light of Sivananda is inextinguishable. It shines in the heart of humanity today, without a lampshade, and so the brighter for it.

Gurudev is the manifestation of God: God is the supreme immutable Reality. He dwells in us. The physical appearance was His own Maya. The impersonal Reality is His own Self.

The end is perhaps shocking. But that is not the end. It is a beginning. The Builder worked outside: he was on view. He created an inside, and he has entered it. Now he works inside, out of external view, but more truly and purposefully active, therefore. Gurudev has moulded us, given shape to shapeless masses, laid stone upon stone in us and built a shrine, entered it and is now busy at work in there.

LOOK WITHIN: BEHOLD, GURUDEV IS WITHIN YOU!



(SWAMIJI'S TRIBUTE TO GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDA)  
AFTER HIS MAHASAMADHI.



FROM SWAMIJI'S DIARY:

"Never abandon a task undertaken- even if it be by the people of a previous generation. This is the road to success." S.V.