

The Glory of Our Gurudev

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We are deeply indebted to Pujya Gurudev and have to pay our respects to him. There is so much to say about him that I do not know where to begin or how to express. He was a great *Rishi* of the modern times. The *Rishis* of the *Upanishad* pray: "May those *brahmacharis*, who want to revel in *Brahman*, come to us from all directions." They prayed for pupils with discipline of mind and body to come to them. Pujya Gurudev drew many such disciples; people from all over the world flocked to him for guidance.

Pujya Gurudev was a great visionary. He showed us the tradition by setting up the Sandeepany Sadhanalayas in Mumbai, Sidhabari, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, where *brahmacharis* are given training. Young educated people between the ages of 18 and 30 are invited to these

institutions and trained free of cost. He wanted them to learn the Scriptures, so that they would be able to live more complete lives.

In olden times the students of the *gurukula* had to go out every day and collect alms, which were in turn offered to the *Guru*. The *Guru* would then give the disciple his share. There were times when he would decide not to give anything, in order to increase the student's level of austerity. In our Sandeepany, Pujya Gurudev made sure that the students did not have to go out for anything. He ensured that all the needs of his disciples were automatically met. His only desire was that the children who came there should study *Vedanta*, without any other concerns. Can you find a more compassionate *Guru*?

He took it on himself to feed, clothe, house and nourish all those who showed an interest in *Vedanta*. Despite all this, the students, on completion of their studies, were under no

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obligation to work for the Chinmaya Mission. Even after giving so much, he had no expectations of any kind from anyone. A *brahmachari* once asked him, "Gurudev, what do you expect from us?" Gurudev replied, "Nothing, just smile when we meet!" In his scheme of things, there was no question of a bond being signed. His only aim was to give them this Knowledge so that they could be free. To work or not to work for the Mission was the choice of the student. As far as he was concerned, there were no hard feelings. It is difficult to find such a large-hearted *Rishi* today! In olden times there is mention of such *Rishis*, who were content if the students gained the Knowledge. They had no other expectations from the disciples.

What a grand educational tradition it was! Our present day educational system stands nowhere in comparison. In that system there was no expectation, no question of measuring what was given, nor any

demands in return. We have the example of Kaustuvani, the disciple of Vartantu, who asked his master what he wanted. Rishi Vartantu replied that he wanted nothing. Bhagavan Sri Krishna also studied under Rishi Sandeepani and on completion of his studies, asked what he should give as *Gurudakṣiṇā*. Rishi Sandeepani said that he did not want anything. He knew Sri Krishna's true nature and felt blessed at having been given the opportunity to teach Him. There are several examples like this in the *Guruśiṣya Paramparā*, to show the greatness of the *Rishi* or Teacher. Pujya Gurudev's life was one such example in the *Rishi* tradition. On making a comparison, one will be convinced that he was a *tattva draṣṭā* with one great thirst – that this Knowledge should reach as many people as possible. He has left us greatly indebted to him.

Rishis are called *tattvavit* or Knowers of the Truth. Our Scriptures have said: '*Brahmavit*

brahmaiva bhavati – the Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.’ In the context of the *Rishi Paramparā*, the *Rishi* is *Brahmasvarūpa*. Such a person is endowed with various divine qualities. There is a *śloka*² in *Vishnu Sahasranama*, with some of the thousand names of the Lord, that are descriptive of the various requisites of a leader. These indicate some of the qualities displayed in Gurudev’s life and activities.

Our Parama Pujya Gurudev was a wonderful leader. *Agraṇīḥ* – he always led from the front, showing people the way to rise and reach higher peaks. *Grāmaṇīḥ* – in keeping with Gurudev’s vision, Chinmaya Mission centres are found not only in the big cities, but also in small towns and villages; there are several specific rural development projects as well. Also, if we take the other meaning of the word *grāmaṇīḥ*, we find that he had complete control over his sense organs and that is how he was able to accomplish so much work.

Śrīmān – he had the ability to garner all the resources

necessary to complete the projects he undertook. This is in sharp contrast to some public projects, which do not get past the laying of the foundation stone. All the projects he started were successful. *Nyāyāḥ* – he was just and fair to all those who worked with him. *Netā* – Undoubtedly, he was a leader of men. *Samīraṇāḥ* – he inspired people. Even today, people are motivated to work simply through the power of his name. *Sahasramūrdhā* – only superlatives can describe his intelligence and thinking power. He was a powerhouse of knowledge, with information on innumerable subjects. *Viśvātmā* – he identified with everyone, not just one country or sect or religion. He said that *Vedānta* is for everyone and should be made available to everyone. *Sahasrākṣaḥ* – despite his failing health, he kept an eye on everyone and even travelled to far-flung and remote places on the globe. He went wherever people called him. This was our Gurudev.

His glories are endless and one can never tire of singing them. I end this with repeated prostrations and salutations at His Feet.

² Please turn to page 14 for a detailed explanation of this *śloka*.

