

Shodasi Talks at Rishikesh, October 8, 2015

On the occasion of Pujya Swamiji's Shodasi function held at Rishikesh, tributes by Pujya Swamiji's disciple Students and Swamiji's were given, a gist of which is reproduced here

Swami Vidadatmananda:

Everybody knows that Pujya Swamiji was a teacher, but now we can share our personal experiences of how he was as a person.

Pujya Swamiji is a many-dimensional great person. As I talked to different people I found how in so many different ways he has touched people. He was a teacher, of course, par excellence, but he was also a highly talented person. We could see his depths of knowledge and understanding in many different fields. Without any formal training he displayed a deep knowledge of music. His compositions are outstanding from the point of view of the lyrics and from the technicalities of the music, not only from the standpoint of the composition, also how the *bhavas* were expressed.

Swamiji was a follower of astrology. He connected with many people through astrology. In every conceivable area Pujya Swamiji could counsel people. In psychology, he was a great counselor. He wanted to remove the pain and grief of all those who surrendered to him.

His concern for Hindu dharma was just amazing. You could see the pride that he had about the tradition, about Hinduism, about scriptures. He was very inspired about Hinduism and listening to him the same thing would arise in you. At the Hindu-Jewish Meet a few years ago, the Chief Rabbi of Israel became his devotee. In the next meeting, Pujya Swamiji taught them Vedanta. It's just amazing, some kind of magic.

He could attract people, he could touch them. He always used to say in talking about personnel management, how to manage persons, "When somebody comes to you, he should feel elevated in your presence." He was so humble and so accepting, so accommodating, so compassionate.

I recently heard that many years ago in the seventies when both Sri Swami

Chinmayanandaji and Pujya Swamiji used to go to the United States, somebody asked: Why did you give this name to Swamiji? Dayananda is a common name, the founder of Arya Samaj had that name. Why didn't you give some other name? Swami Chinmayanandaji replied, "I had no choice." Pujya Swamiji's compassion was just flowing and everybody felt that.

Swami Brahmaidyananda:

Swamiji was one person whom I met who really lived up to what he said. Giving, giving, giving, and giving. He wouldn't take anything unless it was necessary, but on the other hand he was ready to give to anyone who came to him. Swamiji was *yathoktākari*. As a teacher Swamiji did not have any other commitment. *Jagat karanam brahman, aham asmi* There was no other commitment in terms of the *tattva*.

Swamini Brahmaprakashananda:

Om sri Guruve namah. Actually I have no words to tell anything just now. I am so overwhelmed. I don't feel like telling anything except that the very purpose of my life has been to meet him, to be with him, to learn from him. With his great blessings and grace, what a chance to be of any use to him as a physician. My becoming a physician was *cheritārtha* in just doing any little thing I could do for him. We all learned *ātmājñānam* from him, how to understand life from him.

Sheela Balaji:

As Swamini Brahmaprakashanandaji has said, it is too early for us to share what Swamiji has done for us. In my case, I think I came very, very late. I did not come to study so much. I was studying with Swami Paramarthanandaji's classes on Sundays from 1994. I only heard Pujya Swamiji in 1997 when he gave a talk on the *Need for Cognitive Change*. That really changed my life, because after that I met

Swamiji. I think that Pujya Swamiji was also diversifying into seva, into all the publications, and I guess that my interest or whatever talent or skill I had at that time made us just join together and there has been no looking back.

Swamini Pramananda:

For many of us the mind tends to keep going back because we don't know how to think forward without his physical presence. For me personally it is a very big era from very young years.

Yes, *mahāvākya* has been his key and that key we all carry. We have carried it and we will continue to carry it together in this life. But as we carry that key and we live life, as so beautifully Swamiji has said, "Life doesn't just bring an equation, it is about living that equation. It is about actualizing that equation into our entire thought system, our thoughts and words and actions, that whole transforming process, that cognitive change, that shift, that internal shift.

Srinivasan:

As much as Swamiji's and other devotees' qualifications, the only qualification I have to stand before you is that I am the younger brother of Pujya Sri Swamiji. We are all blessed that Swamiji came from our family.

Swamiji has been going all over the world. He was roaring like a lion about the Sanathana Dharma, our scriptures, upanishads, Vedanta and values, and he had established, you know very well, different institutions in different places, to spread this knowledge of Vedanta. All his disciples have the privilege of knowing these teachings and spreading and keeping the flag flying. I pray that Swamiji's teachings will be spread throughout the world by our more than 200 students who are spread out in the world and they will prove that Sanathana Dharma is the best for the individual to follow.

Swami Paramatmanandaji:

Namaste. I had some *punyam* to have a lot of quality time with Swamiji. Since we are talking about personal experiences, I would share what Swamiji said himself to me. Pujya Swamiji met

with Prime Minister Modi in 2012 when there was a crises. He was only there for two days. I still remember vividly what he said. We three were sitting. Swamiji was in the middle holding Modi's hand. Swamiji looked at me and smiled. Then he said to Modi: "You know I am a *yugapurusha* as a teacher and I see you as a *yugapurusha* as a ruler."

I used to tell him, Swamiji you are like a laser beam. Any field he goes into, he sees through and through. And when we look back at the work that he has accomplished in one lifetime, and the teaching that he has done, we thought it was a matter of imagination that someone could do. In a real sense, he was a *vibhuti*. In a real sense there was an *amsha*, I can say. Once when I wanted to do something my way, he said to me that if Shankara was alive today, he would do this. What a way of communication.

I know what we will miss, India will miss, dharma will miss, culture will miss. ... I feel like an orphan. From the day before, I started some decisions, where to go? It's such a vacuum. At political level, national level, social... you name it. And that heart! So many sadhus, *mathadipadis*, felt that he is like a father. They have gone beyond their *maryadas*.

With this pranams to Swamiji and with a prayer that we relax and become stronger to fulfill his vision.

Maharajapuram Ramachandraji:

Namaste. As Swamiji said, our Pujya Swamiji has got the knowledge in every field, whatever he chooses, especially with regard to music. Since I am a musician, I want to say something about that. Since his childhood, he has been hearing the music of stalwarts like my grandfather Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanujam and other stalwarts

He used to say, "I don't know anything about music", but when he composed songs like Someswaram, Mahalingavibho, nobody can believe his statement. That's what I feel.

And I am very blessed because he had a very great liking for me and my father's music also.