

Śraddhānjali to Swami Omkaranandaji By Swamijis

During 1987, Swami Omkarananda came to me to study Vedanta. Swamiji had already taken Sannyasa-- diksha from Swami Chidbhananda of Ramakrishna- Tapovanam. In his purvasram, Swamiji had studied Yajurveda traditionally. He also knew how to perform vedic and temple (agama) rituals. He had a good knowledge of Tamil religious and spiritual literature and was giving discourses in Tamil. He had exposure to Sanskrit language also. In fact, his introductory conversation with me was in Sanskrit.

Swamiji stayed with me for 4 years and attended private classes with three other Brahmacharies. These classes were conducted in Sanskrit medium. Swamiji was very intelligent and quick in grasping the finer aspects of Vedanta. Within a few months he clearly understood the uniqueness of our Arshavidya-sampradaya.

During his stay, Swamiji joined all our Sadhana- camps and conducted Tamil classes. Because of his friendly and jovial nature, he became very popular among the public students of Chennai. The very sight of him lit up their faces.

After studies, Swamiji set up an Ashram at Theni ,Tamil Nadu. He has been conducting several religious, spiritual and social activities, including short-term and long-term Vedanta courses, through the Ashram. Even during the pandemic, he was conducting online classes on various subjects. The growth of the Ashram has been phenomenal.



Pujya Swamiji recognized his resourcefulness and said " Omkarananda is an asset to us ". Swamiji played a major part in all the Arshavidya functions -- Temple Kumbhabhishekams, Pujya Swamiji 's Jayanti celebrations etc. Seeing his leadership qualities, Pujya Swamiji made him his successor to head Dharmarakshanasamiti, an organization involved in religious and social activities. Around this time, Swamiji took up the additional responsibility of becoming the Pontiff of Bhuvaneshwari Pitham, Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu.

Together, we used to visit many places in India every year. I can never forget those relaxed, enjoyable moments.

Swamiji 's tireless work, day and night, took a toll on his health and led to an early end. We are fortunate to be associated with such a Mahatma and we cherish this association lifelong.

- **Swami Paramarthananda**

Sri Swami Omkaranandaji was a Mahatma in the true sense of the word — a large hearted Sadhu with universal love and compassion. His inner joy manifested as his ever smiling face and a very friendly and unassuming interaction with whoever came in contact with him. Naturally, the few occasions when I had personal association with Sri Swamiji, have left a pleasant and lasting memory.

Swamiji invited me to visit Vedapuri, his Ashram in Theni in Tamilnadu and I am happy that it became possible to spend several days in the beautiful Ashram in 2017, with several friends and we enjoyed the love and hospitality and under the guidance of Sri Swamiji, visited several important shrines. We enjoyed the Darshan and the Puja in the grand Dakshinamurti temple and great meals in the Ashram.

Sri Swamiji was always ready to extend help whenever required and we received his guidance for performing elaborate religious ceremonies including the ceremonies during the Shatabhishekam of this Swami. I know that his departure from this world is a loss for countless people and it is a personal loss for me and I will always miss that laughter and warmth.

- Swami Veditamananda

The news of Mahasamadhi of Sri Swami Omkaranandaji came to us like asani-pata, thunder strike. When it happened against all odds, a sense of great loss gripped the hearts of all of us. This sense proves countless qualities that Swamiji was endowed with.

The foremost was his Vedic knowledge. Generally we do not find a Veda Pandita taking to sanyasa ashrama, outside a few traditional Maths. In those Maths also sanyasa ashrama is part of the necessary qualifications to occupy the position of Pontiff. So Sri Swamiji stands out in this respect as he chose this path voluntarily.

Vedanta joined his Veda jnanam:

Having chosen this path, Sri Swamiji did not rest content with a contented life it offered. He renounced those comforts and sought the purpose of that very life style and Swamiji was blessed with a Guru that one would envy to have, that is Sri Swami Paramarthanandaji. He mastered brahmatma vidya under Sri Swami Paramarthanandaji's feet. That proves Swamiji had the necessary adhikaritam that one needs to grasp the vision of brahmatma. Thereafter there was no looking back for him.

Swamiji came into contact with Pujya Swamiji and at once he established a concrete bond with Pujya Swamiji. The result is that he became part and parcel of Arsha Vidya and he always led the group of priests, be it the 60th, 70th and 80th birthdays of Pujya Swamiji, be it Kumbhabhishekams or any other big rituals.

His wisdom of Tamil literature:

Another great contribution of Swamiji is to Tamil speaking people in that he presented the vision of Vedanta through famous religious texts in Tamil language. His proficiency and knowledge of those texts combined very well in imparting this knowledge to a vast Tamil speaking audience. In the process of teaching through Tamil texts, Swamiji tried to nail the idea that this wisdom is alien to Dravidian people.

His qualities:

Coming to the emotional side, Swamiji showered boundless compassion and grace on all those people who approached him at all the times. His availability to them, his ability to address their issues, his readiness to help them in whatever way he can, his cheerful countenance and his face ever bubbling with joy - all these qualities made him a mahatma the most sought after.

Finally his love for protection of Sanatana Dharma made Pujya Swamiji nominate him as President of Dharma Rakshana Samity, an initiative started by Pujya Swamiji, represent him in the Chariot festivals of the great Thiruvudai marudur temple for which Pujya Swamiji offered new chariots built at a cost of five crore.

We pray to Sri Swami Omkaranandaji to continue to shower his blessings for the continuation of the legacy he left behind.

- **Swami Sakshatkrdananda**

Friendship is a beautiful relationship because it is born of total choice. Human beings are blessed and cursed by relationships. Punyam results in favourable relationships and papam results otherwise. With Swami Omkarananda I had a beautiful friendship. We were inspiring each other. Now I remember the days of our study with Swami Paramarthanandaji and good times we spent.

Swami Omkarananda left positive and sweet memories in me. Lamp is lost but not the light. Like the light, his teachings will continue to be with us for ever.

- **Swami Guruparananda**

I salute to the Swamiji known as Omkarananda who always had a smiling face bringing smile on the face of everyone and now he is one with Ishvara,,the meaning of pranava, omkara. In Swamiji's taking mahasamadhi, there is a great loss to Hindu dharma.. He used to talk of three things- practice, protect and propagate our sanatana-dharma and he himself did.He practiced by leading the life of dharma. Protected whenever required and propagated in various ways.

He was great scholar of vedic literature and agamas. Also religious and spiritual Tamil literature which he used to teach. He was very accessible and jovial. Used to make the atmosphere light by his presence. People used to love to be in his presence. He used to relate to people with human touch and leading to divinity or godliness.. Even his form used to remind us of lord Shiva.

For me it is a personal loss because he was a guide for me in some religious and Veda related matter.His departure has created an irreparable loss.. We pray to him to guide us through his blessings.Our greatest tribute to him will be following his spirit and carrying forward the legacy he has left.

आकृत्या शिवरूपो यः स्वभावतोपि यः शिवः ।
वन्देहं शिवरूपं तं सादरं सर्वदा धिया।

“One who is like the Lord Shiva in form and also auspicious by nature.. To that swami Omkaranandaji mentally I ever salute with respect”.

- Swami Sadatmananda

Tomorrow, the 11th May morning Sun will not see the Son of the Sages rising from sleep to do the Pratah Smaranam, the Dhyanam, the soulful chanting of the ancient Veda mantras. Nor shall it see the Glorious Son of the Sages doing the elaborate worship of the Dakshinamurthy, the Adi Guru of the Creation and then move around the antebasis , the loving, adoring Ashram residents and crowds, to offer them not only the Prasad of the God, but also sharing the wisdom of the Ancients with a smile that is innocent and a laughter that is in the words of Kalidasa, धूर्जटिः अट्टहास्यः, the laughter of Shiva!

That Son of the Sages IS very near and dear Swami Omkaranandaji, who Was and Shall Be Eternally Present in the land He walked, the river in which He bathed, the air He breathed, the space that held Him, the trees He planted, the shelters He built and most importantly the lives of the people He touched and shaped - ALWAYS and all with a perpetual smile!

I had seen him first ever time when He was a resident student with Swami Paramarthanandaji , learning the Vedanta Shastra from a very learned and capable traditional Guru. He always held Respected Paramarthanandaji in the highest esteem. It was like the river

meeting the ocean. Both of them had similar background and they clicked with each other in perfect harmony. Since He was already a student of the Vedas, familiar with the traditional chanting and the art of worship, it was a natural shift to the Vedantic Wisdom - that too at the feet of a Teacher who had the privilege of being groomed by Poojya Swamiji Dayanandaji, who was the embodiment of the Upanishadic wisdom. Poojya Swamiji Dayanandaji perpetuated the Guru Parampara as upheld by Acharya Shankara to keep the unique yet the universal way of transmitting the Wisdom, the Atma Vidya. When the revered Shankaracharyas of both Kanchi and Shringeri had total admiration for Poojya Swamiji, Sringeri Acharya recognised the great traditional teaching of Poojya Swamiji by conferring on Him the First ever Shankaracharya Sammana.

Respected Swami Omkaranandaji perpetuated that link with the Shankara Maths, upholding a hoary tradition, while moving around with people who were exposed to the modern day educational systems also. When I met him for the first time, I was introduced to his traditional ways and I really loved it. Whenever we met, I would ask him to chant the Upanishads and he would happily do so. I remember onetime He had come to Tiruvannamalai sometime in 1990s and we all went for Girivalam. Since He knew I loved His chanting, He started the chanting from the moment we stepped into the Girivalam road from our Ashram and continued chanting. Sometime we shall sit-down on the road side under the trees and then He will chant. Those were the beautiful nights of walking around the Arunachala

Once He had come to Uthandi Ashram. Someone had given me a Goldplated Shivalingam. I was keeping it more as a collector's item as I did not know the ways of worshipping it. When He came visiting me with Sri Viswanathan from Hongkong, I happily offered the gift of an icon to Him as He was the right person to have it. He named it as the Swarnakaliswara and kept for the pooja in Theni Ashram. When later I visited Vedapuri, He showed me the Shivalinga He was worshipping. I had taken two special plants from Odisha and we planted those in the Ashram. Whenever we talked over the phone He would tell me how the trees were growing.

It so happened, people whom I knew in my frequent travels to different countries became his students also and that brought us still closer. I had total admiration for his very traditional upbringing and He had that open admiration for my open friendliness. I was ten years older to him. As even I and our dear Paramarthanandaji were very friendly from our Chennai Chinmay Foundation days, that friendship continued with Swami Omkaranandaji too.

Because of His mastery over traditional ways of worship, not only He arranged the rituals to be conducted by a great number of priests for Poojya Swamiji's 80th Birthday organ-

ised in Coimbatore, but also He was there for the Samadhi of many mahatmas who attained Mahasamadhi.

As I am writing this sitting on the roof top of Chennai Ashram under the starlit sky, in the absence of the light, because of the temporary electricity failure, I am aware, in that distant landscape of Theni , the Son of the Sage will have His Samadhi, in the middle of the night, not to be confined to a small space but to belong, at once, to the entire Existence, the Paramdham, where there the Sun never shines. Neither the Moon nor the stars shine there. Once Being there ,there is no question of returning!

न तस्मास्यते सूर्यः न शशाङ्को न पावकः यद्वत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम

Cannot say: Farewell my Friend! as we are Inseparable in the Absolute. You were, are and shall ever be there. We all your friends and admirers were, are and shall ever be there. God (the Truth) Was, Is and Shall be ever there. Never shall it ever happen that we shall ever cease to exist!

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयम् अतः परम्

Therefore Friend ,when the tomorrow's Sun rises ,it will surely not see you walking your path. But it shall continue to shine in You, for You ,in total deference to you as even the Air will continue to blow, the Fire will continue to burn, the God of gods and the senses will continue to rule and out of sheer Reverence to you, the Death shall continue to run non-stop...

भीषास्मात् वातः पवते।भीषोदेति सूर्यः। भीषास्मात् अग्निइन्द्रश्च। मृत्यु र्धावति पञ्चमः इति

It was not your time to return. But then , Friend, who can ever deny you the Immortality.... मृत्योः मुक्षिय माऽमृतात् . You are free from the change, the death. But never from Immortality.

A generation shall remember you and then you shall be passed on from one generation to another for the time, life ,laughter and the wisdom you shared with them.

May your wishes and the dreams be fulfilled by the generation next!!!! You were a friend and a great younger brother. I always felt that brotherly love and admiration. We walked together many a steps in many decades of life. I will miss you! You shall be missed by all the friends who walked together in the foot steps of Poojya Swamiji's life and Teachings.

- Swami Suddhananda

Chennai,1.51am 11.5.21

ओं ह्रींकाराद्याः पादसंपूज्यं हृदयानन्ददायकम् ओङ्कारानन्द-पादाब्जं नमामः चित्तशुद्धये

*om hrīṅkāradīyāḥ pādasaṃpūjyaṃ hṛdayānandadāyakam
oṅkārananda-pādābjaṃ namāmaḥ cittaśuddhaye*

I had darshan of Puja Omkarananda Mahaswamiji in the year 1990, while I was learning Vedanta from Sri Sivaramakrishna Sastri in Advaita Sabha, Trichy.

Puja Swamiji has been teaching the Vedic path of Santana Dharma to the spiritually inclined –both in India and abroad, through his unparalleled knowledge of the scriptures and for protecting the Dharma and for everyone to have peaceful happiness, has installed Adiguru Sri Prajna Dakshinamurti at Vedapuri, Theni. Swamiji has formulated daily prayers through which thousands of devotees are benefitted.

Swamiji took charge as the pithadhipati (pontiff) of Sri Bhuvaneshwari Avadhuta Vidyapitham and for the past 16 years, did Srividya Puja and various Mula Mantra Homas; took Vedanta Classes, guided the trustees; gave Mantropadesha to thousands of devotees and showed the way of worshipping Jaganmata Sri Bhuvaneshwari; did Sankalpa to construct a stone temple for Sri Bhuvaneshwari Pitham, did Bhumi Puja, Chitravaana-shilapratishtha and Sri Bhuvaneshwari Yantra Prathishtha.

Swamiji attained Mahasamadhi on 10-05-2021, leaving all his students, devotees and Sadhakas in unexplainable deep distress. Sri Swamiji's blessings filled with love, must always give mental strength and more and more sraddha to all of us.

I offer my sincere prayers to Jaganmata Sri Bhuvaneshwari, Adiguru Sri Prajna Dakshinamurti and Srividya Paraashodashi that Swamiji's teachings must ever be in our hearts.

- Swami Pranavananda

SWAMIJI HAS ATTAINED MAHASAMADHI. VERY SAD. LOST A GR8 LEADER, MOTIVATOR, FRIEND, AND MUCH MORE. Those who had come to Anaikatti for Temples' Kumbhabhisekam in 2018 would remember he led, guided the entire performance of that program. With his passing away we have lost a great spiritual leader who had captured the whole of Tamilnadu with his talks. His knowledge of the entire Krishna Yajur Veda with all its finer nuance had been unparalleled. Puja Swami Dayanandaji even appointed him to lead the Dharma Rakshana Samiti after him. A great teacher and master he leaves behind a great number of grieving devotees and students. I of course lose an extraordinary friend

- Swami Atmatriptananda, Calcutta