

Swami Swaroopanandaji's speech at the Handover Ceremony

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai

19th January 2017

I often wonder – when did this blessing in my life all begin? Was it in the womb when my father read the works of Swami Vivekananda to my mother? Was it when I was given birth in the clinic of Dr. Chainani and probably opened my eyes seeing Gurudev's picture? Was it the stories that I heard from my grandmother? ... Was it when I found Gurudev's commentary on the Bhagavad Geeta in my father's office? Was it when my father convinced me to go listen to this one man who tolerated no nonsense? Was it when I told my mother I want to go study further and she said, 'I will see that no one ever stops you!'

Love at First Sight

I am frequently asked, 'Swamiji did you ever fall in love?' My reply is, 'He (Shri Krishna) stole my heart long ago (*woh kaala ek baansuriwala suta bisra gayo*)'. Through my studies, in the pursuit of science my search was for that Truth, that Reality, that friend, that Teacher who would be my all.

The first sight of Gurudev was enough. I knew I had found my Master, my Lord, my everything! Beyond him there was nothing. There is nothing. I was overwhelmed by the abundance of his love. Would I be able to love anyone as much?

What he gave, how he transformed each one is a miracle. We eternally remain indebted to him; for eons, countless lifetimes. Any service to him can only be an offering, a drop in that ocean. I wondered, could anyone be greater than Shri Ram, more perfect than Him? No one can and no one will be. I still remember the blessed moment when, totally absorbed and thinking only of Gurudev, I entered Sidhbari, to discover that the devotee of the Lord is also very loving. There is no conflict with the greatness of the Lord.

On Guruji

Sometimes I am asked, 'Who is your Ishta Devata – Shri Krishna? Gurudev? Hanuman?'

They see me, hear me speak on Hanumanji and that is how I see my Guruji. The day I saw the ‘chubby little teddy bear’ (as we referred to Brahmachari Vivek, now Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda) we were in love with him because in his life, we knew that other than Gurudev, there was no He separate from Him. His life demonstrates and teaches what devotion to Gurudev means.

Once in Guruji’s (then Brahmachari Vivek) small room in Sidhbari I said to him, “Can the gain of this Knowledge, make one so proud as to abandon one’s Guru? Then, I would rather be an ignorant devotee, absolutely and madly in love with my Guru, because for the years I have spent with him I remain greatly indebted to him.”

Guruji in his inimitable style replied, “Is liye toh main kahata hoon bhakti karo, bhakti karo, bhakti karo!”

The question in my mind was ‘What is this devotion?’ As though reading my mind, he continued, ‘People say we love Gurudev but if they do not have faith in his teachings and his instructions, then that is not devotion.’

That day, at his feet, I understood the meaning of total obedience, faith and devotion to the Guru, that unquestioning faith, which answers all questions. My heart prayed, ‘If anyone is my Acharya, may it be Guruji. May he accept me as his student and be my guide; keep me ever at the feet of my Gurudev.’

Stepping Up

We heard it said that Guruji is stepping down. To be the Head of such a great Mission that belongs to such a great Parampara coming down from the Lord...to Shri Veda Vyasa...to Shankaracarya...to Swami Sivananada Maharaj...to Param Guru Tapovanji Maharaj...our Gurudev...what could be more than that.

Guruji has shown that higher than any position or status, there is something more – seva to his Guru. Guruji has only risen far, far higher and we can only say that Guruji has stepped **up**.

Though he claims that he is not the Head, he will always remain the head and I will always be at his feet.

A Speck in Gurudev’s Glory

Guruji has given me this opportunity and I have accepted this seva of Gurudev, who gave us everything. To be even a speck in the conflagration of his glory, in his

selfless offering to humanity; like the squirrel if I could place even a particle of dust on the bridge he built between jeeva and Paramatman, I would consider myself blessed.

Guruji's Blessings Fructify

After becoming a Brahmachari, I was posted to Hong Kong. By Gurudev's grace classes had begun there in a small way. However, many more people had to be reached. This Ganga of Gurudev's message had to be carried to so many more vessels. So I wrote to Guruji, 'I feel that I am not doing enough'.

How could I know that what he penned to me almost 33 years ago would come true one day. He wrote, "Now do whatever little you can, one day you will be able to do a lot!"

Guruji blessed me with this seva, which I accepted with tears in my eyes. I requested that he remain the Head, while I do all the work. Guruji in his wisdom and magnanimity replied, "It doesn't work that way. When I give, I give fully. Now I want to hand it over. I want to do something else."

This is Guruji's wish and Gurudev's Mission. I could never disobey him.

Guruji declared in his message, "May I ever remain in your service." I pray, "Keep me ever in *your* service." If he keeps me at his feet, I may do whatever but I know there is no way at any time that I can waiver. When Hanumanji (Guruji) is with us...tum rakshaka kahu ko darna. I am blessed because he is there to guide me and bless me.

He is stepping up and I am ever at his feet!

Knowing Guruji's Mind

If the Guru knows the disciple's mind, then the disciple too should know the Guru's mind.

I know that Guruji wants to constantly and continuously, without interference from other work revel in his Ram and Gurudev. All I can do is to offer to my Hanumanji a small token of devotion.

Working Together

The living body of Gurudev is the Mission and the spirit is His vision. I have all of you – the acharyas, loving elders, householders, youngsters, children who all have

one mission – to carry forward Gurudev’s legacy that has continued from time immemorial. Together we will take Chinmaya Mission – the love of Gurudev, the life and sacrifice of Gurudev, that timeless message of the Vedas and Vedanta declared in his wonderful, inimitable style, to every home. We, the acharyas, brothers and sisters of the Mission worldwide will work towards this one goal and make it glow for eternity.