

God is Glorious in His Saints

- *Swami Sadasivananda Ji*

In an attempt to convey the profound impression that occurs when in the company of the Holy, the mind reflects on the wisdom of the Bible where it is said, “God is glorious in His saints.”



Arthur Osborne once said something similar regarding Sri Ramana Maharshi. “The specious theory that Bhagavan was not a Guru had simply evaporated in the radiance of his Grace. Moreover, I now perceived that, far from his teaching not being practical guidance, it was exclusively that.”

Within nearly ten years of living and moving with Swami Shantananda Puri, I have found that this description of one whose life, teaching and grace-filled presence both pleases God and uplifts mankind can without reservation be applied to him.

Probably the most dramatic evidence that supports such a truth is that Swami Shantananda will be the first to deny such a statement. But as the age-old epithet declares, “the proof is in the pudding.” And the pudding cooked up by Swamiji is irresistible to the spiritual palate.

Those who have the great good fortune to come to him for guidance, or those who happen to meet him as a surprise acquaintance, all come away with a mind changed and a heart uplifted by his presence. The reason for this is not his renowned knowledge of scripture, or even his adorable aptitude for story telling. The transformative effect Swamiji has on one and all comes from the irrefutable truth that his life and spiritual practice pleases God. Can there be any better definition of a saint? I am not using the status of saintliness lightly, but many who know better than I say, “saints are easy for God, it is man who complicates the attainment.”

Swami Shantananda’s earliest recollection, which he himself conveyed to me, was that from the age of 6 he was taught to seek and find the Mother of All through a life of remembrance of God’s Holy Name and service to God’s creation.

Swamiji’s constant guidance to me was straight and unassuming. He echoed, like his own guru and master, the traditional truth proclaimed by the sages from time immemorial;

“Prayer and effort yield the crown of creation – a heart full of love for it’s creator.” Many respond to such a statement by bluntly saying, “This is easy to say, but it is altogether something else to do it!” More than any other, Swamiji knows this is true. So his response to the ‘Doubting Thomas’ in all of us is none-the-less profound. Swamiji would say, “Then just fake it, and one fine day the Divine Mother will say to our hearts and souls, My dear, I am tired of your faking devotion for Me. So now I will make it real, come now and love Me!” One look into Swamiji’s eyes as he is telling you this is enough to convince you of this Truth. Never the less, although Swami Shantananda’s spiritual attainment and erudition of all Holy scripture are renowned throughout India and abroad, he shies away from even a glimmer of self adulation. I know this for a fact, for I was once standing next to him one pre-dawn morning before the Samadhi shrine of Bhagavan Ramana. Tears were rolling down his cheeks, as he stood transfixed before the living presence of the Maharshi as he prayed, “O Bhagavan, somehow make me love you!” If we are still trying to define saintliness, perhaps now it is becoming clearer.

Swamiji once reminded me of the Buddha’s words, uttered just before His departing from this world, “Days and nights are flying by, flying by, so what are you doing right now!” In an attempt to do justice to this wisdom I tried to imitate the schedule that Swamiji himself followed. Though myself being still young (or perhaps youngish), and Swamiji now well into his eighties, I would try to get up for prayer and meditation even before he would. Once while traveling with him and staying in Gujarat, along the banks of the Holy Narmada, I prided myself after arising just past midnight to pray to Narmada Devi. I was staying in a room just above his, and I gazed out toward the Mother I noticed the darkness of the dead of night was being illuminated by a reflection from below. Swamiji had already risen and was dressed and deep in meditation.

Although it was clear to me after years of close guidance, and even more evident to those who knew Swamiji for decades, that regardless of the clear radiance of grace that flowed from him, this man of God was still weeping within his heart, “O Divine Mother, somehow make me love You.”

As the years have rolled on, and circumstance has caused me to be away from Swamiji to a point that rends my heart in two, I know from his guidance the prayer to God that can heal even the greatest human despair. I utter it daily, and sometimes even the grace of tears descends upon me as I say, “O Mother, by the grace of God and Guru, make me love You.”