

The Shivabalayogi Journal

Issue No. 11

Winter, 2000



Dedicated to the encouragement of meditation. The Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj International Trust



The Shivabalayogi Journal

The Shivabalayogi Journal is a publication of the Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj International Trust.

Correspondence regarding *The Journal* should be sent to Editors, *The Journal*, P.O. Box 293, Langley, WA 98260, U.S.A., or send e-mail to info@shiva.org. The editors are Karen Morell and Tom Palotas. The Shivabalayogi worldwide web site at <http://www.shiva.org> is maintained by Dan Gobin.

The Journal is published and distributed without charge. To receive copies or for address corrections, please mail or e-mail *The Journal*.

Donations made to "Shivabalayogi Trust" are accepted by the Oregon Trust for Shri Swamiji's general work and are tax deductible in the U.S.

© 2000, Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj International Trust. All rights reserved. Articles may be used for publication in local media with the prior permission of the editors.

Prashad -

The following questions and answers about prashad are from the book *Tapas Shakti*.

Q *Why does Swamiji give out fruit, chocolate, and other food?*

"This food is called prashad. Prashad is what the guru gives the devotees. It is food that the guru has blessed. When you go to your mother's house, does not your mother feed you? What your mother gives you is just food. What Swamiji gives you and what the guru gives you is prashad."

Q *If I want to heal my body in a specific area, could I take a blessed apple and have a healing? Is that possible?*

"Yes."

Q *What if Swamiji is not physically present and we want him to bless some food to make prashad. If we put the food before the altar and ask, will he make that prashad even when he is in India and we are here?*

"Yes. He will come in an astral body. You can taste and feel the difference between ordinary food and the food that is blessed."

"When you prepare food, you should have a lot of attention and concentration in its preparation. If you do not concentrate on your work when you are cooking then that food will not be good for your health. Such food will upset your stomach."

Q *I assume it is more than just paying attention or being careful. It is the vibration, the energy, or the attitude that one has.*

"Yes. There is a poem by another yogi [Yogi Vemana] from India which says that even a small spoon of milk of the cow is good for our health. However, even a pot full of donkey's milk is not as good. In the same way food that is prepared out of devotion and interest is good, even if you take only a handful." ॐ



- Divine Nectar

Prashad is a gift from god. It is a blessing, usually in the form of food. When we offer food to the gods, they take the nourishment and bless us in return. The food becomes prashad.

Food which Shivabalayogi has touched is prashad, and giving food has always been important to him. He would always be feeding people — not only devotees, but everyone. Devotees especially knew to give prashad to all. When he traveled by train, prashad would be given to the attendants. When he was interviewed on television, he would throw fruit to the camera operators. If someone came for darshan, he would give them prashad. He would make sure the drivers who brought devotees to him received prashad. Everyone who came to the ashram received food. Devotees who knew him would always make sure there was plenty of fruit or sweets for Shri Swamiji to give out as prashad.

If devotees wanted to invite Shri Swamiji to their homes, he insisted that they prepare food for all the devotees. He himself made it a rule never to take food before all others were fed. That way, he made sure that everyone else would be fed.

Swamiji would train devotees how to cook. He would insist that cooking had to be done with attention and devotion. There was to be no distraction, eating or idle conversation in the kitchen because the environment and attitude in which we cook affect the quality of the food. In Shri Swamiji's case, his physical body was so transformed through twelve years of tapas that if the person cooking his meal was distracted, Swamiji's body was likely to be upset from eating the food.

Shri Swamiji's devotees regularly conduct mass feedings at his ashrams, particularly on the occasions of his birthday, tapas anniversary, Shivaratri, and mahasamadhi. If there is a lot of food to be served, a portion of each dish is put on a plate with a piece of vibhuti and offered to Shri Swamiji to bless. Since His Holiness dropped his own physical body, the food is offered to his astral body, typically through a photo. The blessed food and vibhuti are then mixed with the food to be served. Through this action, all of the food becomes prashad.

Hundreds and thousands of people come to receive blessed food. Most who come are poor people from the slums where having enough food to eat is a luxury. Their interest is often less spiritual than physical hunger. It is no less important to His Holiness who insists that stomachs have to be filled first. Swamiji's devotees serve blessed food to laborers, beggars, wealthy business people and humble devotees, and Swamiji insisted on waiting until the last person was served his meal before he would leave.

Shri Swamiji himself used to enjoy cooking food for the devotees. Sometimes he'd boil different fruit juices with spices to make a wonderful hot drink, or maybe he'd mix juices with soda water and have a "soda party" with the devotees. When he was staying at the ashram in Bangalore, he typically cooked a dish each week. He was an excellent cook and anything he made tasted more wonderful than anyone could duplicate, no matter how carefully they tried.

Shivabalayogi always offered his food to the gods before eating it. He explained that the physical world exists in relationship to the spirit world. The gods and goddesses are part of our own family. They come in their astral bodies and eat the food that has been offered. The food then becomes prashad for us. It has become blessed.

In one place where Shri Swamiji was staying in 1991, there were images of several gods in his room. Each time food was brought for Swamiji, it was first placed before these images. The assistant put some vibhuti between his eyebrows, lit some camphor, and made clockwise circles with it (*arthi*) several times before the images.

Devotees who saw this asked what was going on. It was then that Swamiji described how astral bodies come and eat the food. Jesus, explained Swamiji, also offered food to the gods. That was how food multiplied when Jesus fed the masses, and that was how shortly after Shri Swamiji was made to sit in tapas, a single coconut fed two hundred people. The same can often be seen during Swamiji's mass feedings in India when the cooks fear there is not enough food to feed all the people. Somehow there is always enough, even though prior observation says there should not have been. ॐ



Photos:

p.2 top, Swamiji on the asana in Bangalore.

p.2 bottom, Swamiji blessing sweet halva.

p.3 Swamiji blessing a plate with a portion of each food to be served at a mass feeding in Adivarapupeta.



Experiences

It was on Tuesday morning, two days after Sathyaraju was made to sit in tapas. A village woman came to where the fourteen year old boy was sitting by the canal. She was convinced that Sathyaraju was a *balayogi* — a boy yogi — and she worshipped him with incense and flowers and made a traditional offering of a coconut. Having finished her worship she distributed pieces of the coconut as *prasadam* — blessed food — to numerous people who had gathered before the boy yogi. Everyone received a piece of the coconut even though it was impossible that one coconut could be distributed to so many people. As the blessed food was distributed, it kept becoming more and more. Miraculously, the *prasadam* multiplied to feed everyone.



My parents used to have Swamiji visit our house in Kakinada. All sorts of important people would come for Swamiji's darshan, business people, politicians, landowners and the like. The

simply say he did it when he hadn't.

Some time in the 1960's or 1970's, my mother made some sweet pancakes called "bobbattu" to take to Swamiji. She made them with Sathyanarayan Amma and another lady. They counted eighty of them and put them in a stainless steel container.

They drove to Adivarapupeta and presented them to Swamiji who, as was his custom, had the container put under his *asana*, the bed on which he was sitting. Swamiji was giving public darshan that day. Several hundred people were lined up. They would enter the ashram building from the east door, take his darshan, then leave by the door to the west.

Swamiji called my mother and asked her to distribute the pancakes to all the devotees. She was nervous because she knew how many she had brought and that there were not enough for everyone. But Swamiji insisted that she distribute them. He made her take a handful from the container and give them out. At first she tried to tear the bobbattu in half and give just a piece to each person, knowing that if everyone got a half there still would not be enough to go around. But Swamiji made her give out whole pancakes.

With the help of other devotees, they took handfuls of the pancakes from the container and distributed them, then returned to get more bobbattu from the container. In this way, all the devotees were served.

Afterwards, my mother told Swamiji that she knew for a fact that they had brought only eighty of the pancakes, yet several hundred devotees each received one. How was that possible, she asked. Swamiji just told her that she had miscounted. He typically would not admit to causing miracles.



One Sunday evening I went to Swamiji's room just



cars with their drivers would be waiting outside, parked along the street.

Swamiji would always insist that everyone receive *prashad* before leaving. He would call me and instruct me to personally take *prashad* to each driver outside and make sure they ate. I was to do it personally because if one of our servants were asked, he might



when he was about to go to the darshan hall. Mr. Ramaradhya was with him. His Holiness asked me casually, "Are there many people in the hall?"

I chose my words carefully and said "There aren't many devotees, Swamiji, but there are a lot of those laborers." I was referring to the people who came from the nearby slums.

The implication that the laborers were not devotees annoyed and pained him visibly, so much so that he turned to Mr. Ramaradhya and said, "*This fellow creates a headache for me. He says they are not devotees.*" That was a good lesson for me to consciously avoid any such differentiation.

There was something that Swamiji once said. I do not know the context, but I can imagine. His words were to the effect that: "*It is true that people come here [to the ashram] for food. But having come here and consumed the blessed food they get transformed. They develop gratitude and devotion.*"



Swamiji was in Ambala when I invited him to our house in Patiala. Swamiji's response was that he would not be able to come. I was disappointed and felt like insisting, but my husband told me to accept the answer and not press Swamiji.

We returned home and soon we got a phone call one night that Swamiji would be at our house the next morning at about eleven o'clock. I had little time to prepare so I ran out and bought five kilograms of ladu sweets to offer to the devotees who would be coming with Swamiji.

I thought that five kilograms (11 lbs.) should be enough because there was no time to tell anyone that Swamiji was coming. But so many people came. The ladus were finished, I had to get ten more kilograms,

and still people kept on pouring into the house. I had no idea from where the people were coming.

We had a very nice visit. The compassion and love I saw on his face that day is something I cannot explain. I remember that day, every day. He gave me so much of love that I cannot explain — I can only feel it.

I have so many prized feelings for him. Like once I was serving food to him in my own house. There were three other people in that room. Being the hostess, I started to serve the others and planned on taking my food after everyone had left. Swamiji said "*No. Serve for yourself.*"

I said, "Swamiji, I will eat after you people go because I will feel very awkward eating my food."

He said, "*No, I am your mother. You are like my child. Who else will serve you? I'll feed you first and then you will feed me.*" I enjoyed that meal so much that I can't tell you.

So many times. Once I was extremely sick. I was so sick I couldn't even walk. I was in a very bad way. He scolded me when he saw me. He said, "*Mother, what have you done to yourself? Look at yourself. You have not been taking care of your health.*" I'm basically a strong person and don't get tears in my eyes. I have that sort of control. But seeing him, my eyes started getting wet and I had tears. I couldn't control myself.

Next day morning, we were at General Ajai's house.

Swamiji was being fed and he asked Mrs. Ajai to call me. I went into



Photos:

Swamiji cooking a pot of pullao rice one Sunday in March of 1994.

Mass feeding at the J.P. Nagar ashram in Bangalore, shortly after the ashram was opened in 1977. For large functions, white rice, yellow rice, sweet payasam, vegetables, and sambhar (vegetable broth) are cooked for about eight thousand people. There were about nine thousand people at Swamiji's birthday celebration in 1993. Thirty people started cooking at about four in the morning and the food was served from one-thirty in the afternoon to nine-thirty at night. More food was cooked as people came. They sat in rows on the ground as devotees ladled food from stainless steel buckets onto leaf plates. Any food left over was given to the poor the next day.

A Letter from India

Swamiji's room and he asked me to sit next to him. He asked Mrs. Ajai to get me a plate. Whatever food Swamiji was eating, he picked three, four big helpings, put on my plate and said, "Eat it. You be strong and have good health." I could feel his blessings coming through that food. I regained my health in due course of time, but for me it was more my health. It was the love which I got that day.

The Dehradun ashram was for me like going to vacation and home. It was all fun. There were several lichee trees in the garden and we used to eat their fruit. Swamiji used to have lichee parties and we used to play. We used to go for walks with him. We used to go for picnics. At those times I completely forgot that I was with my guru. I used to feel that I was with my mother or my father or a senior member of the family.

The previous issue of *The Shivabalayogi Journal* (Issue No. 10) focused on Shri Swamiji's playfulness and love for children. The issue evoked these memories.

Dehradun, 22 April, 1999

Blessed Brothers and Sisters:

We received *The Shivabalayogi Journal*. Thank you very much. May Sri Swamiji inspire you in your continued efforts to spread Sri Swamiji's mission and message. Sri Swamiji taught us to exchange love and honor.

Sri Swamiji and children — is really very interesting and inspiring. It's very true Sri Swamiji loved children so much. He used to become a child with them. Sri Swamiji used to pat on his own stomach and say, "Hey! I have got hundred hundred children in my womb. What do you say? No nonsense, OK!"

I said, "Yes Swamiji. All of us are your children."

Swamiji said, "Hey! The brahmanada [all pervading space] is my womb! All are my children. I have to care for them."

Once during kirtan he was in dhyana. Some children were making noise and playing. One devotee felt disturbed, objected to the noise, and by scolding drove them away. After the kirtan Sri Swamiji came to know this and was upset. He took the devotee to task, "Hey! What type of a person you are, cannot bear with children. Why did you scold them? Alas, they must be feeling terribly upset and sad. I myself was a child when Shankar Bhagwan made me sit for tapasya and that is why my mind continues to be like that of a child as far as the universe is concerned. That's why people may find me childish naughty."

Children were always attracted to him. He was so loving, they never felt any fear. His vibhuti was the children's sweets. If they were hungry and crying, he understood quickly and asked us to feed them. He used to play with them by throwing towels, fruits, etc. In the holy River Ganga — oh! That was a scene to enjoy. If any child was scared of the water, he used to pick her and dip her in. The moment children got a dip, their fear used to vanish and they were all smiles and demanded more dips. Swamiji used to say, "Look, the fear has vanished. You face the trouble, fear disappears and you become courageous. Teach the children like that."

Sri Swamiji never had any reservations to initiate children in meditation. He used to say, "Spirituality should be taught in one's childhood. Children can pick up bhakti marga [devotional path] easily as their minds are less diluted towards the worldly things. Ego



Whenever devotees left the ashram, they always got prashad. He would always give me three extra pieces, saying, "This prashad is for your children." He was always feeding us. ॐ

Swamiji's mother, Parvathamma Allaka Garu, received everyone at the ashram with love and attention, and she often interceded with Shri Swamiji on behalf of devotees. She made sure that all who came to the ashram were fed.

The photo above was taken in Dehradun, and on the left in Bangalore at the Bannerghatta Road ashram.



is almost nothing.” Thus Sri Swamiji used to say.

Parents would bring their children to Swamiji so he could give them names, and this naming ceremony was another beauty. Blessed are those children whom he took on his lap, applied *tilak* (dot) of vibhuti on their forehead, and blessed them. He would give them names, and he used to ask the devotees gathered there to whisper the new name in the child’s ears.

Well, there is no end to the stories Sri Swamiji used to tell about his own childhood, but one of them has always been very touching. His thinking, observation and understanding powers even as a child were amazing.

When he was a very young boy, Sri Swamiji used to ask his mother, Parvathamma, for food. Readily she used to give him food with love. Occasionally young Sathyaraju (the future Swamiji) used to find his mother’s face covered with sadness. He started wondering, what could be the reason? Sathyaraju was hardly five years old. Another thought occurred to him as he realized that he had never seen his mother eating a proper meal. Then he went and asked mother for food and, as usual, Parvathamma gave him some. This time the future yogi insisted that his mother should eat with him. She replied that she was busy working and that she would take food a little later. The boy wouldn’t agree. He wanted her to share the food. Finally she took half of the food, but instead of eating immediately, she told her son that she would have it a little later.

Sathyaraju finished his part of the food and made like he was going outside. But instead, he quietly hid himself behind the door and kept a watch on the food which his mother had set aside for herself. Nearly two hours passed by and the boy waited patiently to see whether his mother ate any food at all. What he doubted was true. She took none.

After some time, Sathyaraju came out from behind the door pretending as if he was coming into the house from outside. He called on his mother and asked for food, as he usually did, saying he was hungry. Parvathamma readily gave him the share of food which she had set aside.

Sathyaraju asked, “*Mother, did you take some food that you had kept two hours ago?*”

Parvathamma replied, “Yes, yes! Don’t ask me questions. You are hungry. Come eat.”

Sathyaraju started arguing with his mother. “*No, Mother, you are lying. You haven’t eaten any food. I have been watching all the time for two hours.*” At this, tears rolled down from Parvathamma’s eyes and she had to turn her face away.

Puzzled and pained whether he had hurt her, Sathyaraju went to his grandfather, Goli Sathyam, and demanded (that was his style), “*Why doesn’t Mother eat proper food? Why does she give her share of food*

to the children?”

Grandfather explained, “You see, we are poor, but you need not worry just now. Concentrate on your studies. Mother cannot bear her children’s hunger. She eats very little — hardly any proper meal for many days.”

The five year old demanded to know what poverty was and why they were poor. Grandfather replied, “Your father died when you were barely two years old and hence your mother has to work to feed her four children.” But Goli Sathyam also said, “Poverty is only circumstantial and certainly not a thing to be ashamed of. By sheer will power, hard working with wisdom and honesty — facing boldly one can overcome the crisis.”

Thus as a five year old boy, Sri Swamiji already understood that his family was poor and the reason for it. He resolved to drop out of school and work to support the family. He was bold without fear, pain, or sorrow. He demanded that his mother stop working as long he was alive. That was self respect. He worked hard, double the normal work.

He loved children. He understood their sorrows, their fear, their hunger. Always he wanted to show them the right path. He is our Shivabalayogi.

With love and blessings to all our friends, brothers and sisters, at His lotus feet,

Sri Shiva Rudra Balayogi



Mahashivaratri

The "Great Night of Shiva" falls on March 4, 2000. It is the most auspicious occasion of the year for Lord Shiva, Shivabalayogi's Guru. Each year Shri Swamiji celebrates Mahashivaratri in the place where he sat in tapas, Adivarapupeta.

Each Mahashivaratri is a wonderful celebration organized by the trustees and devotees of the Adivarapupeta ashram, and all are urged and welcome to attend.

The annual Adivarapupeta devotees' meeting will be held by the International Trust on Sunday, March 5, 2000. All are invited to attend.

Those who cannot make the trip to Adivarapupeta can celebrate Mahashivaratri locally in their cities and towns by meditation and performing bhajans. For those interested, Mahashivaratri is a wonderful occasion to bathe and do puja to Shivalingams. ॐ

Resources

The Trust is producing short videos on Shri Swamiji designed to be shown in connection with meditation and bhajan programs. Each gives some background and features images of His Holiness. To date there are seven: the "Introduction," "New Age Forum, on

Guru," "New Age Forum, on Meditation," "Kakinada Sea Bath," "Prashad, Divine Nectar," and "Sacred Images, the Early Photos." \$10 each plus S&H.

Contact the Trust or the Shivabalayogi web site at shiva.org for more information on purchaing books,



video tapes, audio tapes and photographs of His Holiness. Orders with payment to "Shivabalayogi Trust" can be sent to P.O. Box 99703, Seattle, WA 98199. Please add \$2 per item for shipping and handling (S&H). ॐ

Photograph recently taken of the Ardhanarishwara lingam in Adivarapupeta. A light body (astral body) appeared on the film when it was developed. Light bodies ordinarily are not visible to the eye, but should the astral being wish, its image can be captured on film.

Shri Shivabalayogi
Maharaj Charitable Trust
P. O. Box 99703
Seattle, WA 98199



The Shivabalayogi Journal
is distributed without charge.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION
ONLY. NOT FOR SALE.

e-mail: info@shiva.com
Shivabalayogi web site:
<http://www.shiva.org>

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT No. 5491
