

## **Pujya Gurudev – As I See Him Swami Tejomayananda**

The Upanishads, *Gita* and innumerable spiritual texts and works use the most fascinating and powerful words to “describe” the indescribable *Brahman*. Every one of these words also describes Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. *Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati* – the knower of *Brahman* is verily *Brahman*. How can I ever “describe” Him better than these great scriptures? Yet I will try.

*Sri Dakshinamurty Stotram* and *Updesha Saram* describe the Lord as *ashtamurti* – eight-faceted divinity. For us, Pujya Gurudev is indeed the Lord Himself. Hence I will present some of my ideas and reminiscences about Him through eight of His countless facets.

### **A peerless personality**

Even though the *guru* is the supreme Self, still he has an individuality and a personality that attracts devotees and disciples towards Him. He blesses them with knowledge and devotion. Pujya Gurudev had a many-faceted personality that is difficult to capture in a few words or names.

### **An epitome of evolution**

I saw Him as a perfect *jivanmukta purusha* – a person liberated while living. Many a time I have felt that it is easier to describe *Brahman* than to describe a *jivanmukta*. We find many verses in our scriptures in praise of such an enlightened soul. One such characteristic that comes to my mind is that the enlightened person is one who is free from worry over the past, anxiety for the future and is totally detached and objective in dealing with the present. Gurudev Himself used to speak about such a person as someone like a mirror, “A mirror accepts everything, rejects nothing, reflects everything, but keeps nothing”. Indeed, He was that *jivanmukta purusha*.

### **A cosmic charmer**

His presence was most appealing. It spoke more than His words and taught more than His lectures. I see His presence in His pictures also. Just to be with Him was a great joy and an experience in itself. No one was immune to His cosmic charm.

### **A matchless role model**

His greatness went beyond His presence and that He revealed in every little thing. In big things every one shows off, but Gurudev revealed His greatness even in small things. For instance, when I was studying Vedanta at Sandeepany, Mumba, I also used to teach Sanskrit to the *brahmacharins*. There was a small hall where I used to hold the class. Once Swamiji wanted to discuss something with a group of people. He brought them there and only then saw that I was teaching. He could have asked me to finish the class at once, but He humbly requested, “May I use this hall for some time?” That was His greatness. He did not say, “Get out! I want to use this place.”

### **A magnificent mentor**

I also had the great fortune of learning from Him. Actually, I felt that He used to teach just me. Every now and then, He would ask questions, and if out of ten questions, I did not answer just one or did not answer quickly enough, He would say that I did not know the answer or that I was sleeping through the class! Or, sometimes He would speak and pause in the middle of the sentence and wait for me to complete it. And if I spoke softly,

He would ask me to go out on the banks of the Ganga and speak so loudly that the man on the other side could hear me! Of course He knew what I would be doing for the best part of the rest of my life!

### **A divine disciplinarian**

Discipline was one thing that He loved. Not only was He Himself a very disciplined person, but He also enforced it on others. The beauty of His discipline was that it was not dry or harsh, but was accompanied with compassion. For instance, once during a *Gita Jnana Yajna* some of the *brahmacharis* skipped the meditation class. That day He ordered, "The *brahmacharis* will not be given lunch today," but at teatime, we were given special *upama* along with the tea. Thus He punctuated discipline with compassion.

### **A vast visionary**

His vast vision for the mission was essentially two-fold. The first aspect was external, relating to activities and projects, while the other was internal, the unfoldment of the personalities of the members while undertaking those projects. The outer activities started by Him have expanded, grown and benefited the society, but unfoldment by itself is subjective, and each worker will have to sincerely and honestly evaluate himself or herself. The very fact that thousands of people have been working for such a long period of time shows that they have been getting something or else they will not work. So we have succeeded to a great extent. However, never think of stopping at a final goal. Both outwardly and inwardly, the sky is the limit.

### **A lamp of love**

I consider myself extremely blessed to have come in contact with Him and served Him. The most striking quality that I saw in Him was His unconditional love for me that made Him forgive me many a time. I know that is true of any one who reached His feet. He was, is and ever will be an *akhanda jyoti* of love, light, devotion and knowledge perfectly integrated.

May His blessings be ever upon us all to serve Him.