



BLISS ALONE EXISTS

Swamiji¹ chants:

Sarva-maṅgala-māṅgalye Śhīve Sarvārtha Sādhike, Śharaṇye
Tryambake Gaurī Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute.

*The most Auspicious of all, the Blissful, the Source of success in all
undertakings!*

*O Bestower of refuge! O Tryambake (the three-eyed) Goddess Gauri (Parvati)!
O Narayani (consort of the Supreme Lord Narayana)!
Salutations to Thee!*

Sṛiṣṭi-sthiti-vināśhānāṃ Shakti-bhūte Sanātānī,
Guṇāśhraye Guṇāmaye Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute.

*You are the embodiment of the powers of creation, sustenance and
destruction, and the eternal Energy of all beings;*

*You are the Abode of the qualities (of all creation) and the Embodiment of
these qualities. Salutations to Narayani!*

¹ A talk given by Revered Sri Swami Chidanandaji in Uttarkashi, Northern India, in 1996, to celebrate the 100th Birth Anniversary of Her Holiness Revered Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma.

Śharaṇāgata Dīnārta Paritrāṇa Parāyaṇe,
Sarvasyārti-hare Devi Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute.

You are the Saviour of all who seek Your refuge.

You remove the suffering of all. Salutations to Narayani!

Jai Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute, Jai Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute,
Jai Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute, Nārāyaṇi Namō'stute.

Brahmanandam parama shukhadam kevalam jnana murtim
Dwandātitam gagana sadrusham tatvamashyadi laksham
Ekam nityam vimalamachalam sarvadhī sakshi bhutam
Bhavātitam triguna rahitam sadgurum tam namami.

*I prostrate to that Satguru, the Brahman, who is bliss,
Who is the giver of supreme happiness, Who is absolute Knowledge,
Who is beyond the pairs of opposites, Who is vast like the ether,
Who is attained by assertions like "Tat Twam Asi" (That Thou Art);
Who is one, eternal, pure, and changeless, the witness of the mind,
Who transcends all change and modifications,
Who is devoid of the three modes (of Prakriti.*

Om Mā Shree Mā, Jaya Jaya Mā.....

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! It is a wonderful thing to be here with you all, sincere seeking souls yearning for liberation, keenly longing to obtain knowledge that illumines and wisdom that liberates. You are *jijnasus*²; you are *mumukshus*³. You are seekers. You are *sadhaks*⁴ engaged in *sadhana*⁵ in order to obtain the goal of illumination and liberation. You are Yogis

² Jijnasu: One who aspires after knowledge; spiritual aspirant.

³ Mumukshu: Seeker after liberation.

⁴ Sadhaka: (Spiritual) aspirant; one who exerts to attain an object.

⁵ Sadhana: Self-effort; spiritual practice.

pursuing yoga practice according to your chosen path. You are devotees of the Divine Reality, of God, Bhagavan, or the Lord Almighty, Yahweh, or Ahura Mazda, or the 'Thing in Itself', or the Supreme Reality Brahman of the Upanishads, or the Tao of the Taoists. But ultimately all these are terms indicating one nondual, identical Reality, without beginning, without end, timeless, eternal, unlimited, boundless, infinite, which is the one and only Reality that exists, that has ever been. Therefore, everything that seems to be, all the many, varied, multifarious objects appearing before us, are only appearances. In reality they are all grand and glorious manifestations of that one, nondual ultimate Reality.

Being amidst you, having the opportunity of spending some time in your gathering, is a great good fortune. Great is the grace, great is my joy. Similarly, all of you are greatly graced. When people meet a monk or a renunciate or a padre, or a person belonging to any religious order of the orient or the occident, it may be a Tibetan, it may be a Japanese Buddhist, or a Roman Catholic priest or sister, or a Carthusian or Franciscan monk, they always expect blessings. A holy man means blessings.

But what can I give you when you are so full of grace? When your life is so full of grace, so full of blessedness, that there is no space anymore for any additional grace or blessing? You are so full of grace, so full of blessing and benediction directly from the Divine and from great divinities like Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, and Shree Shree Ma, and all those wonderful people who have made it possible for you to be here. Just to be here is the greatest grace and blessing.

There was a German mystic in Bavaria, who was a cobbler. He was called Jakob Böhme. He wrote many mystical works giving out his experiences. Even to this day, some of his works have not been understood. He uses a language that is not a common language, with its roots in the Grecian tradition. But one of his outstanding works is a book called *Signatura Rerum*, in which he brings out the truth of his own experience: that whatever exists in this world outside of us, whatever is seen, heard, tasted, touched, smelled, thought about, whatever was, is or will be, is all a symbol of God – God presenting itself in that particular form, just as a signature of a person stands for a person.

The signature of a millionaire on a check is enough for a bank to give away half a million dollars to the beneficiary of the check, just as though the millionaire had gone and withdrawn the half-million and given it. The signature is none other than the one who signs it. The signature has all the power, all the identity, and all the force of the personal presence of that being who has signed it. Similarly, this entire, glorious

universe and everything in it is the visible signature of an unseen Being that, although unseen, is the real, the greatest Reality.

Even so, a world-teacher, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, in one of the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita wisdom teachings says "Whatever you see, whatever you have around you in this universe, that Great Reality, is Myself. I have become all this." Sometimes Krishna identifies himself with his incarnation identity; sometimes when he speaks, he identifies himself with his eternal, transcendental identity. In this context he identifies himself with his eternal, transcendental identity. He goes on to describe "among trees, I am such-and-such a tree; among birds, I am such-and-such a bird; among horses, I am such-and-such a horse; among elephants, I am such-and-such an elephant; among sages, I am such-and-such sage; among poets, I am such-and-such poet; among flowing waters, I am Ganga; among firm, unshakable things, I am Himalayas." And so, [being here in Uttarkashi for this retreat] you are surrounded by God manifested as Himalayas, God manifested as the flowing waters of the Divine Mother Ganga. You are in the presence of God, and His Presence as Himalayas and Ganga dominates the location of this Retreat. And you have come into God's presence in order to contemplate the Centenary of another divine presence, that is Ma.

Therefore, who can be more blessed, more abundantly graced than you people. What further blessings can I add? I can only say, may these seven days that you will be spending in spiritual fellowship morning till evening, may they be spent in a 100% spiritual way. May this retreat be a landmark that gives a great impetus to the onward ascent of your spirit towards illumination and God-realization. And from this turning point, may there be no turning back. May the days, weeks, months, years ahead of you be a tremendous journey towards the great goal, thanks to this turning point in your life. May you be crowned with enlightenment and spiritual illumination, "God-experience", as Papa Ramdas used to say; "*aparoksha-annubudhi*"⁶ in the words of Sankaracharya; and "God-realization" in the words of Gurudev Swami Sivananda. Thus, may your life become fulfilled. May it be a life of fulfillment, complete achievement and attainment, a glorious consummation in liberating you even while you are in this body. That is my good wishes welcoming you to this seven days retreat. Hari Om!

[Swamiji pauses for 15 minutes of silent meditation, from 8.45 pm to 9.00 pm, following the custom of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma.]

Swamiji chants:

Jaya Mā, Jaya Mā, Jaya Jaya Mā

⁶ First-hand or direct experience of Reality.

Sadā Śiva Samāramabhāṃ Śaṅkarācārya Madhymām.
Asmadāchārya Paryantāṃ Vande Guru Paramparām.

*Starting with Lord Sadasiva, with Adi Sankara in the middle,
and continuing up to my immediate Acharya (teacher),
Salutation to the Guru-disciple lineage.*

Om Sri Visvanathaya Namah, Om Sri Sankaracharya Namah,
Om Sri Satguru Paramatmane Namah,
Narayana, Narayana, Narayana.

Lokaabhi-Raamam Ranna-Rangga-Dhiiram
Raajiiva-Netram Raghu-Vamsha-Naatham |
Kaarunnya-Rupam Karunnaa-Karantam
Shri Rāmachandram Sharannam Prapadye ||

*(I take Refuge in Sri Rama) Who is Pleasing to the People,
Who is Calm and Composed in the battle field,
Whose Eyes are like Blue Lotuses,
and Who is the Lord of the Raghu Dynasty,
Who is an Embodiment of Compassion
and Who Showers His Compassion to All;
I take Refuge in the Lotus Feet of Sri Ramachandra.*

Kṛiṣṇāya Vāsudevāya Devakī Nandanāya Cha
Nanda-gopa-kumārāya Govindāya Namō Namaḥ

*Prostrations, again and again, to Lord Shri Krishna,
the Son of Vasudeva, the Delight of Devaki,
the Darling of Nandagopa, the Protector of cows.*

Namāmi Nārāyaṇa Pāda Paṅkajam
Karomi Nārāyaṇa Pūjanam Sadā .
Vadāmi Nārāyaṇa Nāma Nirmalam
Smarāmi Nārāyaṇa Tatvamavyayam

*Always I salute the lotus-feet of Narayana,
I propitiate Narayana, speak of the pure name of Narayana
and bear in mind the immutable factuality of Narayana.*

Vasudeva-sutaṃ Devaṃ Kāṃsa-chāṇūra-mardanaṃ,
Devakī-paramānandaṃ Kṛṣṇaṃ Vande Jagad-gurum.

*I worship Lord Krishna, the Guru of the world, Who is the Son of
Vasudeva, the Destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura,
and the supreme Joy of Devaki (His mother).*

Om Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Jai Ram Om

Sri Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Jai Ram Om.....

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal Reality, the absolute, transcendental cosmic being without beginning, without end, imperishable, eternal, unchanging, at once the origin, as well as the support, as well as the ultimate goal of all existence, in whom millions of infinite universes emerge, by whom these are sustained, in whom once again they submerge and subside and become one. The absolute, supreme Being alone remains, being beginningless and endless, forever and ever. The emergence of countless millions of universes and their existence and their dissolving back into that Being does not in the least affect its unchangeable quality of being one, nondual, ever-calm, peaceful, radiant Nature due to its vastness, its stupendous, imponderable, awesome magnitude, in which these phenomena are like the trembling of a drop of water in the vast Pacific Ocean. All the countless number of millions and billions of universes emerging and subsiding are like some phenomena taking place within a tiny droplet of water in the immeasurable, unfathomable vastness of the Pacific Ocean. Infinite numbers of universes emerging and existing and merging back into It is verily like some little thing that takes place within a grain of sand along the vast seashores all over the world.

So infinitesimal, so insignificant is all this phenomena that we see. We stand aghast at our own little, tiny universe, our sun, moon, stars, galaxies, in the vastness of outer space. We stand aghast that all this is like some little vibration or little speck somewhere in the vastness of It's infinitude, It's imponderable magnitude.

What we think of as awesome, great or grand is, as compared to It, like a cipher, nothing. For It is the source, the support and ultimate subsidence of countless, infinite millions of such phenomena every moment. It is eternal beyond time, and infinite beyond space. It is the one and only Reality that alone exists.

Great Ones were ever merged in the awareness of the Oneness of their consciousness with that Consciousness – Yagnavalkya, Vashishta, Ramana Maharshi, Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma, and many of those *parama jnanis*, those who had

attained the infinite, the One without a second, the nondual state of consciousness where the notion of the many is meaningless, where One Alone is. They were ever-established in that state of identity with the imponderable, infinite, absolute, nondual Consciousness that cannot be described.

The Upanishads say, "Thought and speech can't reach It and fell back unable to attain it, and had to return. *Yato vācho nivartante, aprāpya manasā sah.*" [Taittiriya II:9.] Such is the declaration of the Upanishads about this Reality.

Again and again to that Reality, we pay reverential homage. May Divine Grace flow from It, shower upon you in abundance, and infill you, lifting up your own little, erroneous consciousness into It's own vastness, purity, magnitude, serenity, into It's own state of blessed blissfulness, into It's own state of effulgent luminosity.

*Jyotishaamapi tajjyotistamasah paramuchyate;
Jnaanam jneyam jnaanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam.*

That, the Light of all lights, is beyond darkness;
It is said to be knowledge, the Knowable, and the goal of knowledge,
seated in the hearts of all.

[Bhagavad Gita 13:18]

It is Param Jyothi Swaroopa, the Supreme Light, the dazzling Light, the Light of a million billion midday suns.

May your consciousness be uplifted to that state of effulgence, of divine radiance, of imponderable peace and serenity, *shanti*. Out of It's infinite grace, may your consciousness become centered and established in that indescribable and sweet, blessed blissfulness.

"Within you is hidden God." Thus sang revered and beloved Holy Master Swami Sivananda. "Within you is hidden God. Within you is immortal Soul. Within you is fountain of Joy. Within you is ocean of Bliss." Right where you are, within you, is the ocean of Bliss, the fountain of Joy. [Swamiji sings:]

Shantimayi, Hey Bhagavan
Anandamayi, Hey Bhagavan

This is how Shree Shree Ma indicated this same, identical experience that is always within, always flowing, flowing, flowing, the perennial unbroken stream of the Spirit, of the Atman, of that which the ancient sages called Brahman. Ma called it by its many names: "*Shantimayi, Hey Bhagavan; Anandamayi, Hey Bhagavan; Premamayi, Hey Bhagavan*". It is ever here, as a constant ever-present undercurrent of blissfulness, of blessedness, of all that is holy, all that is sacred, all that is beautiful, all that is divine.

[Swamiji sings Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma's song:]

Satyam Jñānam Anantaṃ Brahma.

All that is of the nature of luminous wisdom consciousness, infinite (Anantaṃ), is Brahman.

Shantam Śhivam Advaitam Brahma. Ekam Evādvitīyam Brahma.

Brahman is Shantam (Peace indescribable, Peace that passeth understanding); Brahman is all that is auspicious, blessed (Śhivam), nondual (Advaitam).

Brahman is One alone without a second (Advaitam), and blissful (Ānanda).

Ma sang it that way. That atman, that Brahman, is within you, presiding at the center of your being. Again and again, in a hundred different ways, all the Upanishads, all the shastras and puranas, all the utterances of the Great Ones try to bring home to you this fact: that illumined bliss infills you, bliss envelopes you, surrounds you, saturates and permeates the whole existence.

Live in this awareness. When you wake up from the tranquility and serenity of the night's deep sleep and your consciousness emerges into the state of this stressful, restless, ever-changing, gross, earth wakefulness, refuse to be beguiled or turned away from the inner center of bliss and blessedness, from the center of Light and Effulgence. Refuse to be turned away from the inner center of Peace, Silence, Blessedness, Light, Beauty. Look upon all the variegated things and see only Oneness in this endless, infinite, multifarious diversity of appearances – the so called seemingly 'multifarious appearances'. Say to yourself, "All that I behold is only One. That alone is." *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma.* (All this is Brahman. Chandogya Upanishad, Verse 3.14.1) *Sarvam Vishnu Mayam Jagat* (The entire world is filled with Vishnu).

This is the one thing needful: to see the One in the seeming all. You may see a hundred different varieties of cloth in a cloth shop, but be aware that you are only looking at cotton. You are not looking at many; you are only looking at one. You know you are looking at only one single principle (the one single *Tattva*) that is Brahman, the non-dual One.

Upon the festival of Dussehera⁷, in the little Indian markets, the sweet-sellers

⁷ (Editor: The festival of Dussehra, also known as Vijaydashmi, is celebrated with great enthusiasm in India. On this day Lord Rama killed Ravana, and Goddess Durga triumphed over the buffalo Demon Mahishasura. That is why the day is also referred to as the 'victory of good over evil'.)

prepare innumerable items of sweets out of boiled sugar to which they add different colors – light blue, light pink, light green, light orange – and then they pour the colored liquid sugar into molds of different shapes, like a horse, a house, a man, a bird, a temple, a flower. And when it is set, they take it out of the mold and display it in their shop. But the pink flower and green peacock and blue horse are all sugar.

As I have said, when your consciousness emerges out of the silence and deep serenity of the non-dual state of deep sleep, and emerges into the wakeful state, do not be beguiled, do not allow this to draw you away from your non-dual awareness of the one Ekam Evādvitīyaṃ (*One alone without a second*), that Anandamayee (*Bliss-filled*) Brahman, that Jyotirmayee (*Dazzling Light of Consciousness*) Brahman, that Shantimayee (*Peace-filled*) Brahman. That alone exists. Be established in that center. And do not be deluded or diverted by the appearance of seemingly many, because it is only variegated forms of different shapes and sizes that appear before you. But that which is the very stuff of it, that which is its alpha and omega (beginning, middle and end), its all in all, is the goal that you are seeking, that which you are meditating upon, the experience that you are striving to attain. It has to be that. It cannot be anything else for That alone exists. There is none else beside It. There is no escape from this compelling and imperative fact *that Brahman alone is*. Atman alone prevails. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*. There is no many.

Be established in this truth. Keep your awareness bound to this truth. Do not budge even a hair's breadth away from this truth. Live in Brahman. Act in Brahman. Be aware of Brahman. Think in Brahman. Breathe in Brahman. And know that you are aware and one with Brahman. This is the sadhana. This is the constant thought that should be with your every breath and every step, every beat of your heart – One alone is, That alone is, That alone prevails. That is peace, That is bliss, That is Light. That Light is within me; I live in that Light and I am one with that Light. Brahman alone is. Brahman is bliss, and all this is Brahman. Therefore, Bliss alone exists, Bliss alone prevails. And Bliss is my innermost center. I am centered in that Bliss. Be this Truth. Live in this Truth. Remember this Truth.

May the Grace of that ever present all-pervading indwelling Reality enable you to be established in this truth. May the grant of grace and choicest blessings of Revered and Beloved Holy Master and of Shree Shree Anandamayi Ma be upon you all, each one of you, and enable you to be centered in this Truth. Live this Truth, be this Truth, and become ever established in this Truth. May they give you the inner strength to never budge from this Truth.

Make yourself a center of this higher awareness. That is the one thing needful.

That is Abhyasa⁸. That is the highest truth. That is wisdom that is for all time, forever.

(Swamiji repeats Om 4 times)

What has been said and recommended and pointed out is nothing but your own birthright upon which you have a claim. Do not ignore or neglect it. Claim it now and become forever blessed.

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu
Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu

*May all beings everywhere be happy and free from suffering
in a state of realization of unified existence. May it be so.*

Asato Mā Sad-gamaya
Tamaso Mā Jyotir-gamaya
Mṛityor-mā Amṛitaṃ Gamaya.

*Lead us from the unreal to the Real;
Lead us from darkness to Light;
Lead us from mortality to Immortality.*

Oṃ Pūrṇam-adaḥ Pūrṇam-idaṃ Pūrṇāt-pūrṇam-udachyate
Pūrṇasya Pūrṇam-ādāya Pūrṇam-evāvaśhiṣhyate.

Oṃ Śhāntiḥ Śhāntiḥ Śhāntiḥ.

*Om. The great fullness or plenum is Brahman.
What comes from fullness is fullness only.
After the coming out of the effect from the Cause Supreme,
What remains is ever full.
Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!*

The appropriate way of saying thank you to God upon the outer level is by saying 'thank you' to the organizers of this Retreat, helped by those in India at Sivananda Ashram. So, our thanks goes to them for working out all the details. We give thanks to the organizers and thanks to the saints who inspired them: Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma and Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj. And thanks to God who made all this possible. Ultimately, He is the inner prompter, the inner director of our thoughts and deliberations. He is the *sutra-atma*⁹. He is also the One Doer. Ultimately the Doership is His.

⁸ Abhyasa: repeated practice, effort, perseverance, the correct attitude and intention in our spiritual practice.

⁹ *sutra-atma* : the divine soul, the divine thread of spirit, like the thread that passes through all the flowers in a flower garland.

And therefore, to come back to the message – the message is 'make hay while the sun shines', 'strike while the iron is hot'. The message is, 'Come, come, when a golden opportunity has been given to you, enrich yourself !'. Now is the time, recognize the grace, seize the opportunity, and bless yourself. That is the message.

In the ultimate words of Gurudev: Do It Now ! Gurudev was very fond of this saying: 'Do It Now'. He sang it as sort of ditty. (Swamiji sings)

D-I-N, D-I-N, D—I—N,
D-I-N, D-I-N, Do It Now.

NOW ! Seize the opportunity ! Make the best of the present ! The future will take care of itself. The present can nullify the past. At the highest ultimate reach, all the past karmas become burned to ashes in a second, in a trice, and there is no need to come back into this ever-recurring wheel of incarnation after incarnation. When the *sanchita*¹⁰ is burned, there is no more coming back. Therefore, attain that realm attaining which there is no return.

Yadgatwā na nivartante taddhāma paramam mama.

Having gone thither, they return not; that is My Supreme Abode.

[Bhagavad Gita 15:6]



¹⁰ Sanchita Karma is the sum of one's past karmas – all actions, good and bad.