

SWAMI  
**TYAGISHANANDA**

**A Life of Dedication**



**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY (Regd.)**

CA No.5A, 3rd Cross, BSK 1st Stage

Bangalore - 560 050.

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**Compiled by :**  
**Swami Sukhatmananda**

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## Preface

Swami Tyagishananda, an eminent monk of the Ramakrishna Sangha, described as a "Monk of sterling Spiritual Qualities", was the President of the Ramakrishna Math, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore during 1938-51. He was a guide and mentor to innumerable souls in their spiritual life.

His very picture one is familiar of a Tall, Majestic with a regal bearing, leonine in look and appearing with a long stick in his hand to match his height and stature, he looked a replica of the ancient rishi one has heard of or read in the scriptures, one wonders, He looked one wonders, Bhishma-like of the Mahabharata fame. Bhishma the 'Terrible', Tyagishananda was in his learning, in his scholarship, in his renunciation (tyagisha- the 'King among Renunciates') the apt sannyasa name he bore and justified fully in his monastic life.

Sri N. Krishnaswami (dear 'Kitty Master') used to remind us frequently to prepare a life of Swami Tyagishananda, ever since he learnt that we had taken up the work of bringing out Rev. Swamiji's works of his class-talks given at Bangalore Math over the years during his tenure of President-ship, available in manuscripts form into Print. Now, since two of his Books, apart from few others published long back, have come out in Print as separate



book (published) namely "Ishavasyopanishad and True Import of Dharma" (2013) and the "Bhagavad Gita - Insights and Significance", it was felt a necessity has arisen. So an attempt was made to prepare a Life of Swami Tyagishananda, in spite of non-availability of details of his early years, from the available materials mostly from, the Souvenir-3 of Swami Vivekananda Education Society, a short life by D. Prabhushankara and personal memory of people intimate with the Swamiji.

It is a great sanctifying experience to remember him and recollect incidents related to him even today. I have tried to collect reliable information about the great soul's life.

Swami Vivekananda Educational Society (regd.), BSK I Stage Bangalore have come forward to publish this in a book form for the benefit of the devoted followers of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

I sincerely hope that this book reaches as many as possible and guide and inspire them in their lives.

● **Swami Sukhatmananda**

# SWAMI TYAGISHANANDA

## A Life Dedication

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेववा ।  
तत्त्वेवावगच्छत्वममतेजोऽशसंभवम् ॥

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the Gita " Whatever is specially bright and exceptional and full of truthful substance, rich and coming up successfully, be sure that that object has been created with a little of my power and light."

A person who is endowed with special qualities which are extraordinary is known as Vibhutipurusha. In the eyes of most people who knew him, Swami Tyagishananda was such a person. In his personality one could visualize how a man of God lived in this world. किंप्रभाषेत, किमासीत्, ब्रजेतकिम् ॥ as Arjuna asks Krishna in the Second Chapter of the Gita, "How does a perfect man talk, how does he behave, how does he move about?" The answer from Krishna is enshrined in the last eighteen verses of the same Chapter of the Gita, which formed a regular part of the prayer in Gandhi's Ashrama. These verses are known as *Sthitaprajnalakshnana*. Acharya Vinoba has written a special commentary on this part of the Gita. A Gandhi, a Vinoba and a Tyagishananda tried to live a life patterned after these verses.

The outcome of this work, to bring out a comprehensive life of such a soul is a fascinating portrait of Swami Tyagishananda which will help all those who want to lead the spiritual life in accordance with the great

life and Teachings of the Great Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva.

Holiness can be stimulated, or imposed by others, or strained, or natural it can be aggressive or quiet, demonstrative or unassuming. The quiet, unassuming, the natural variety is, of course the best. Only superior persons have this quality, and Swami Tyagishananda was truly one such.

He was holy because he was whole-some, clean and good at heart, clear in mind. He was human, because besides having some well recognized and high spiritual qualities he also behaved as a-natural human being, even sometimes revealing certain normal but acceptable '*imperfect-nesses*'. He was by no means a rigid copy-book model of a stern and absolute saint. In his dealings with his fellow-beings, while he would appear to some as a '*severe*', or '*quixotic*' or careless, those who knew him intimately had quite a different idea and experience. They found in him a most loving and lovable person, careful and concerned, tender-hearted and generous. But all this manifested in and through an outer physical body, spartanly dressed, a physical stature and a flowing beard and hair allowed to grow naturally, which gave him a venerable-rishi or sage-like look, but within which dwelt a gentle '*child*' all the same.

"Many are called; but, few are chosen" says the Bible and among such chosen, those who reach the goal or move near it, are rare who can be counted on one's fingers. Swami Tyagishananda was one among such great personality.

His very name is so apt in all he represented in Renunciation, Scholarship, yet so simple with a golden heart and hard austere, giving-up selfishness up to Himalayan heights, and hard nut to break for selfish ones.

None who came into contact with him left without being influenced by the life of renunciation and sanyasa ideal. The rest, though lead a house-holder life outside, yet held on to vairagya and spiritual life internally and never yielded to attraction of life of enjoyment. Many lead such a life.

The most vivid picture of Swami Tyagishananda, that comes to one's mind is that of a striking figure walking up and down the veranda of the old Ashrama (corresponding to a few yards of the present prayer hall right in front of the present shrine), talking to young men who had gathered there on various topics - moral, spiritual, even secular, but always elevating or at other times absorbed, all alone, in his own thoughts (doing japa, mental repetition of the Lord's name in silent meditation as he told privately). Tall majestic, with a regal bearing, leonine in look and appearance, with a long stick in his hand to match his height and stature, he looked a replica of the ancient rishis one has heard of or read in the scriptures, आजानुबाहुमरविन्ददलायताक्षं (तुलसीरामायणम् ।) what with his fair complexion and the shining, long, silvery, grey beard and tousled hair on the head, unkempt and unattended as they were.

Another image that crossed in one's mind ever so often was of his emaciated body stretched on a cast of plaster

of Paris during the last two months of his mortal life at the K.G.F. hospital, immobilized by the fatal illness, spinal T.B. He reminded one of the Bhishma on the bed of arrows, awaiting the end. It must have been awfully painful, but he gave no indication of it, calm and peaceful as his face always was, except on one occasion. Sri Avinashilangam Chettiar, the then Education Minister of the erstwhile Madras State and an old-time colleague and associate of his when he was engaged in flood-relief work in Kerala in the twenties, had come to see him , having heard that he was seriously sick. Tyagishanandaji jokingly told him: "you can introduce this as punishment for the inmates of your jails when you become the Home Minister". Proof enough of the intense suffering he surely was undergoing, though he uttered these words with a smiling face.

Bhishma the '*Terrible*', Tyagishananda, was in his learning, in his scholarship, in his renunciation (*Tyagisha*, the '*king among renunciates*', the apt name given to him at the time of his ordination into monastic life by his sannyasa -guru, Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the then President of the Order), and above all in his spiritual eminence. Terrible but not '*terrifying*' ---There may be, and surely are, many others who are his equals in scholarship and renunciation, if not greater than him, but his scholarship and renunciation had certain unique features which put him apart from them, in a class by himself, which are worthy of note. First they were not terrifying - people who came near him stood in

awe and reverence, no doubt of his vast scholarship and renunciation, his intellectual acumen and legendary powers of endurance, but were never frightened or dismayed by them. A forty-eight hour fast, followed by or interspersed with a five or six hour long discourse was nothing for him. They were as if he was drinking a glass of water. Though they were all beyond our comprehension at times, so natural to him and fitting, they never baffled nor sit heavily on us. Just as the asceticism of John the Baptist in the Bible, with his uncouth dress of camel's hair and food of wild honey, decrying all as woebegone vipers and calling everyone to resentence, repulsed us; that of Jesus Christ pleased us, so it was in the case of Tyagishananda which endeared him to one and drew them nearer.

Tyagishanandaji was one of the few to whom scholarship, learning, renunciation, and every other virtue had only one purpose, that is God-realisation, as Sri Ramakrishna put it, or Self-realisation or spiritual fulfilment, to use the Vedantic terminology for the same ideal. He directed these faculties of his and all his energy for that one and only worthy objective in life. They were not for him, as for most others, things to flaunt and show off; for gaining a little name and fame in this trumpery world, for a momentary public applause. In fact he was averse to any kind of publicity and propaganda and personal glorification that one never came across a single incident when he praised himself. His words were only for edification, to correct the error in our thinking.



He was once during the night class, seen yawning and he was upset with himself which foolish people normally ascribe it to tamas or inertia predominant in most, whereas he had no tamasic tendencies at all. It was all pure sattva, though externally it resembled tamas sometimes.

Another student, who later in life came to occupy a high position in the Central Government, used to attend Swamiji's classes found during his one noon visit to the Ashrama, the doors of the Swamiji's room closed and thought that he was asleep. Tyagishannadaji replied him in fun; 'What! Do the swamis ever sleep? They are always in *Samadhi*. Of course he was joking but the simple student believed in it and would tell everyone about this. Perhaps the student was in all probability, not incorrectly describing the Swami's real state of mind; '*nidrasamadhisthitih*', sleep in the case of the highly evolved is no ordinary sleep, but virtually a state of samadhi, a state of complete absorption in God-consciousness, even as the waking state is.

His thoughts were imbued with the thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and his interpretations of scriptures perfectly in accord with their ideas. In fact, all his efforts were directed to interpret the ancient scriptures in the light of their thoughts. He used to tell a funny incident in this connection. At that time a study circle known as Vedanta College, based on the old Mysore Study Circle, was functioning within the Bangalore Ashrama campus, started by one of the senior swamis of the order, with a view to spread the teachings of Vedanta among the younger

generation. The founder had prepared a syllabus and a curriculum to be followed by the teachers, with the stipulation that certain texts should be completed within certain periods. Tyagishanandaji was one of the teachers, but he could never abide by the stipulation. For, vast as his knowledge was, and as everyone who has heard his talks alone knows, even one verse of the Gita or the Upanishads or the Bhagavatam or any other scriptures would take days, if not months, to complete. The founder swami (Srivasananda), anxious to know what was happening in his class, once asked him: 'What Upanishadic text are you taking now?' Tyagishananda replied '*Ramakrishna Upanishad*,' not the book currently going by that name authored by Sri Rajagopalachari. He was actually taking Ishavasyopanishad. What he meant was : that he had been conveying only the message of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, who was equally dear to the founder swami.

He used to advice people who wanted to see a *Jivanmukta* to go and see Ramana Maharshi, and encouraged them to visit Tiruvannamalai. Considered as a realized soul of his time, what you learn and experience by just observing such great souls is not understood by reading scriptures many times.

Once he was seen holding a newspaper and looking at a cartoon and smiling within. He showed to the visitor. There a small infant crying loudly with movements of its limbs awkwardly. To make it quiet all the family members from the grand-parents down to the young kids were making all

efforts at it. The caption of the cartoon read "*who is the Master of this house?!*" All heartily laughed, immediately he kept the newspaper aside, got up and told a story of Sri Ramakrishna illustrating "the quarrel between the Master's son and the maid's son, and when the Landlord's son scared with the word "I will tell my mother" the maid's boy too retorted "I too will tell my mother". When he repeated the last word 'I will tell my mother', few times, his mood changed and tears flowed from his eyes.

Association with such a holy person results in eagerness to learn Sanskrit, desire to study scriptures in the original, cessation of all superstition, increase of Shraddha, Devotion in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Respect for the Ramakrishna Sangha, ideals of Sanyasa life as the highest.

First visit to the Ashrama, on an Ekadashi Day, Swami welcomed a new entrant with the words "Have no fear, be free of shyness, be coming to the Ashrama now and then, this will be your path for own good." Any visitor would see him deeply absorbed in God, sitting alone in a corner of the veranda of Prayer Hall. He made people who met and talked to him, to think positively, ever ready to help anyone who was a genuine seeker of Truth without any reservation.

During his time, there were no cooks or servants in the Ashrama and all works were handled by monastics only, all work of kitchen, garden, goshala, cooking, worship and

preaching as they say '*from juta Selai to worship*' (Swami Vivekananda words).

The cow *Lakshmi*, dear to all the inmates, once chased a thief stealing the clothes from the Ashrama, and made him surrender leaving the goods. Another Cow was Tyagi of majestic elephant size, well fed with fodder, grass etc., which used to give milk 3 times, totalling 15 litres a day. Looking at it, people would wish to be born as an ashram-cow in next life.

Swami's erudite Scholarship, face brightened by eternal faith in god, ever friendly conduct and loving blessings was a source of light of life to all his juniors.

The thing that most attracted people attending the evening Arati at the Ashrama was the scene of a statue of a Majestic figure of a Mahatma, sitting in a yogic posture at the left side of the long Veranda, with mace of hairs and a long beard, in meditation without least awareness of external world. Such a personality which could attract everybody's attention was Swami Tyagishananda. The very sight would make one bow his head automatically and step into the Prayer Hall.

Innumerable are the students who from abject poverty got the shelter under the loving care of the Swami to persecute their studies.

One Engineering student, who later became head of an Engineering Institute in Bombay and served as a Senate

member of Bombay University, in his final year got refuge in the Vidyarthi Mandiram as a paying student out of the little money he saved by working as a Maistri on daily wages in a road-concrete work during his summer holidays with the assurance to pay the balance amount from his salary for the job he would get after completing his course. Swami graciously acceded to the request.

During summer holidays, Swami used to take classes on the Bhagavad Gita and his scholarly comments, broadness of explanations, one could gather from his famous '*Narada Bhakti Sutras*'. Even small ideas he would explain its Spiritual significance bringing out the essence of Swami Vivekananda's comments on the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna 'Serving man is serving God'.

Once two youths who were passing through the Ashrama front road on their way to the hotel for their tiffin, noticing the Board at the Ashrama gate of '*daridranarayana seva*', came inside the Ashram to meet the Swami and requested him to accept their tiffin cost of As.8 (half-a-rupee) for they felt such Narayana seva is more important than their *udaraseva*. Swami lauded their tyaga aspect and blessed them with the *ashramaprasada*. He would quote this in his Gita classes. - Swami's rare quality of broadness of heart and *spandana*.

Swami would carefully watch that the contributions, in cash and kind to the Ashrama by generous devotees, and see that things were utilized most properly and with least

wastage. Swami himself would be in the kitchen looking into things personally. He would make use of even the skin of some vegetables and essence of some others in some form in the cooking process. He stressed on the Satvic items, with use of chilly less always - appearing as if he would dip the chilly in preparations and take out.

He was very particular about financial discipline and the necessity of public funds being used with care. The idea of trusteeship was emphasized by him quite often. On one occasion he told that he had written to Belur Math declining the invitation for a meeting called by them. This was because he found the agenda such that he felt his contribution would be little and the expense would not be a good use of public funds that had been contributed to the Ashrama. How one wish these high standards of accountability and effective use of resources were practiced in general public life in the country now.

It is heard from the Swamis who lived with him during his time, that for Narayanaseva, Ashrama volunteers would take a push-cart and go from house to house to collect provisions, money and other materials. Some would welcome and contribute their might and entertaining them too. Some others would criticize the Ashrama for their service, without caring for caste, sect and turn them out without any help. When the volunteers reported these experiences to the Swami, what was Swami's reaction? - To look on सुख, दुःख, मान, अपमान equally is the state of direct proof of becoming an स्थितप्रज्ञ in life is the teaching of the Gita. This, just because



you go in the name of God, all will welcome whole heartedly and none will act against it is a wrong notion of ours. These are occasions to experience directly the differences and direct the mind in its right path. Swami with such an instruction would make people aware of the truth.

During the Narayana Seva of the Jayanti celebrations, Swamiji used to take food in the Beggars-line as the first beggar with other beggars sitting next to him.

The great devotion and love to Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, the Enlightened Scholarship of Swami Vivekananda who spread the Message of the Master and the motherly love of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi had gone deep in the Swami's person.

When a spiritual seeker expressed his inner feelings of not being fit to follow the sacred path, the swami lovingly encouraged the person with the words "This Ashrama is for all spiritual aspirants and why do you feel that you are unfit?"

Another who spent all his student days in free-hostels, coming from very poor strata of society and made a mark in his life as an Educationist, Principal, Scientist, Vice-Chancellor, a rationalist, a Gandhian-cum Ramakrishnaite to the core! He, while studying B.Sc.(Hons.) course discontinuing his studies to take part in the 'Quit India' movement and underwent 9 months imprisonment at Bangalore and Yervada jail and came back to continue his course. When he was denied in any free hostel admission

to stay, with no other options left, he was desperate, Swami Tyagishananda sent for him and told him "You are in difficulties now, you come to stay in Ashrama and continue your studies. He completed his studies making a mark in life later, rising to the level of Vice-chancellor of University, highly loved, respected and revered as an educationist of par excellence, i.e. late Dr. H. Narasimhaiah.

When another resident who never attended the evening prayers, questioned by the Swami openly said "I don't have faith in prayer and do not like to sit before your god and seek like a beggar".Swamiji asked him "Then you believe in what"? The immediate reply he got "I believe in work (physical)". Then Swami asked him to do garden work during the prayer time and he too did it all through, while other residents prayed. A great thinker has said about prayer "Prayer is a long call having nobody at the other end". It was the great quality of the Swami that gave exemption to him, from prayer and made him do what he believed in. Anybody else would not have kept him in the hostel.

**Life:** - Swami Tyagishananda, known as Sri V. K. Krishna Menon in his pre-monastic days came of a distinguished and cultured *Vattak Kurupatfamily* of Trichur, related to Cochin(State) Royal Family. After school education at Trichur he entered the college at Ernakulam and completed his Intermediate education with distinction. He stood first in Sanskrit in the whole university and was awarded a gold medal. Later he had to go to Madras for higher studies. He completed his B.A Hons., with distinction and a gold

medallist throughout. After finishing his Sanskrit M.A. (he won the first Rank and Gold Medal) at Madras Presidency Collge, he took his B.L degree and became an Advocate. His uncle was a Judge of the Madras High court and encouraged to study Law. Tyagishananda got the first Rank in Law examinations too and practiced for a few years as an Advocate but was dis-enchanted with it. He gave it up after experiencing the conflict of values which had made Gandhiji also give up that. He wanted to become a Teacher and completed L.T degree with a First Rank in that too.

It seems that Mr. Krishna Menon was asked by the Court, when he started practice, to defend the accused that had no lawyer of his own. This very first case, he won due to his clever arguments, made him stray from truth. When the Lawyer talked to him about the case, the accused man said "Sir, you must somehow save me, I prostrate at your feet. I did commit the crime". This stunning disclosure put the lawyer in a dilemma; on the other hand the court wants him to defend the accused, who however confesses to the guilt. How could he prove his innocence under the circumstances? Obviously he had to utter a lie in order to carry out the Court's order. He got the acquittal, but declined the honorarium usual in such matters. Thereafter he quit the profession and was on the lookout for a job suiting his ideals, where he would not have to go against his conscience. That is how he came to Teaching profession.

In the meantime the committee of the newly founded *Vivekodayam* High school at Trichur in 1922, approached him for his services and he agreed to become its Headmaster. As a Headmaster he started a shrine in the school, organised regular prayers, opened a Gita class for the staff, encouraged music, and drama, sports etc. arranged for lectures of the Ramakrishna Mission Swamis at Trichur and gathered around him a number of men young and old. With their help he started a *Guru Kula*, named *Vivekodayam* (Sri Ramakrishna Gurukula) for Untouchable children, perhaps one of the very first in India) and a High School at Vilangans, five miles away from Trichur town in 1927.

Another story about his personal life: - The *Vattakk Kurupat* family to which Krishna Menon belonged was very aristocratic, almost like a royalty. The Cochin Royal family members usually selected girls from this family as their brides. A boy from this family was considered a prize catch by the father of any girl. Here was an eligible bachelor, good looking, well built, a lawyer, who shunned all female company. The lady members of the Kuruppam family, worried about his reluctance to marry, tried various tricks and all methods of persuasion. When this became a nuisance, Krishna Menon left home and decided to stay in the School premises.

With his first salary, the hard earned money, he purchased a small plot of land at *Vilangan*, and constructed thatched hut to do some educational service to the less fortunate.

He started a school for Harijans, developed into a good institution and became its Headmaster. Every day after his school, he would walk to his thatched shed and rendered his free services to those illiterate children. Slowly the work grew and today it is one of the big centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. He wore Khadi all throughout his life, even wearing Khadi ochre cloth after becoming a sanyasi. He had unstinted faith in the constructive works initiated by Gandhiji.

H. H. Appan Tampuran, the 9th prince of Cochin a scholar and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, gave a free hand to Krishna Menon in all school matters.

The Teacher wore simple Khaddar dhoti and a closed collar coat, whenever he came to teach and at other times wore only a short dhoti and stayed in the Ashrama. As Head Master he started growing a beard and never had a haircut and only tied a loose turban on his head whenever the Government School Inspector made a visit. He made such a good impression on the minds of the teacher and students alike that saw in him a saint-like and a strict disciplinarian. He spent almost all the money he received as Head Master salary, on scholarships to deserving students, even supporting them in their college studies after leaving the school. One such beneficiary became a model Head Master in the Kollengode Raja's High School. Sanskrit received special attention in the curriculum from V Standard.

When the school could not hire a teacher for any subject because of absence of numerical strength, the Head Master himself, would preparing after studying and conduct classes. A few students and teachers (one Nambiar Master who became a monk later as Sw. Nishreyasananda) used to stay in the ashrama alongwith the Swami. Morning meditation and doing some Ashrama chores and a boy would do the worship were the routine. Another resident teacher who also worked as a school accountant did the cooking of simple food. The Swami used to get food from his house in a big tiffin carrier, sent by his mother and this arrangement was made just to save the Ashrama his food. Many times there would be some fruits also which he would distribute to young students.

The Teacher-accountant-cook, called also as Manager, would argue with the swami about the sternness and strict discipline of the H.M, maintaining that the method of love was far superior. The H.M used to have a hearty laugh at this, because at heart and he was all love.

The Swami used to have weekend Bhajans in the shrine, mostly either chanting of Sanskrit slokas or sahasranama. To add his mite to the bhajans, he learnt mridangam under a professional and by devoted study and practice he started playing well. He developed a small kitchen garden in the ashrama and grew vegetables and banana and himself dig and shovel, replanting and watering as a regular morning exercise. It was honey produced from this institution that Mahatma Gandhi had taken to break one of his fasts.



The School daily opened with morning prayers with students and teachers singing together shlokas from the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanaishads, Soundarya Lahari, Sivananda Lahari etc. during that time.

Misbehaviour on the part of the students was unknown. Hence parents preferred to send their children to *Vivekodayam*, which soon earned a name as the best school in town, both academically and in the field of sports and games. After class hours, the ashrama inmates used to play volley ball in the school compound with the HM and the Nambiar master joining them. Rare cases of misbehaviour attracted punishment as to reform the erring students. The most common punishment meted out was doing a fixed times *namaskar* in the shrine.

One of the first things the HM introduced was Spinning & Weaving Classes as extra-curricular activity. A part of the hall was dug up and weaving looms installed. There were two dozen wooden Charkas on which students and teachers spun the yarn which would be later woven into Khadi cloth.

When Gandhiji visited Trichur, the only school he visited was the Vivekodayam, and the only section which attracted him was the Spinning & Weaving Section. While being shown around, Gandhiji suddenly stopped and sat near a Chakra and dexterously spun on it for a minute. The yarn was so fine as to draw the admiration of one and all. This yarn was enclosed in a glass case and exhibited at the annual school-day function every year.

The Annual School-day Celebrations was unique in many respects. Many Swamijis of the Mission would visit event with lavish hospitality extended and together with a large number of parents and the public joining the talks on various topics, An Exhibition put up entirely by students, staging of couple of dramas on religious themes, often depicting episodes from the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the curtain itself was a portrait of Guru Maharaj, sometimes Sanskrit dramas enacted. Prince Appan Thampanan never missed the function.

Talking about the HM, Nambiar Master told "We are like unripe mangoes being squeezed for a little juice, whereas HM was like a ripe mango from which sweet juice oozed forth.

Though the Swamiji did not get initiated into the Mission because his mother had not given permission while the Prince was successful. He joined the Order after the death of his mother and only after the work had been put on a firm footing. He took sanyasa in 1932 from Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj (Mahapurush Maharaj) who always used to praise him as a fine tyagi.

But the Swami was in essence a true sanyasin on the lines of ancient rishis. The spiritual influence of this one great man attracted many young souls to the school who later on joined the Mission. Amongst a dozen or so who joined the Order Vishwambharananda, Nishreyasananda, Vyomakeshananda, Narayan Maharaj, and Bhaskar Maharaj who was in Mauritius.

Once the H.M stood for election to the Trichur Municipal Council and was elected unopposed. His purpose in entering the Council was to bring about legislation banning the opening of hotels and cinema houses near schools.

Kerala was in the grip of floods in 1924 leaving many homeless. Krishna Menon with the help of teachers and public support started flood relief work serving the victims. At the same time Ramakrishna Mission also came forward to render their services. It was during this time he came in touch with the Swamijis of the Mission intimately who influenced him to join the Mission. He agreed and joined the Order donating the Vilagan property to the Mission. Later this property was known as Ramakrishna Ashrama. Krishna Menon resigned his job and he was appointed as the first President of the Ashrama there by the Mission. He took Sanyasa as Swami Tyagishananda (1932). The activities of the Ashrama went on very well and the educational service to the less fortunate Harijan children was highly successful.

His strength of mind was tested when he was young itself. It seems that when he went away from his place to join the order, uncle of his wrote to him and taunted him from running away like a coward from his place. Later Swamiji went back to his old place to live as a renunciate and his uncle had to admit that this person (Swamiji) was no coward but a bold renunciate.

He was very austere in his personal life. He would fast the whole day on Ekadashi and the next day, before

breaking his fast, he would go out in search of a beggar whom he would bring him in and feed him sumptuously, give him clothes, considering as *Lord Narayana*. Once a beggar was arrested by the police thinking he was a thief. Krishna Menon went to the police station and got him released as innocent.

While Studying at Madras, he came into contact with the Ramakrishna Math and Swami Ramakrishnanandaji which gave a definite form to his life *tyaga* and *seva*. He took initiation from Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He met Maharaj at Madras Math and requested him for initiation. Usually Maharaj was very strict and he would test the candidate thoroughly before giving initiation. So Krishna Menon has to pass through those tests. On the eighth visit, he asked the candidate to come at mid-night. During those days the area around the Math was a desolate forest. The young man hesitated to agree to his proposal. Knowing his predicament, Maharaj asked him to pass the night in the Math. Krishna Menon agreed and spent the night without a wink of sleep. Maharaj came out from his room at 3'O clock. He straight entered into the shrine and called the candidate only at 6.00 a.m. and initiated him. This exhibited his deep patience and long sustained effort on his part.

When he was in Trichur he observed Ekadashi with rigour. On the next day Dwadashi, he would get ready, go out of his place, find a poor person, bring to him to his

place and get him bathed, would wash that person's feet, offer clothes, food etc. and after serving him and sending him off thus, break his fast. His seva to Narayana was thus observed for many years.

As years rolled on his health broke down due to the severe austerities and lack of nutritious food. In 1936, when swami first showed signs of being a T.B patient; the authorities asked him to proceed on leave from Trichur and recovered. He spent one year in the Study circle for monks at Mysore and took charge of Bangalore Ashrama in 1938 from Sw. Siddheswaranada who left for France. The Swami's own scholarly nature and the consideration he always showed to students and educated young men made him loved and revered by large numbers.

His spiritual eminence, scholarship, scriptural learning, independent mental attitude, humanism, love for mankind always comes to the forefront whenever one thinks of him. His ideal life can be a living example for the present day youth. Devotees had seen the Swamiji in Bangalore spending long hours in studies and meditation, the night 2/3 a.m. was a normal time for him.

His care and attention, respect and courtesy, tenderness and understanding where good souls, simple and sincere were concerned, be they very senior monks, or no vices, devotee or servants. His concern was not with VIP's, however important in public eye, be they monastic or lay, but elderly, ailing and needy monks were

his special objects of reverent care and service, to which he made all others who came to him to apply themselves. He preferred to employ humble '*untouchables*' to work as gardeners or servants in the ashrama.

He arranged Coaching/Tuition Centre every year, at the Bangalore Ashrama, for poor boys appearing for S.S.L.C Board Examinations, personally looking to all the needs, during his time only.

Swamiji used to conduct Community Service Camps (present NSS) at Villages during the summer vacations with about 15-20 volunteers. Once it so happened that he sent a volunteer from the Ashrama, perhaps on cycle a distance of nearly 30-35 kms., to inform one of the camp-participants of his passing the B.Sc. Hons. Examinations in first class. Swamiji's happiness at this was more than the student himself and at his affections for the students.

Once Swamiji narrated the nature of Malayali people (Kerala) very peculiarly (of 1940's) as consisting of 1/3 are cooks, another 1/3 swamis and the remaining 1/3 are communists. Their influence is quite powerful even today.

Swami was a strict idealist committed to basic principles at any cost. The Ashrama had pecuniary difficulties but he never sought help from any one, yet managed the affairs from whatever came voluntarily. At such times, once a well-known industrialist sent a cheque for Rs. 1000/- a big amount then, and the Ashrama members were all happy.

But the Swami asked the cheque to be kept pending without cashing it, at the cost of grumbling of others. After 15 days the Donor sent a letter of recommendation for admitting a boy to the hostel against the rules. Then the Swami sent the check back to him. The real fact is the Industrialist Donor used to contribute Rs.300/- per month to the Ashrama at a time when the monastic members going out with a gunny bag to collect rice for the maintenance and the Swami himself would cook and wash kitchen and the bathroom. He insisted his unqualified cook's son studying in High School to be admitted in the Ashrama Hostel which was meant exclusively for poor boys persecuting College studies. The Donor stopped helping the Ashrama after this, but the Swami was in no way perturbed, sticking to his adherence to principles and not budging an inch, with the remark "I am a Sadhu and I will live on alms."

Another benefactor of the Ashrama had given a house temporarily to the Ashrama for accommodating the boys of the hostel with a condition that it has to be used only for use as Hostel boys. Swamiji did not accept the conditional Donation.

Swamiji loved Kannada. Though he did not know the language well, yet his love and respect for the language was deep and believed in the Truth that Education should be in mother-tongue only. Once at a ceremony in the Bangalore Sanskrit College, Tyagishananda was the President of the meeting. SRI (well-known Sri B.M. Srikantiah,

Professor of English and Kannada) the main speaker started his lecture in English with the notion that Swamiji would not understand Kannada, immediately the Swami got up and said "you have to speak in Kannada only and he would not permit that as the President of the meet. For the sake of the audience the talk should be in Kannada" and Sri followed it implicitly.

Swami Tyagishananda used to quote verses from the Scriptural Texts, profusely in all his discourses. Once, during the Dushara holidays he gave about 10 talks on the essence of Hindu Dharma Shastra and to pin-point the basic differences in Vedantic view and modern scientific view, he quoted a verse for the *Kathopanishad* and spared an entire discourse to explain the meaning of the mantra:-

"परां चिखानिव्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूतस्मात्पराञ्छपश्यतिनान्तरात्मन् ।  
कश्चिद्दीरप्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षत्आवत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥"

The essence is :- Brahman created the man's senses outgoing, hence he sees only the external world but a rare discriminating soul, desiring self-realization turns it inwards. You never realize Truth by searching outside with help of any sophisticated instruments like telescope, microscope etc. Hence you have to turn your mind inside and search deep within your own depth. Modern psychology, particularly Froyd's view of not controlling our desires but should be satisfied as any control of them would lead to mental diseases. Contradicting these views, the Swami advocated the control of senses as the only way for attaining Shreyas



and quote Sri *Bhagavata* verse: - "नजातुःकामःकामानामुपभोगेनशाम्यति।  
हविषाकृष्णवर्त्मैवभूयएवाभिवर्धते ॥"

Desires cannot be quenched by enjoying; rather they ignite more ferociously as when ghee is poured into the fire. Therefore to control desires, mind has to be restrained and by renunciation alone perfection in yoga is attained.

Another Verse, he used to quote to substantiate the Renunciation was: "त्यजेदेकंकुलस्यार्थेकुलंग्रामस्यार्थेत्यजेत् ।  
ग्रामंजनपदस्यार्थेआत्मार्थेपृथिवीत्यजेत् ॥".

This verse from Manu Dharmashastra: - Give up an individual for the good of a family, give up a family for the good of a village, a village for the good of the nation and for Realization of Self give up the entire world. He would give the example of Ramayana epic wherein the Emperor Sagara expelled his son the cruel Asamanjasa to the forest and crowned his son Aumshuman as the king.

Different from the above 3 verses is the one engraved in the Ashrama at Koylandi is:- "त्रेतायारामरूपाय द्वापरे कृष्णमूर्तये।  
कलौ पूर्णावतरायरामकृष्णायतेनमः ॥".

*"He who was Rama in Tretayuga, Krishna in Dwaparayuga and Purnavatara in Kaliyuga as Ramakrishna, Salutations to you!"* The composer of this verse was Swami Tyagishananda, was confirmed by the Swami who lived with him then, as it was in vogue at Trichur Ashrama from the days of Swami Tyagishananda.

A young student of his class, asked him one day," Swamiji what is the nature of *Maya*? He laughed and said, "If you learn that, you will become a *brahmajamani* immediately. It is *Maya* which stands in the way between you and true knowledge. Therefore *Maya* is as difficult to know as Brahman itself".

His Sunday classes on the Bhagavad Gita created a permanent impact, which used to attract more than 100 at that time itself. His voice sonorously reciting, giving the meaning for every word of the Shloka and explain completely with reference from Veda, Upanishad, purana and Itihasa. Starting his class at 08.00 a.m., sitting with eyes closed, without any notes, he would get himself absorbed, was not aware of the passing of time. He would open his eyes after 2-3 hours and seek apologies for detaining the audience so long.

His talks, lectures etc. would make volumes, nay a library. The notes few have taken run into hundreds of pages. On topics like Ahimsa, he would talk for months and on Gita could not be completed. On the Maha Sivarathri day, his lecture started at 8 in the morning and went up a full 5 hours or more (a portion of it and other subjects are available in manuscripts). His talks on *Daivi Sampath* and *Satyam* (Truth) went on week after week with no end in sight, so exhaustive that anything left to be added (brief notes are available in manuscript form). He would take his week-end classes late in the evening, for the benefit of

sincere seekers and went on for long hours. Once swamiji was at the subject, time was no hindrance as the subject matter, invariably all absorbing both for the teacher as well as the students for his knowledge of the subject and depth were so vast and incredible. A glimpse of the manuscripts of his class talks available now reveals abundantly this truth (given at the end). Swamiji taking classes on the Bhagavad Gita, every class would be for more than an hour and while dealing with the 16th Chapter the topic of *Ahimsa* went on for months and the exposition of *Satya* next took over a year and a half. He considered any topic from every possible angle and full of quotations from various scriptures, authors, extensively from Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, the Bible, the Koran, Sufi and other mystics and many western philosophers besides Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, and a gifted exponent of the deep and universal message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The entire gamut of spiritual life and the different religious traditions were covered in his talks. It was not only an intellectual treat but a practical exposition of what one ought to do in seeking the higher truths. The breadth of outlook and vision of the Swamiji was equally amazing and one wondered at his memory as he never referred to any notes or paper.

Once when he was explaining some issues during his talk on *Satya*, he told "when I come to 18th chapter", several in the audience asked, "When is this to be, these two words *satya* and *ahimsa*, have taken two years

already and at this rate it will have to be in our next lives!"

Swamiji would talk for hours on spiritual topics without any notes or preparations, but once he acted very strangely, where he had gone to speak. When his turn came, he stood up and told "Please excuse, Sri Guru Maharaj is not allowing to think of any topic" and sat down. In fact, whenever he spoke, he would be inspired.

Swami Tyagishananda used to discuss with the youth who used to assemble at the veranda of the Ashrama prayer hall in evening time, on various current topics in vogue like affairs of the country, youths duty, state of country freedom struggle with great interest. Swami was deeply interested in the youth, developing their character and did the best possible service to the country. This was his main teachings to the young people who came to him.

Whenever youth sought suggestions to their problems, he would say "you are all science students and must be able to find solutions to every problem by trying to find the cause and a solution comes forth in your mind". But at the same time he would discuss and give out well-judged suggestions to solve it.

His concern for the poor and interested he showed in it was exhibited during the Feeding the Poor on Jayanti days and he used to join the volunteers to serve food to all of them. He used to sit in the last batch along with the poor

to take food. His simple dress, ever smiling illumined face comes to memory when you think of him any time.

When 3 youth, attracted by the light of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideals, approached Swami Tyagishananda for guidance; Swami smilingly replied "Look, you are elderly youth not yet caught by the worldly temptations, with a vague idea of the Ideal. The youthful enthusiasm attracts to an ideal life. But it is only momentary. Life of it is very hard. After some time the practical life draws you back to the world. Therefore plan and seek your own position well, for some more time. When they asked whether the incidents of youth Vivekananda gave any indication of future greatness, Swami smilingly replied "That is True though he lived like you all but grew up by tremendous self-effort". He was particular for entry of any to the Order, should complete his education, at least a graduate.

Thinking about him reminds one of his firm austerities, dedication to work as a dominant feature of his personality, his simplicity. How he used to go to the cowshed and talk with the workers about the fodder, cleanliness, medicines for the cows, he would become one with the workers there, in the same way he would concern him self with the problems of the devotees who approached him with their problems. He was really a *tyaga-murti*, true to his name and attracted in a natural way as one among them.

Some volunteers of the Ashrama would raise monthly collections from the merchants who would make the

volunteers come many times to collect the amount of Re.1 per month from them. During such time, once some pious soul donated 2 acres of cultivable land to the Ashrama and the Swami immediately stopped the monthly collections saying "we will be satisfied with what Sri Guru Maharaj graciously gives and manage our affairs within that only.

Once a devotee (who later joined the Order) requested him to collect some donations for the ensuing birthday of Sri Ramakrishna but the Swami forbade him and he kept quiet. After some days, one evening, a *jatka* came to the Ashrama with groceries and vegetables. Swamiji asked another close friend of the devotee to enquire the details from the cart-man. He was informed that the goods were sent by the owner of a grocery store to the Ashrama. However the Swamiji thought that the devotee might have arranged it. So he asked the friend to go to the store and find out the truth. The owner of the store told him that the goods were his donation in kind for the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna and that he never knew the devotee. The gift was a spontaneous-one. All were surprised. Swamiji had tremendous faith in Guru Maharaj and he knew that the Lord was the doer and all other were only instruments.

Even during Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, a Building to come up, when suggestion came to organize a concert by M.S.Subbalakshmi, he did not approve saying that money would come if Guru Maharaj willed; and so it did

As a Gandhian he was very careful in spending what public gave. Any unnecessary expenditure, he termed it is **adharma**. He used to come by walk from the station, while returning from outside place.

When he heard the news that Gandhiji was shot dead, the swami switched off all the front side electric supply to lighting and told all that "*light is gone*"; alluding to the death for Gandhiji's influence and impact on the country and masses had gone so deep in the heart of nation, all felt that the light was switched off.

He used to joke about the financial position of the Ashrama those days, comparing with the Fund collection capacity of another swami, "S has the capacity to get Girders from Bombay, where as we think twice before we buy a Tooth Brush."

With a smiling face he used to practice strictly the principles of Vedanta in his daily life. He would not allow devotees to do namaskars to him touching his feet, as that would enhance one's ego. Anyone who would observe his daily learnt the art of doing all his works by himself with least trouble to others. Noticing some taking food from their plates standing, he said "Sit on the floor and take your food, not necessary to eat while standing, to save the work of washing the floor, is not good from health point of view. He did not approve of avoidance of any work or make light of it in any way. He firmly believed

in inculcating the moral values in young minds, never missed going to National High to take weekly Gita Classes without fail, in spite of all works he had.

He helped some devoted persons of Mangalore to start a centre there and suggested bring public awareness about Dharma, encouraged start Homeopathic treatment, to prevent religious conversion going on. While returning from Mangalore, after the inaugural function there, he brought a Homeopathic Box and started at Bangalore also.

When the news of Mahasamadhi of Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the 6th President of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at Calcutta arrived, Swamiji remarked, "Now my turn".

When Swami Tyagishananda took charge of the Bangalore Ashram in 1938, after the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations at a time when it was undergoing a traumatic crisis, needing some holy-at heart, a calm and sturdy spirit, a serene sanyasi, to bring it back to health and to restore its '*dignity*', which he did it quietly in his own way. He came after a very important monk, a contemporary of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda's brother- monk.

He did what was needed to be done, not by flashy measures, loud publicity or subtle propaganda, or putting up imposing structures and attracting and organizing big crowds --- but by living a life which was in tune with Sri Ramakrishna's example of a lotus blooming quietly, when



bees would be attracted of themselves to suck the 'nectar' with no need of publicity or other enticements. He certainly did not attract 'flies' which are prone to sit on a flower or a sweet-meat or on dung or a festering sore-with equal zest.

To begin with he had one assistant named G. Veerappa and a cow donated by a donor and was named *Tyagi*. All works of cowshed, kitchen, cleaning the shrine, ashrama, gardening and its watering. One day Veerappa asked about the need of more people for the Ashrama work, Swamiji said, "Guru Maharaj will send people needed" and lo joined Brahmacharis--- Srinivas and Ramaiah within 2 months. Swami himself prepared the offerings of Guru Maharaj, do the daily Puja, cook food. Outwardly he appeared an intellectual, a Jnani, but he was a great Bhakta as well. Devotees have observed his deep devotion and his surrender to Guru Maharaj. Some days he would prepare the food offering and do puja at the shrine.

When asked how he joined the Ashrama, Swamiji narrated "I decided to lead a life of sanyasin, after reading the life of Swami Vivekananda studied deeply his Teachings, which left a deep spiritual imprint on my mind. By this time, Gandhiji's life's principles and teachings had influenced sufficiently. Understanding my mental make-up, my mother took a pledge from me that I would not become a sanyasi as long as she lived. After her passing away, I joined

Gandhiji's Ashram and participated in its entire creative works. In the meantime, attraction of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda *Sevadarsha* pulled me intensely away.

Added to this, an urgent letter from the Belur Math that those desirous of joining the monastic order should not exceed the age limit of 30, I joined the Order."

Swami had come to Madras Math to join with a loin cloth. Swami Yatishwarananda used to tell "Hay! I taught the Brahmachari to wear clothes."

The love and kindness he showered on monastics and others alike. Few devotees were the one privileged to attend the night class talks of monastics, for there were very few monastics. Though he appeared a serious sadhu externally, he had a *great sense of humour*. When remarked that had he been living with Sri Ramakrishna, on seeing him he would have realised God at wish, the Swami laughed and said, "The population of Calcutta was several lakhs at the time and only a score of them realised the greatness of him and fewer still realised him."

The Swami had the habit of perambulating from one end of the veranda to the other with his famous Badri stick (a long bamboo stick with a pointed metallic end with which he had been to Badrinath). He would be talking to people from the sublime to the ridiculous to which he would be brought down. On one such morning, once the pujari brahmachari came out of the shrine and shouted at him,

"I am doing puja and you have no business to talk and disturb me". The shocked swami gained his cool and said "He is quite right. We ought not to disturb the puja". A Swami of such stature and standing react in such a manner to a young impetuous brahmachari is amazing. The Vedanta he taught for years occurred in the premises of that veranda-perambulation, revealing his stature of a veritable moving library - a university.

It gave the appearance of a lion of Vedanta moving in its den (for the veranda had wooden grills) or like a gurukula of yore when a rishi taught his boys moving round him! The Swami used to take scriptural classes for monastics, twice a day, the latter at night after supper. He conducted the classes, walking up and down with a tall stick in hand as support while students sat below. He needed no book to hold, as most of the scriptures were in his 'head' and on his tongue. He was a great scholar, a man of knowledge, a 'jnani' but at heart he was a true devotee - a lover of God.

He always stressed on the need for a harmonious development of the head and the heart and the practice of selfless work. It was not enough to 'mouth' principles of Vedanta; there was need for sincere practice. Mere scholarship was no use; he said and often quoted 'शब्दजालंमहारण्यम् ।' to illustrate it. He was a great Sanskrit scholar and a deep thinker. He often reminded one of the Gita saying 'स्वल्पमप्यस्यधर्मस्य त्रायतेमहतोभयात्।' and 'अभ्यासेनतुकोतेववैराग्येणच गृह्यते ।'. Purity, Steadiness and

sincere effort were watch words for a sadhaka. He also wanted one to be '*thoughtful*' and carefully consider things. He recalled many times Sri Krishna's words to Arjuna, 'विमृशैतदशेषेणयथेच्छसितथाकुरु ।'- not carried away by things and keeping a crucial and watchful eye was important for spiritual progress. One learnt from him how one can have a harmonious blend of the true scientific temper and spiritual life. His knowledge of the traditions and scriptures of different religions was truly amazing, so was his catholicity and respect for those whose life showed a sincere practice of at Hostel, suddenly transferred to another work at office without any reason and much later the person learnt that he was in danger of losing the proper attitude to work. The right thing was to put one's whole soul upon the work, yet be unattached. The power of concentration and attachment in the sense of dedication should be practiced but there should be a sense of attachment as well. A perfect balance between attachment and detachment is needed to truly raise oneself spirituality. The danger of one getting trapped by so called selfless work, and the necessity of practice of *karmayoga* in the true Gita-spirit were thus brought out.

His brother monks held him in high respect as a living example of the twin ideals of *renunciation* and service (*tyaga and yoga*), a harmonious blend of Bhakti, Jnana and Vairagya.

Prof. V. Subramanya Iyer, a great scholar, well known highly respected Advaita philosopher who had been a teacher to the then Maharaja of Mysore (*Rajarishi*) and

a teacher at the first Mysore Study Circle, used to visit Swami Tyagishananda and spend for hours discussing with the swami. Once he was seen coming out of the discussion with shedding a few tears - an extraordinary sight. He told the reason for being so moved, "I told the swami that wished to be a renunciate like him in my next life, for the swami who dedicates his whole life to the realization of truth and not a mere scholar. I was touched by Swami's deep scholarship and his renunciation and dedication to God. Mere intellectual understanding is not enough."

One Senior Swami talking about Swami Tyagishananda said "He was a saint and we realised it only later - If he was not a saint who was?"

The starting of Vidyanthi Mandiram has a very interesting beginning. At a time of deep suffering of people due to steep rise in prices, during the war years, he thought of doing something for the education of these people's children. A young poor boy appeared one morning before the Swami and sought help. Finding this boy Bhim a Harijan, the swami immediately said "Yes, I have started my Students Home today with this boy" and put him in the Ashrama until the mandiram was started elsewhere. At this time he decided to take only one meal a day himself. He explained the reason for doing this as that it was not enough to do 'seva' by forgoing some expenses of the Ashrama for example. What then would be his personal contribution, he asked. He would forego something himself and partake in the seva. This continued for several years. A lesson

to learn the necessity for individual sacrifice in the higher cause and love of humanity that spiritual life inspires one.

He showed great concern for the students and those who came into contact with him or were in the mandiram would clearly perceive this. However, he was very particular about discipline, orderly conduct and adherence to the rules of the institution. In this he would not relax rules for the sake of so called rich and powerful in society. He was always fair and impartial. He was very particular that students practice the principle of the dignity of labour and not avoid work on the grounds that it was meant for a lower social class or was not in keeping with their status. He himself set an example of doing any work that was necessary.

Association with Gandhi : - Once Gandhi, touring for Harijan work, had halted in Bangalore and sent word to the Swami remembering his work, in Cochin and Travancore, for Harijans. A European lady who had asked for an interview with Gandhi entered and started talking without a break, and Gandhi got tired of her and rebuked saying "you have come to listen to me and I have to talk and not you. And look at the Swami - he is listening."

All sorts of students came to the Swamiji, some active politically, some highly intelligent, some ordinary and to each he had a kind word and supported them in their studies. When there was not yet a hostel started, the swami had a few students staying in the Ashrama itself, looking after them lovingly. One of them was Dr. H. Narasimhiah.

To the youths, who used to come to Ashrama seeking guidance from the Swami, some who were members of the University Training Camp (now N.C.C) got involved as members of the Central Student Council in the Quit India movement agitation prevailing then. The then Home Minister who was a great devotee of the Ashram warned the Swami to keep them out to avoid action of Government. Although he was not actively interested in politics, he was a champion of the Indian struggle for freedom. The Swami with profound sagaciousness instructed "There is no realisation of inner *Swarajya* without external independence. I am fully with you but Belur Math keeps off from politics. So keep away from the Ashrama. Nevertheless, I would be happy to hear about your activities and welfare. Keep me informed discreetly and in secrecy. If you want help to keep your money etc. make use of good Vasudeva Rao, Retd. Post Master. The youth openly met the swami only after calm prevailed and normalcy came back.

Many youths who attended his classes, joined the Ramakrishna Vedanta College started in Bangalore with Swami Srivasananda as the Principal, were gradually drawn to Swami Tyagishananda's talks on "*The Essence of Hindu Scriptures*" (a brief summary available in manuscript form) during Dasahra holidays of 1941. There they met a tall and well-built, long hair over his shoulders, a flowing beard with a look of an ancient rishi. Once every six months he shaved his hair and beard to look like an ordinary sanyasi. He wore simple Khadi gerua dress, his grave face breaking

into smiles when he met with young people, whom he liked. This was the appearance he presented. The audience about 50 consisting of, young and old many of them college students and professionals like doctors and lawyers.

The Swami spoke without notes, with eyes closed most of the time, would go on for one or two hours, quoting verbatim from various scriptures, verses flowing from his lips spontaneously. The lectures were a feast for the intellect and a wonderful introduction to a man who was a walking encyclopaedia of religion, spirituality and scriptures, particularly Hindu scriptures. The various topics he dealt are available in manuscript form, however brief it may be.

Once when only a few people came to the class, because of *Grahana*, he spoke on Eclipses, for an hour, so as not to send them away without a talk. The way he talked about a subject was to divide it into three aspects, the *adhibhautika*, the *adhyatmika* and the *adhidaivika* dealing with the physical, spiritual and characters in purana and concluded with the significance of the eclipse and how it may serve as an object of meditation (the common method of in Upanishads).

His favourite texts were the Gita, the Bhagavata and the Upanishads. His scholarly contribution on the Bhagavata for the classic work "*The Cultural Heritage of India*" and his *Narada Bhakti Sutras* commentary are well known. When he was writing the Narada Bhakti sutras commentary, he did not have the English Translation of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna to help him. He once told, "If I had the



English Gospel to refer to, the Sutra commentary would have been three times its present length."

Swamiji had an interesting approach to Acharya Shankara, though he had great admiration for Shankara and the Advaitic School which he followed ardently as a great student and knew all his works thoroughly well. He did not agree fully with Shankara commentary on some passages on Bhakti in the Gita wherein Jnana being put as the highest ideal and only path with others given a secondary place. The Bhagavad Gita gives an integrated view of all the yogas and with the same approach Swamiji, a great lover of the Gita, could disagree sometimes with Shankara. This was Swami Tyagishananda in his aspect as the scholar the great expounder of Hindu scriptures. Wherever he has dealt in detail exposition of the scriptures, he would bring back to the fundamental ideals of *tyaga* and *yoga* in order to practice both the positive and negative aspects of spiritual life.

Sri Ramakrishna was everything to him and he would think of Him constantly. He would sometimes say, "You see my mind is always going towards Guru Maharaj. Sometimes of course, it goes towards some of the ashrama affairs, but it always within this ashrama, with Sri Guru Maharaj; it never goes outside". Such was his total dedication to the life of the ashrama.

He was a strict disciplinarian too. He asked a devotee to wind the clock in the Ashrama on Sundays at a fixed

time. He was doing this duty regularly and one Sunday he came to wind the clock, the clock in his room at 9.00 a.m. On one Sunday, the devotee came in time but did not enter the room as the swami was meditating, so was waiting outside. When his meditation was over, the devotee entered his room to discharge his duties. Swami came to know the reason for the devotee coming late and told him "Well, if I am disturbed by these small things, there is no use of my sadhana all these years. You be punctual and attend your duties". One could understand how deep his concentration was.

When a devotee once saw the swami very perturbed and worried about the illness of a cow in the Ashrama, questioned "Swami what difference does it make between we the householders who worry about our children's illness and you swami's who worry about the cows". Swami's characteristic and pertinent answer, worth noting by all was, "Rao there is only one difference between the two. If the Head Quarters transfer me from here to anywhere else, I just leave the place with my towel" and he demonstrated his leaving the centre lapping his back not even to carry the dust from the place, as if it were cutting off in one stroke the "associations, admirers, the sycophants -- even the dust of the place. This remarkable quality befits his name.

The famous V. Subramanya Iyer who was taking Panchadasi classes in the Ashrama once remarked about the name of a student Ramachandra (who happened to be a Vaishnava) "How come you are named Ramachandra -

a non-Vaishnava name. When Iyer said, "you will realise the Truth". The swami with a loud laughter nodded his head or shook it as if not to agree.

Last days - Although endowed with a stalwart frame, (the swami was over five-eleven in height and proportionately muscular) austerities slowly broke down his health till it became necessary to get him admitted as an in-patient in a Bangalore Hospital for some time in 1949. In 1950 his illness turned serious and he became practically crippled

He went on a pilgrimage to Sringeri and Rameswaram accompanied by a devotee. After his return he yielded to the importunities of a few friends and agreed to dictate the manuscripts of a translation of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* on the same lines as his earlier work, *Narada Bhakti Sutra*. And during fell sick seriously and passed away in 1959. After few months, when it was progressing, one day while writing, the pen slipped from the hand suddenly and he could not hold it any longer. He became bed-ridden with a pain in the back. As long as he was healthy, he would never allow any one to do personal service to him

When he took ill, Dr. Dunkerley of K.G.F Hospital, a Bone Specialist examined the Swami in the Military Hospital and after examining the results of the investigations, became grave and pronounced "Your swami has tuberculosis of the spine and he has to be immobilized. As the life of the Swami is precious, I shall show you the best room

in the Hospital". He was admitted to the KGF Hospital. The whole of his big body was in a plaster cast. Two friends had made their house available for the attendant's stay. Priyoda Maharaj (Sw.Atmaprakashananda), who was a great friend of the swami, who worked with him in relief-work, came from Belur Math to look after him. A team of Brahmacharins consisting of Br. S, N, R and P worked round the clock by turns, while S.D.G. Rao and G. Narasimhaih practically stayed all the time.

In the hospital, devotees had seen him lying flat with a plaster cast frame on a cot, spoon-fed of liquid diet; his golden body emaciated with only his face was shining, like the Bheeshma Pitamaha on the bed of arrows in the battlefield of life. Even under such circumstances, he was seeing the message of Upanishads in front of him continuously written golden letters, as he expressed to an attendant serving him. Amidst such sufferings he told the attendant once "come, we will go away from here", reminded one of Swami Vivekananda words "Oh! Mind, come let us go back to our real abode" as if his last message.

Swami Tyagishananda, during the last days suffered greatly and passed away after about 50 days suffered much for few months from Spinal T.B and passed away at Bangarpet on 6th August 1951 and he was sixty years old. It was a great irony that such a man had to meet such a painful death. One wonders why such death comes to a sadhu who led a pure life. It shows that the law of nature does not care for anybody. The body has its own laws.

When the swami passed away Priyoda Maharaj lit the pyre uttering "Hari Bol! Hari Bol!" Tears rolled down the eyes and all returned from the cremation, which was done in KGF itself, with the words "All is over! All is over!" The leonine Swami's personality with his long beard and dishevelled hair remains in the mind's eye, of those who saw him once, even after for long.

His sterling qualities which made him great were, the embodiment of renunciation - *Tyagisha*, extreme kindness towards less fortunate members of the society, abundance of the element of *tyaga* and *yoga* (attachment to Supreme Spirit and giving up attachment to worldly enjoyments and finally merge in it), truthful and pure life attracted one and all. Many knew of his prodigious scholarship, memory and austere life and respected him for it but few were aware of the marvellous and devoted heart dwelling under a rather stern and sometimes even forbidding exterior; that heart could sense and recognize goodness, sincerity, simplicity and earnestness on the one hand and the need of less fortunate humans who were victims of varieties of miseries and blows of life on the other. Quietly he would proceed to provide each what one needed most, in the fullest measure possible for him. With all this impressive personality, he was so unassuming, easy accessibility termed as *soulabhya*, the characteristics of an extraordinary man. He would talk to you before you spoke to him. He did not put on any airs of greatness of scholarship, which he could wear so lightly because he was so much vaster than that scholarship or greatness - indeed really a great man.

It was this humble and devoted heart which shouldered any work or duty in Bangalore Ashrama as Head of the centre and used his position to help and serve only others and never to exercise authority and exploit. He involved himself readily in any such works, whether the work of daily worship in shrine or cooking for Ashrama inmates or to 10 college students residing in the Ashrama. There was practically no work that Swami Tyagishananda did not do. People have seen him cooking in the kitchen, tending cows and doing gardening. Some devotee thought that the swami's life was not that much different from that of a householder and remarked "you are also like a householder". Swamiji replied "Yes, but there is a difference. We are not attached to the Ashrama. If tomorrow I get a telegram from Belur Math that I am transferred to another Ashrama, I just pick up my towel and go away to the new place. Can a householder walk out on his family like that"? When saying this he made a peculiar gesture of wiping his hands on the dhoti he was wearing, at the left and right sides of his waist, a sign of finishing a job.

Among several teachings which one might say were specialities of Swami Tyagishananda, one was the relativeness of even such values as truth and non-violence. What is non-violence in one circumstance may become violence in another set of circumstances. He would speak, extensively about truth. Once citing the story of Kausika, from the Mahabhrata when he told a lie to protect the man who took refuge in him, Swamiji said, "To protect a man's life,

you can even tell a lie, and that becomes a truth" and agreed with one entrant to the Ashrama telling a lie to his parents that he was going to a friend's house while visiting the Ashrama, with the words " That is not a lie, if for the sake of spiritual progress you tell a lie, that lie becomes a truth". This assurance of the swami did not encourage the person to continue telling lies; but instead it encouraged him to become a little bolder and defy his parents.

He was very simple in his personal habits and all the inmates of the Ashrama too were austere, ate simple food, strict in their observance of the time for study with regular evening classes. He believed that a sadhu should be very strict in his personal life and pure. Whatever he believed he put it into practice. He was a living example of what a great sadhu should be he was a *tyagisha* in the real meaning of the word - a man who renounced everything for the sake of God. He stood for the idea of renunciation and under his influence many young men renounced the world which he encouraged. But before he accepted anyone as a Brahmachari in the Ashrama, he would put the young man to all sorts of tests. He would tell him to stay at the ashrama for a while, test himself and then see how things went. Unlike so many other sadhus who tell young men to join the ashrama, he never made propaganda like that. In fact, he did not give young men positive encouragement toward formal monastic life until he was sure they were made of solid stuff. Many of these young men became monks in the Ramakrishna Order.

He had vowed himself to read the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna one hundred and eight times, the normal number prescribed for doing japa, the repetition of Lord's name, the implication being, perhaps, both were same. We don't know whether he could do it before he passed away, but quite a number of times he had read it.

He was not always effusive in giving expression to his love and affection. On the contrary, he often put people off by his brusque manners and rough exterior.

Once, however, one had got close to him, one could literally smell the strong aroma of the sweetness that hovered around him. Even then, he showered his affection without making any fuss about it silently, unobserved by others. Two incidents indelibly etched in the memory of one monastic who had an intimate experience, very insignificant, but very touching:-

One was just on the day of my joining the order, or strictly speaking, the next morning. I had come away from home to the Ashrama the previous evening and spent the first night there. Before my joining Swamiji himself used to cook, and the simple dal and rice he had prepared that morning, part of which served as evening meals too, and which I was tasting for the first time, tasted so delicious as no other delicacy I have taken since then has done, though devoid of any masala-ingredients we add to take things tasty; chilli, pepper, coriander etc. May be just an individual psychological reaction or it really was delicious!



However, that is by the way. The next morning, to my great surprise and shock, I found Tyagishanandaji busy in the kitchen preparing a nice breakfast of the well-known South Indian sweet dish, Pongal, with a lot of ghee, cashewnut, kismis and what have you, added into it to make it as rich as possible. 'So, it is all true', the thought raced through my mind in a flood uncontrollably. 'What my Sanskrit teacher had told me, people in the Ashrama are having a nice time leading a comfortable life, eating and sleeping well, with nothing much to do! The Sanskrit teacher had come to the Ashrama one afternoon to collect some *samit* (the wooden sticks of the sacred *asvattha* tree for his daily fire-worship), and someone had had asked him to come later as the Swami-in-charge was having his noon-day rest, from which he had drawn his conclusion. The act of Swamiji only confirmed what the teacher had said, I thought. Those were days when we were equally inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's call for a simple living, side by side with Swami Vivekananda's exhortation to be strong, bold, and vigorous. I was upset, and made my way home, only to return in the evening, drawn by some irresistible force, and to find, to my shame that Swamiji had taken all that trouble to prepare that rich Pongal in the early morning just for my sake. That being my first day in the Ashrama, he wanted to put me at ease and make me feel as comfortable as possible.

Of course he was not all that sweet in his Trichur days, as one who had joined the order under his inspiration then

told once, when he was on a visit to Bangalore to see him. "Your Tyagishananda of Bangalore is not the same Tyagishananda of Trichur whom we had seen. He is now quite a changed person; very sweet and endearing, only honeyed words dripping from his mouth. Then he was so **harsh and severe on himself and others. I would have** endless quarrels with him about the poor quality of food provided in the Ashrama, of which he was the founder. "I must have good food to eat". I could say young and heavily built as I was, tall and hefty (his name itself was Vyomakeshananda, one whose tuft of hair reached the sky), and I needed it. "No", he would say, as firmly, "this is all you could get here. You can go elsewhere if you are not satisfied with the fare here". "No, I must stay with you, and still have better food", I would insist. Thus the arguments would go on---on this and many other issues --- he keeping to his position and I to mine. Thereafter he would be silent for days, not a word coming out of his mouth---the worst punishment he could inflict on anybody.

Swami Siddheswarananda told one who joined the Order under Swami Tyagishananda 'He is a great saint. Be with him for some years, and you will realize it in due course. Don't leave him.' Swami Madhavanandaji, the then General Secretary of the Mission, wrote of him in the obituary; 'A monk of sterling spiritual qualities'.

Often I have asked myself in life; what did I get by staying with him for five long years and more? - A bundle of class-notes dictated by him that are with us? Is that all?

True, they have been useful in streamlining in our thoughts and giving them a definite direction, the much needed spiritual orientation to them, or in taking up classes or giving lectures, I am weaving out beautiful talks from out of them, taking the credit to ourselves. But is that all". The ever recurring question, and 'No' the ever recurring answer. Then what? Difficult to explain, but it was there, and it is still there --- some subtle influence which has helped in facing boldly all sorts of trying situations and in shouldering manfully every responsibility that has come one's way during the course of our monastic life in the order, in solving our problems internal and external, in realizing our own potentialities and our limitations and striking a balance between the two, which alone can make for a happy, successful living in limiting ambitions to one's capacities thus avoiding frustrations and despondency, on the one hand, and in finding fulfilment and satisfaction in one's achievements. However little they might be in standing up with one's head high when everything is going against one, and not to lose one's head when they are going one's way to remain and unified in both circumstances.

Often when I was doing tribal work in the far-off Arunachal Pradesh (then NEFA), then I used to ask myself could Tyagishanandaji have worked in this place in the most unsuitable conditions prevailing there, particularly for one brought up in an aristocratic family, when you had to make so many compromises, many times with your own ideal, for the sake of the ultimate good you had in view? Possibly

not, in spite of the fact that he had tirelessly worked for the uplift of the Harijans in his own hometown, Trichur, carrying out literally Swami Vivekananda's dictum; 'Aristocracy, dig your own grave and may the ignorant be your God! May the poor be your god! Washing their feet and drinking that water as *tirtham*, instead from the temple or shrine. Then I would ask myself could you have worked there but for your stay with Tyagishanandaji for those five long years? "No" was definite reply that would arise in my heart. So in other spheres of life the cumulative effect of one's stay with him was palpably there at every step; his unseen hand guiding one in every walk of life his unconscious influence in our general approach to life and its problems; our ways of thinking, in our settled views on religion, philosophy, and spiritually all coloured by his personality.

Tyagishanandaji never went out of his way to offer his advice to any one, unless specifically sought nor ever assumed the role of a guru, teacher or ever tried to impose his ideas on others, and rarely spoke himself ---- all of which were equally abhorrent to him. His attitude in this respect was akin to Sri Ramakrishna's or Buddha's and Krishna's. Rama Krishna, as well all know could not hear the word 'guru' applied to him. Buddha exhorted his disciples to be light unto themselves. Be take yourself to no external refuge. Hold fast to Truth as a lamp. Hold fast to the truth as refuge. Sri Krishna had told Arjun, one should raise oneself by oneself ---- "*uddharedatmanatmanam*". When a monk, to be,

requested for his autograph and a message to be written on The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna he had purchased; Tyagishanandaji just wrote these words, '*uddhare datmanatmanam*'. Same advice he has given to another brahmachari who was with him for years, was feeling uncomfortable and out of sorts, a fish out of water, in another place where he had been transferred to a distant Lahore (now in Pakistan), and wrote to him, seeking some solace in his troubles, 'You must face yourself now'.

Yet, it was not that he fought shy of giving advice or avoided people altogether. There were occasions when he departed from the norm he had set himself, mixed with people freely and gave the needed advice or instruction when sought for by the serious-minded, sincere aspirant, often quoting his own example directly or indirectly, though he spurned the idle questioning of the spurious curiosity monger with the contempt it deserved. One such occasion was on that fateful evening of 14 April 1946, when, I had come to the Ashrama specifically to tell him of my intention to join the order and to seek his guidance in the matter. That was practically my first encounter with him, for, though I had been attending his class room talks and the evening arati more or less regularly on Sundays and Ekadashi days for more than a year, shy and tongue-tied as I was in those days I hardly had spoken to him. Even that evening I could not brace myself up to speak to him, and was about to go away. Fortunately, the lights went off just then, and I tarried till the candle lights were brought in, others had left by then. Finding me there standing alone, Tyagishanandaji spoke to us for the first time and inquired who I was,

what I was doing, and what I intended to do. I told him, and added; 'only I am wondering whether I should join here or go elsewhere, as there surely would be opposition from the family to the proposal and I wanted to avoid all unpleasantness, if possible.

He did not show any surprise. On the other hand spoke to me as if he had already known my intention. He merely said 'another boy also (who had been residing in the Ashrama and was earlier in the hostel attached to it) intends to join the Mission'. Then without giving a direct answer to my query, he spoke of what had happened in his own case, how he had fled away from the home in Trichur to Madras, where he had been studying earlier; how his people had followed him there to bring him back and how one of them, his grandfather or uncle, had cornered him with the questions 'what kind of sanyasi, or renunciation, is this that you are after? Swami Vivekanandawhose follower you profess to be, ever and anon said; 'माभैःमाभैः' *mama bhaiah, ma bhaiah* 'Be fearless, be fearless'. That was the constant refrain of all his lectures and teachings. And here you are afraid of us your own kith and kin, and running away from them! The coward that you are. That tickled him to the core of his heart. There was an element of truth in the argument, he saw, and returned, but not to his home. He stayed some distance away from his house, and lived on his own. Food would come from the house, but he would not touch it. There he stopped.

He had not specifically told me what I should do, but it was obvious what he would like me to do. I came away

to the Ashrama the next morning. In retrospect I find what a sound advice it was. It was not an advice or instruction for the time being, but for all time to come. Face the world bravely, come what may, knowing fully well that the Lord is behind you. How often it has come handy in every moment of crisis --- in dealing with external situations and internal problems and in overcoming all obstacles in one's path!

On another day, we the brahmacharins, two or three of us, who were then at the Bangalore Ashrama, were discussing about a senior monk of the order who had strayed from the path he had chosen. We just heard about it, though the incident had taken place years back, in a distant era almost. We had been shocked by this event. That such a thing could happen was beyond our wildest dreams, poor as our understanding then was in the early days of our monastic life, about the hazards of spiritual life, ramifications and vast dimension of its tentacles. We knew nothing of the lanes and by lanes of this razor-like path. If something similar should happen in our own case, that was our fear, the point of discussion. What we should do in such a case. Someone suggested; let us make a pact amongst ourselves --- whoever is the victim, him the others should put an end to, so that he sins no more. Childish the suggestion was, it appeared to all as the most acceptable. Just then Tyagishanandaji happened to pass that way. Perhaps he had heard our discussion. Still, he asked what we were talking about. We told him. He was horror-stricken: "Never, never think of doing any such things. Never entertain such a thought even in fun." He admonished us and then gave this advice, "who are you to take another's



life whatever be the nature of the crime? Even yours you have no right to take, Sri Ramakrishna called it a heinous crime. If a monk has sinned, it is already done and you can only sympathize with him and pray for him in his sad predicament. If he is at the point of doing so, you can try your best to bring him round. If he falls, again you can only sympathize and have pity on him and pray for him. After all, success in this life is possible only by Lord's Grace, not by your own efforts, important as they are". An important lesson learnt. We had heard about it, read it in books but when it comes out of the mouth of a great soul like Tyagishanandaji, what we had read or heard about rang true and real. How correct he was, I myself have experienced in later life at every step, his Grace, the all important factor in spiritual life.

Another time, he suddenly told us one day: 'Just see, how funny, Yesterday a stray thought crossed my mind, just a simple tray thought. How nice it would have been if I had a shawl to cover myself with. Unbelievable as it is, today did bring a shawl. I was frightened. This was an innocent harmless desire, what if some bad thought had come to my mind, an evil? And it was fulfilled immediately? Then and there I prayed: 'No, no O Lord fulfil my desires if only they are good, if only they are helpful for my spiritual development and progress, otherwise not. Another life-truth learnt that day, how to pray and what to pray for.

Often Tyagishanandaji would come and stand there watching us wash the cows and clean the cowshed and would just say '*Satyakama*' referring to the Satyakama



Jabala, of the Chhandogya Upanishad who had come to the Guru seeking the knowledge of Brahman and whom the guru has entrusted with the task of tending hundred cows, with the admonition that he should make them tenfold, which ultimately paved the way for his (Satyakama Jabala's) realization of the highest Truth. The parallel between us and Satyakama Jabala that Tyagishanandaji would draw every time he came to the cowshed, would throw us into a sort of ecstasy, elated as we were with the comparison, however undeserved, and with what we were doing.

A great characteristic of his, the greatest one could say, was he never spoke ill of anybody, but pointed our attention only to the virtues of everybody. There were many who had behaved badly with him in the past, and we never knew anything about it until years later they themselves told us when we happened to meet them accidentally. Tyagishanandaji had given such a high opinion of them, praising their talents and other qualities, which they had, true but wanting in many other respects, as we found to our disappointment subsequently on meeting personally, with the grand image we had built up about them dashed to the ground in a minute. But *Tyagishanandaji's attitude was; a person's virtues are the common property of all, but his drawbacks are his own.*

137) A few Sanskrit verses of which Swami Tyagishanandaji was very fond and which he often quote in his lectures or talks, verses of great moral and spiritual import:

1. अनुभ्यश्च महद्भ्यश्च शास्त्रेभ्यः कुषलो नरः । सर्वथा सारमादयत्पुष्पेभ्यः इव षट्पदः ॥”

"A wise person should gather knowledge and wisdom from every source big or small, should extract the essence of every scripture, without minding whether they are one's own or others, and assimilate them into one's being, even so the good qualities and virtues of other persons, just like the honey-bee extracting honey from every flower, without caring whether they are small or big, whether they are beautiful or ugly.

2. Another his favourite, describing the goal of spirituality in glowing picturesque language:-

ब्राह्मणस्य च देहोऽयं क्षुद्रकामायानेष्यते । कृच्छ्रया तपसे चेह प्रेत्य नन्त सुखाय च ॥

"This body of the Brahmana, the aspirant after spiritual perfection (Brahman-hood or Brahmanatva), God-realization or self-realization, in other words, is not meant for the enjoyment of trivial sense pleasures but for severe self-discipline and austerity down here, so that he may have unalloyed bliss in the higher spiritual realm".

3. Describing the student coming out of the teacher's house after completing his education:-

एवं बृहद्ब्रताधारो ब्राह्मणोऽग्निरिव ज्वलान् ।  
मद्भक्तस्तीव्रतपसा दग्धा-कर्माशयोऽमलः ॥

"Devoting to me (that is, the spiritual ideal), and shining with the splendour of a blazing fire, what with the great vow of celibacy which he has observed for long, and rid of all impurity by his life of self-control and self-discipline".

Could the modern young man coming out of the universities and colleges today, often frustrated, worried, and looking haggard, with an uncertain future staring at his face, cynical, rudderless and goalless, except sense pleasure at the lowest level, take a leaf from the above and make his life blessed and fruitful?

4. The following sounds a note of warning to all real spiritual aspirants, emphasizing the need of constant vigilance and wakefulness in spiritual life.

मातृस्वसूदुहित-वानविविक्तः आनोभवेत् ।  
बलवान्इन्द्रियग्रामो विद्वंसमपि कर्षति ॥

"One should not be alone even with one's own mother or sister or daughter, (what to speak of others of opposite sex), for the pull of the senses are so strong, even for the wisest and would drag them down (if inadvertent)."

5. The next is a salutary advice to the spiritual aspirant, on the one hand, and an unfailing recipe for good health, on the other, which, besides, if strictly followed by everyone, would automatically usher in a real socialistic welfare state, instead of all the frothy talk that is going on in its name:

तवात्भूयेतजठरंयावत्सत्त्वंहिदेहिनं । अधिकंयोऽभिमन्येतसस्तेनोदण्डमर्हति ॥

"One should restrict one's appetites and possessions to one's barest needs and capacity, to what is healthy for one (literally, one should eat as much as fills the stomach), he who goes on for more is, indeed a thief, and deserves the severest punishment."

6. And last, a prayer with which on his lips Tyagishanandaji got up from the bed every morning, as he said often, and which provided his daily sustenance:

योऽहंमास्तियत्किंचित्इहलोकैपरत्रच । तत्सर्वंभवतोनाथचरणेषुसमर्पितम् ॥  
पदेपदेयथाभक्तिःपादयोस्तवजायते । तथाकुरुस्वदेवेषनाथस्त्वंनोयतः प्रभो ॥

"Whatever is 'me and mine' in this or other world, O Lord, all that I offer at Thy holy feet. Vouchsafe unto me unalloyed and unwavering devotion at Thy Feet at every step and in every walk of life; Thou who art the overlord of everything---of me, of gods, and the universe.

7. Another shloka dear to him was from the Viveka Chudamani as follows:-

शान्तामहांतोनिवसन्तिसन्तःवसन्तवत्लोकहितंचरन्तः ।  
तीर्णाःस्वयंभीमभवार्षवान्जनान्अहेतुनाअन्यदपितारयन्तः ॥

His physical personality, as described by one who was very close to him was "Tall, copper-golden colour, strong built body with long hair flowing white hair hanging down his face (beard) and head was very attractive Tagore-like.

He taught the values of monastic life more through his life of silence than what all books can teach.

He used to conduct regular scriptural classes for monastics, while walking up and down the veranda with the Brahmacharins would note down. These run to thousands of pages which have come down to be edited and published. The Ishavasyopanaishad he taught is the smallest text with 16 mantras only which after 10 months had advanced to

2nd Verse and the notes covering 300 pages. When a brother enquired about, at this speed when the text will be completed, the Swamiji replied "If your view is that I should finish it early and I do so, then you can tell others that you have studied all the Upanishads. I am not interested in such things but that you all should have a long, general, deep thoughts foundation is my importance, so that in future based on these line of thoughts you all can study scriptures by yourself".

Apart from the published works of Swami Tyagishananda, the materials of Class Talks in manuscript form available till date, which needs to be Edited for making it ready for seeing the light (print) of the day are:- *Ahimsa, Avatara, Astheyam, Brahmacharya, Causality, Danam, Dipawali, Dream Theory in Indian Thought, Dushera or Durga Puja, Grahanam, Ganesha, Puja (worship), Navaratri, Nruyajna (Hospitality), Papam, Paurusha or divine will, Religious Symbolism, Puja (Worship), Satyam, Scriptures, Shraddha, Shiva, Sri Krishna, Tapas, Upakarma and Sandhyavandanam, Sri Ramakrishna in Sanskrit Literature, Woman status in ancient India, Varaha and other Avataras, besides Ishavasyopanishad or The True Import of Dharma* just published in 2013 and *The Bhagavad Gita (Insights and significance in March 2019 available now)*.



# SWAMI TYAGISHANANDA

A Life of Dedication

Swami Tyagishananda, an eminent monk of the Ramakrishna Sangha, described as a "Monk of sterling Spiritual Qualities", was the President of the Ramakrishna Math, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore during 1938-51. He was a guide and mentor to innumerable souls in their spiritual life.

He looked one wonders, Bhishma-like of the Mahabharata fame. Bhishma the 'Terrible', Tyagishananda was in his learning, in his scholarship, in his renunciation (tyagisha- the 'King among Renunciates') the apt sannyasa name he bore and justified fully in his monastic life.

● Swami Sukhatmananda

Rs. 50/-

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