



March 2025

PREMA ANANDA VAHINI



Prema Ananda Vahini

March 2025

CONTENTS

1. Satsang with Swamiji – *How can we be sure that when we are far away from you, you will receive our thoughts and messages whenever we think of you?*
5. News from the Sri Premananda Centres Around the World
11. Swamiji Answers Your Questions
14. Satsang: *Understanding great souls*
16. News from the Premananda Youth

<p><i>“God is the one who creates everything, who makes everything happen. God does everything through me, I am only an instrument in his hands.” Swamiji</i></p>



Satsang with Swamiji

(Swamiji gave this satsang on 23rd and 24th November, 1989)

How can we be sure that when we are far away from you, you will receive our thoughts and messages whenever we think of you?



This question arises because you have a fear that I may not be aware of you or close to you when you are not in my presence and when there is a great distance between us. Isn't that right?

Divine power and human power are two very different things.

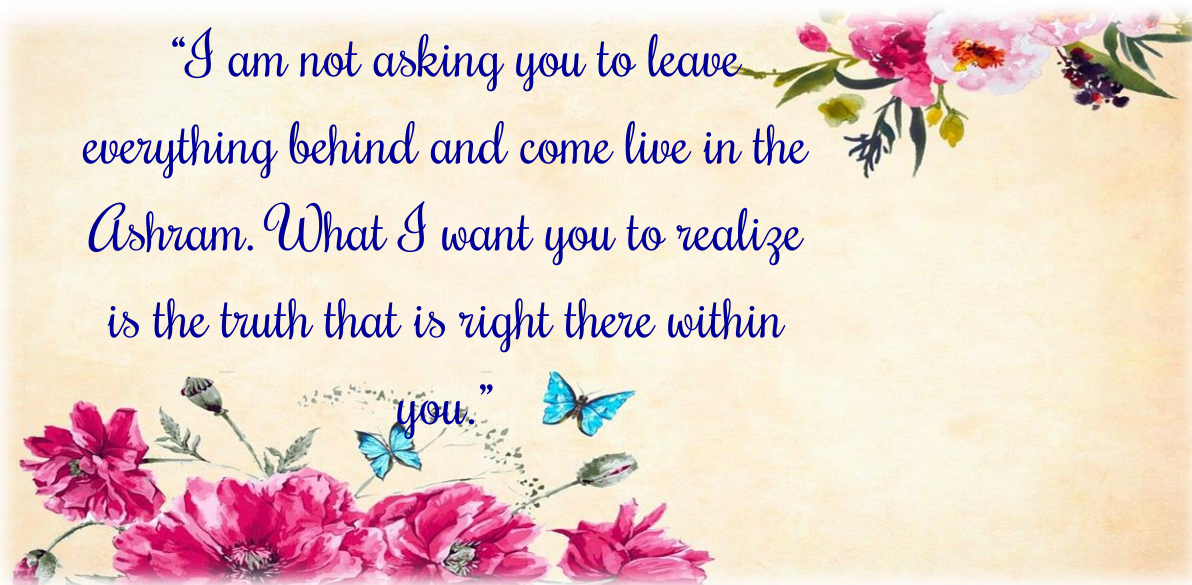
Divine power can transcend any barriers of time and space, no matter how far away someone may be.

You should also understand that sometimes you think of me because it is my own wish that you should think of me. This is because when I think of you, then immediately, without your knowledge, my power goes to you. Once that power is in you – when I will it to come to you – then suddenly you will think of me.

It is natural for you to *sometimes* think of me, but it is natural for me to think of you *often*. If you take one step towards me, I will take several steps towards you.



At the same time, if you were to leave me, to take a step back away from me, I would remain standing where I am and continue thinking of you. I would not step back; I would remain standing and wonder why this human being's ignorance keeps them from understanding what they should be able to understand.



Actually, there are many things you do not understand. You may be thinking of me in some way, but, at the same time, I may also be there in your words, thoughts and deeds. You may or may not follow whatever principles I prescribe. However, when you do follow those principles then you will be getting nearer to God, but, if you do not, then you will only be getting nearer to this body of mine.

This body is impermanent, as is your body. You can expect whatever you wish from this body – you can ask me questions, smile at me, talk to me, or you may solve your problems through this body of mine. But how can I make you realize Divinity? The way to make you realize God is to help you realize the truth that is within you.

I am not saying you should abandon your duties in life, I have nothing against you carrying out your professional duties. I am not suggesting that spouses should not look after one another or that you should stop with whatever service you are giving. I am not asking you to leave everything behind and come live in the Ashram. What I want you to realize is the truth that is right there within you. For that, it is good for you to have the thought that I am always with you.

But, before that, you should develop a certain amount of trust and belief. There may be certain things I say, or something in my attitude or in my way of life that you do not understand, but your mind should be open enough to feel that, although you do not understand something, it will nevertheless have a meaning. The reason you do not understand certain things immediately is because we are in two different dimensions; your mental capacity and mine are in two different dimensions.



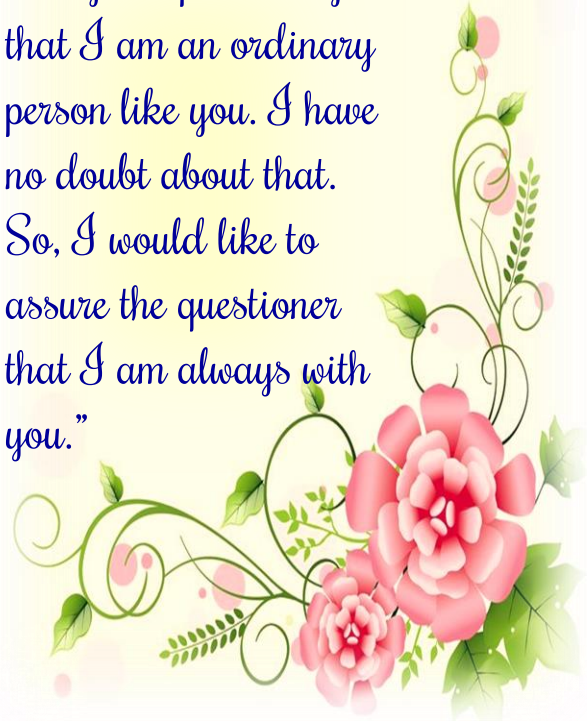
The difference is that you are mostly self-centered, only thinking about things in relation to yourself. You live your life in this way, but I do not have this self-centered attitude to life, not even a little – that is the difference. I do not think anything is mine, I know everything is the play and will of God. God is the one who creates everything, who makes everything happen. God does everything through me, I am only an instrument in his hands. In your dimension you live a life full of attachments, where everything you think and do is self-centered, and therefore egoism plays the most important part in your life. I live in another way, without this dimensional restriction. I come to see you, yet you may not even realize I am there. This is because of your attachments and mundane existence, because of the kind of life you lead. Those who live a family life say ‘mine’ – my house, my mother and father, my relatives, my sisters and brothers, my child, etc. They are living a householder’s life, but a person who knows that everything belongs only to God has a different set of rules and behaviour.

So, when I look at you all from here, I can see that because of your desires, attachments and this attitude of ‘mine’, there are obstacles to your obtaining God’s grace. You will certainly think of God for a little while in your life, but at the same time you are also completely attached to the kind of life you are living. You have one foot on one side and one foot on the other – one on the spiritual path and one in the mundane life. And you are unsure of which side to be on – the mundane life or the spiritual life.

After coming here to see me you decide to step further on the spiritual path and less on the mundane path, but once you fall back into the routine of daily life, whatever faith you have in regard to the spiritual path gradually fades as you involve yourself more in your worldly life. And in that worldly life you do not know how to control your desires, you do not know what true love is, you do not know what is true or not. Every part of your body is busy going out into the perceptive world and relating with it. Each part of your body reaches out to have contact with this mundane world.

Which type of relationship do you have with the world? This is the problem you face. The eyes are drawn to the physical world, the perceptive world, and if you were to ask the eyes what is it that is so attractive to them, what would they answer? Sometimes they may say that this

“In your mind you will always keep thinking that I am an ordinary person like you. I have no doubt about that. So, I would like to assure the questioner that I am always with you.”





material world is so very beautiful that they want to enjoy all the possible views. They may ask why it should not be alright for them to take pleasure in looking at all the handsome men and lovely women. Or they may say they want to enjoy the benefits of all the luxuries of life available in your country.

Beautiful flowers, tasty fruits – aren't the eyes drawn to all these things? This is why they are unable to think of God, to enjoy God, to receive his blessings and all the benefits of that. Because the eyes are so very much attracted to the things of the material world, they cannot see the Divine, which is something that you cannot see with your eyes or hear with your ears. And what do your ears say? They say that what they are hearing is so beautiful and interesting, yet they are unable to actually follow what is being said and what they are hearing.



"There may be certain things I say, or something in my attitude or in my way of life that you do not understand, but your mind should be open enough to feel that, although you do not understand something, it will nevertheless have a meaning."

When someone speaks in anger or something undesirable is said, then the ears will not want to hear it. On the other hand, the ears are perfectly willing to hear someone talk nicely and say highly favourable things about one.

The eyes want to see beautiful sights, the ear wants to hear sounds it thinks are pleasant. The nose too wants to only smell lovely fragrances. Unfortunately, the mouth doesn't always only want to talk about pleasant subjects, it also has the ability to talk badly of others. If we could manage to

get the mouth to talk only about good and pleasant things and not say anything bad about anyone else, then we would be transforming ourselves for the better and developing maturity.

Our eyes, ears, nose and mouth listen to stories and then the mind takes a decision.

A good decision will steer your life in a good direction. Therefore, if you think of good, then you will realize that I am always with you. But if you are unable to think of good, then even if I am near you will not be aware of it. Even if I were to be sitting right next to you, you would not know it. In your mind you will always keep thinking that I am an ordinary person like you. I have no doubt about that.

So, I would like to assure the questioner that I am always with you.



News from the Sri Premananda Centres Around the World

*2024 - Year in review - Sri Premananda Centre,
Vlamertinge, Belgium*

New Year



With the arrival of the New Year, we looked forward to the Ganesha abhishekam, wherein we ask for his blessing, for his help in difficult situations and to grow in wisdom.



Everyone could hold the statue in their hands and pray to Sri Ganesha, whilst we all sang uplifting bhajans. We also read out the satsang Swamiji gave for Premananda Day in 2002.

Mahashivaratri

To celebrate Mahashivaratri we chose to perform a Lingam abhishekam on the evening of 'The Great Night of Shiva'. It was a truly inspiring spiritual experience.

The evening began with the singing of the special 'Om Namah Shivaya' mantra for Mahashivaratri during 10 minutes before the start of the abhishekam. This way of singing the mantra served to connect us with Swamiji and the unique energy of this spiritually significant time.



After a short informative talk on the significance of Mahashivaratri, we performed the Guru Ashtotra, in this way calling Swamiji to be with us on this night. And we did indeed feel him close to us! We then sung many beautiful bhajans that further opened our hearts for the Divine love.



Gurumurti and Trishuli performed the Lingam Abhishekam with sincere devotion and everyone received a Lingam blessing, as we meanwhile continued singing bhajans.

To end the programme we again sang the special 'Om Namah Shivaya' mantra for 20 minutes. Experiencing the benefits of singing this mantra so moved us that we found it difficult to stop!



Then it was time to distribute and share all the prasadam – vibhuti, kumkum, rice pudding, coconut and sweets. We all felt very thankful to Swamiji for giving us the grace to celebrate the presence of the Divine in our lives.

Ramanavami



On this day we performed a Krishna abhishekam. In honour of Rama's birthday, after the Guru Ashtotra we read out some stories about him.





We sang many beautiful bhajans while basking in the sweet energy of Krishna.



At the end of the abhishekam we chanted the Rama Mantra full of devotion from the bottom of our hearts, followed by a very nice Rama bhajan.

Buddha Poornima

We began the programme by sharing some information about Buddha, who had been celebrated worldwide on the previous Thursday.

One of the devotees brought two statues of Buddha, which we nicely decorated and placed on a bench near the altar together with some flowers. One of the bhajans we sung was especially in honour of Buddha.

During a short meditation we played the CD where Swamiji chants 'Om Namah Shivaya', following which Suresh and Chatrugan performed the Ganesha abhishekam.

We asked one devotee for whom it is always difficult to sit quietly for a longer time to be the 'puja girl', which she thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed.

At the end of the abhishekam we chanted the mantra 'Lokha Samasta...' for 10 minutes and read out a satsang. One couple who regularly attend our programmes are devotees of Buddha and told us afterwards how pleased they were with the programme and the recognition we gave to Buddha.



Guru Poornima

On Guru Purnima eve, we held a programme for a number of people who were not able to attend the national programme. We choose to perform a Lingam abhishkam in recognition of Swami's manifestation of so many lingams over the years.

We sang bhajans and, of course, everyone received a lingam blessing.



We listened to one of Swamiji's satsangs where he urges us to "Think of me and be happy!" We shared the prasadam and chatted amicably with one another, after which everyone headed homewards feeling joyful and inspired.

Krishna Jayanti



When we once again gathered to celebrate Krishna's birthday this year, we felt there was again a powerful energy that filled the space. One new person came who was interested in learning about what exactly an abhishekam entails. She especially enjoyed singing the bhajans. As usual on this day, everyone could hold the statue of Sri Krishna and receive his special blessing in this way.

The following day we received a mail from someone who wanted to let us know the happiness she experienced from the blessings and about a particular wish she had made that was fulfilled.



To end this celebration we read out a satsang Swamiji gave in 2007 in which he tells the story of Draupadi who begs Sri Krishna to give her sorrows so that she would always think of him, and in which Swamiji encourages us to try to live with the Divine in our daily lives.

Ganesha Chaturti

The whole day while preparing everything for the celebration of Lord Ganesha, we listened to Ganesha bhajans and mantras.

The satsang we chose to read out was one Swamiji gave in 1999 about the special qualities of Sri Ganesh, and so we thought it appropriate to read it at the beginning of the programme. The bhajans we sung and mantras we chanted resonated richly in the room as if we were a much larger group than we actually were! Everyone experienced a personal moment of contact with the deity when they could hold the statue in their hands. We ended the programme with a short meditation during which we could quietly imbibe Ganesha's powerful energy.



Navaratri

We are always very happy when it's the time of Navaratri, because the Divine Mother holds a special place in our lives. This year, the fact that a certain devotee returned to visit our Centre after several years of absence was especially pleasing. She was very happy to sing bhajans and sang the lead of several.



*The Divine
Mothers
Bhuvaneshwari
and
Karumariamman*



We began by giving some details about the 10-day Navaratri celebration and particularly about the Divine Mother as Durga, since this was the second day of Navaratri.

At the beginning of the abhishekam everyone was blessed by holding the statue in their hands and praying to the Divine Mother for personal needs and those of their families and friends. We all share the belief in the Divine Mother's grace that strengthens us to develop spiritually. The beautiful bhajans we sang generated a powerful energy, leading us closer to our inner selves and so connecting us more with the Divine Mother's qualities. Knowing that she is always there to protect us in every situation, that she guides us and purifies us, gives us peace of mind.

When the abhishekam was finished we read out a satsang, after which we shared prasadams, including a delicious cake Nadine had baked with lots of love!

Swamiji's 73rd Birthday Eve

A sizable group of people came to celebrate Swamiji's 73rd birthday, which made it a really festive programme. For some it was the first time they were attending one of our programmes since before the Covid epidemic. It was a real joy to celebrate Swamiji together with so many lovely people. As usual, we began with the Guru Ashtotra. Swamiji's picture on his chair had been nicely decorated with colourful flowers and a beautiful mala made by Nagulan. The bhajans we sang created wonderful vibrations and, while reciting the Shiva mantra, we were overjoyed and so grateful to be able to feel Swamiji's presence. We were once again made aware of how when people who carry Swamiji in their hearts come together in this way it strengthens our longing to connect with him ever more strongly.



Everyone received a lingam blessing and we read out a satsang in which Swamiji talks about respecting the Divine within all living beings.

We sang the mangala arati with great enthusiasm, followed by a cheerful "Happy Birthday to Swamiji!" and ended by sharing all the different prasadams. Besides the usual vibhuti, kumkum and rice pudding, there were several cakes and cookies.

Thank you Swamiji for all the grace and blessings you bestowed on us throughout this year!

Jai Prema Shanti!



Swamiji Answers Your Questions

Swamiji, could I, by simply imitating someone who is giving selfless service, also transform myself into a selfless person?



When one is on the spiritual path, or, in fact, on any path, a proper environment and way of living is very important.

If a selfless person works in a certain place and you too work in that same place, then being in that environment will have an effect on you, it will change you in some ways.

But, if the person giving selfless service is weak-willed and the other person's will is much stronger, then the stronger person may change the weaker person. Therefore, the surrounding can do either of these things.

A good environment will be conducive to good and a bad environment will be conducive to bad. For example, there will be a difference between the manner in which I teach spirituality and the way this disciple here would teach it.

Whoever comes to me to learn about spirituality, I definitely know that I will be teaching them the truth and transforming that person in order to get them to follow the spiritual path.

But with this disciple it would be different; if the person seems not to be interested, she may give up and just let them do whatever they want and let them go their own way. So, if someone like her is doing *seva* and someone like me comes along, it would change her. And if she were to give selfless service with me, it would not change me because I would be the strongest, the most confident.

The point I want to make is that self-confidence is very essential in spirituality. Without self-confidence you will be hindered in so many ways. So, ask yourself how much self-confidence you have to go on the spiritual path. You should increase your self-confidence. Don't be frightened of anything; bravely do what you set out to do. Suppose you are giving service and someone tries to change you – don't let them! And don't criticize those who are working with you, try instead to win them over to your side.



When one is able to sufficiently still one's thoughts, the awareness of the "I" seems to diminish. Is this just an illusion? And, if not, what finally happens if this awareness of the "I" continues to diminish?

It is natural for this to happen when a person dedicates him- or herself completely to the spiritual path or when they meditate. When this happens it is a good sign, and it is also true. And, if it happens, you should continue

on your path or with your meditation practice. It can be that you experience some fear, however, there is no need to be frightened.

There is a difference of opinion in Buddhism about whether or not there is an 'antara bhava', a period spent in between births. Some say that when a person dies they will get another life very soon, either in this world or in one of the seven 'lokas', while others say they will remain in the ether for some time, even hundreds of years. I would like to know, is there an antara bhava or not?

Yes, there is.

For everyone or only for some people?

For some people.

Swamiji, as a father of three, could you give me some advice about bringing up children? Should we be very strict with them or should we be lenient?

Both ways are correct; it depends on their maturity. Some parents dote on their children and some let them grow up more or less independently. I think that children who are unduly pampered will not grow up to become responsible mature adults. Their development will be hampered and they will not be able to successfully make their own

ways in life and face whatever difficulties they encounter. They will always depend on their parents. If the parents always make the decisions for them, they won't be able to decide anything for themselves. So I think it is good to let children grow up a bit more independently.





“If you would like to meditate and to be happy, then you should diminish the amount of looking, listening and talking that you do. Don’t fill your head with unwanted messages.”

- Swamiji



Satsang:

Understanding Great Souls



After the [Supreme Court] judgement pronounced on 5.4.2005, I received many letters from devotees expressing their grief, sorrow, devotion and also their strong confidence. I read the letters from Centre Coordinators who wrote that they will continue the spiritual activities as I instructed, but how they worry that I am suffering in prison and that my health condition is not good.

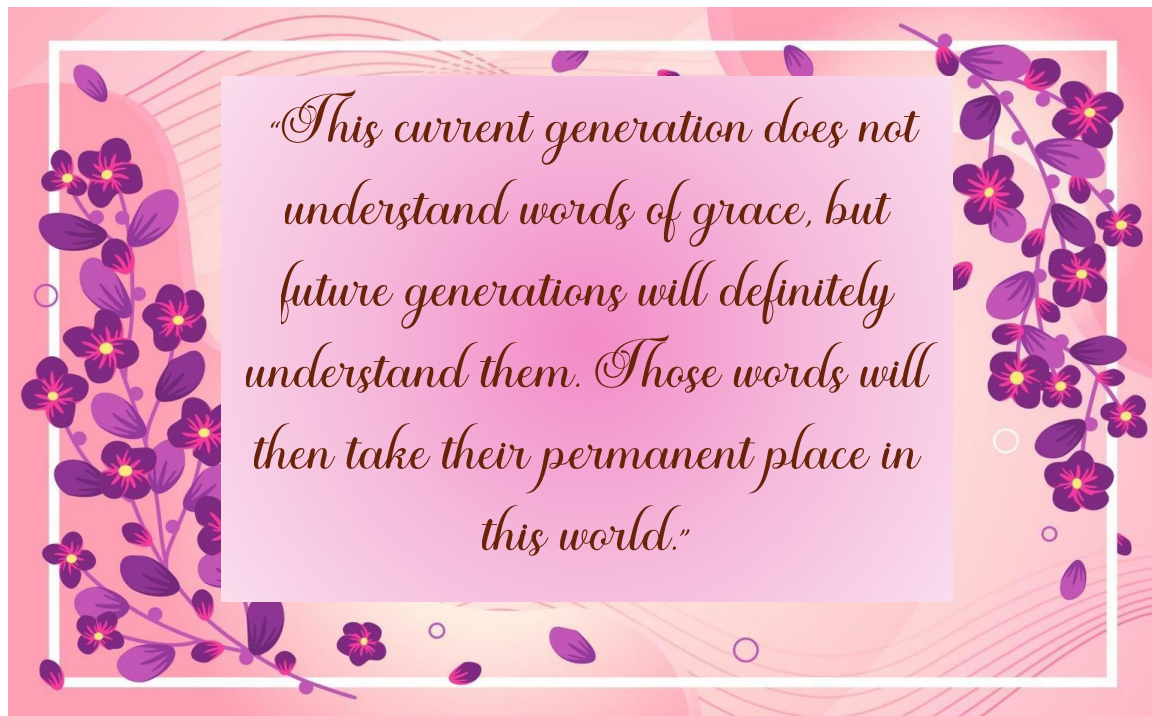
Dear divine souls, those who have faith in God, who is beyond all things, surrender themselves completely to him and live with divine thoughts.

Those known as saints, siddhas and God's messengers have always undergone many difficulties and sufferings. People did not appreciate them; they underestimated them and, not understanding them, they mocked and punished these divine beings. Some even died as a consequence. It was only much later on that people understood their teachings and spiritual messages from the Divine.

Today people live in a material world, with their own imaginings. They fail to understand that taking wrong decisions, getting involved in dishonest actions, untruthfulness and the egoistic



thought that 'what I think is correct', are great obstacles to their spiritual interest. Daily and weekly magazines print false news in order to increase their sales. Judges neglect to carefully study the laws before passing judgements. There are many judgements made in this way, with many expectations.



(...) Time will take Swami's teachings to the entire world and reveal their meaning. But, for now, we can only sympathize with those who as yet have no awareness of all this.

Lord Rama spent 14 years of exile in the jungle. This did not happen without reason; he had much to do in that region. The fact of Krishna being born in prison revealed many truths to the world. Lord Buddha too was affected by accepting wicked people as his disciples. Although they were aware of Lord Buddha's high state of wisdom, they still poisoned him. Nevertheless, his philosophies now have a permanent place in the world. Although Jesus was crucified, his meaningful teachings continue to live on.

Therefore, right from the beginning, good spiritual people have suffered and are still suffering today. This current generation does not understand words of grace, but future generations will definitely understand them. Those words will then take their permanent place in the world. We are born as human beings, but our souls are Paramatma, the universal divine energy. As long as we do not identify ourselves with this universal energy, we will talk and act in any way we please.



News from the ...



Thaipusam – Celebrating Lord Muruga

Thaipusam is celebrated to commemorate Lord Muruga's victory over the demon Surapadma, for which the Divine Mother gave Lord Muruga his divine spear ('vel') to fight evil. In the Ashram we celebrated the festival by carrying pots filled with milk, and symbolic burdens (called 'kavadi') from the main gate of the Ashram to Lord Muruga's shrine in the Sri Premeshwarar Temple. The milk was then offered to Lord Muruga in a abhishekam.



*Clockwise:
Procession with kavadi and milk pots
Abhishekam to Lord Muruga*



Every month we highlight a great
quality of
a Premananda Youth

This month:

*Striving towards a good goal
with honesty, faith and truth*

Youth is the time in which you organize your life. You can work, train for a profession, fall in love and do many more things. You can also choose a life of renunciation. Whatever you choose, youth is the time for it. However much you strive for your good goal, that much will you be successful. In whichever area you show your capacities, set an example of yourself to others with honesty, faith and truth.

