

Some Reminiscences
of
Shri Orriyababaji Maharaj

—*Swami Akhandananda Saraswatiiji Maharaj*—

Verily the Self-effulgent Brahma, who is the self of all beings and the locus of all existences is shining forth as this universe of names and forms. Notwithstanding It's appearance both as the subject and the object, It remains ever established as the non-dual undifferentiated Consciousness. The mere appearance of these natural, Supernatural or divine Phenomena in this Anirvachaniya universe (which cannot be categorised as true or false) does not in any way obstruct the experience of Brahma as the self-same non-dual consciousness. On the other hand, countless mysteries and strange diversities behind these phenomena speak volumes of Infinite Freedom and Fearlessness of substratum. Every experiencable object reflects the radiance of the fundamental unity and consciousness of its locus. And that Fundamental Consciousness must be identical with individual consciousness, otherwise it would totter down as an object of experience and so as insentient and mutable. Again if individual consciousness be different from that Fundamental Consciousness, this must end up as momentary and destructible, Thus the difference of the ultimate reality from individual consciousness is against experience. The gateway to the experience of

this undifferentiated consciousness is a spiritual giant who has reduced to ashes the root ignorance with its attending vices in the Fire of knowledge.

It goes without saying that our Maharajji (Sri Uriyababaji Maharaj, who was reverentially called Maharajji by his devotees) was such a spiritual giant, a free soul even while living. Even before I had the good fortune of seeing him in person, I had come to know of his greatness through fellow Satsangis and through his utterances as published in the Hindi Monthly "Kalyan" published from Gorakhpur (U. P.). I had therefore developed a great attraction towards him. However I could have his 'darshan' only when he himself came to Allahabad as if to bestow his grace on me. Those were the days when I was under a vow of silence. I did not speak except while discoursing on the Srimad Bhagwat. After I had 'darshan' of this moving Brahma during my discourse I had an occasion to ask him a question in the Evening-Satsang. I asked "Sir, who is it that transmigrator ?".

I had thought that he would answer according to the well-known pattern of the Vedantic Texts, namely that the astral body consisting of seventeen elements undergoes transmigration. I also imagined that he would prove transmigration like this : That man is suffering from pain and pleasure now proves their cause, namely pre-existence of actions, good and bad, prior to the formation of this body; and similarly since man is continuously doing good and bad actions and their fruits are yet to accrue, he must assume fresh bodies to reap those fruits, thus proving the postexistence of the soul, the doer. If we don't accept this position then, I imagined, he would say that our

logic would suffer from two errors of Akritabhyaam (getting the fruits of actions not done by us) and Kritvipranash (destruction of fruits of actions done by us) and God, the Creator, will be liable to charges of favouritism and callousness. Therefore we must accept transmigration. I was further planning to ask : "If the astral body suffers transmigration, let it. What have I to do with this ? I am the witness, I don't have any connection with the astral body. Therefore where does the need to destroy transmigration for arise ?"

But all this proved to be a futile mental exercise for me, for his answer was unique and never heard before. He said : "Contemplation is always directed at the negation of transmigration and never at its assertion or affirmation." After having said this much only, he began to laugh. I must admit I was wonderstruck at this pithy reply unassailable by reason. The fact was simple but touching deeply. True, what is the need to establish by thought and reason a thing which is itself a product of ignorance ? One should only try to negate it.

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Ganeshji :—People worship Lord Krishna in many forms, for example as the child Krishna, the adolescent Krishna, the Lover Krishna and so on. Does one and the same Lord Krishna appear before them in different forms or different Krishnas appear before them. I think one and the same Krishna appears.

I :—Why one and the same Krishna ? There ought to be different Krishnas according to the difference in the feelings of devotees.

Ganeshji :—How can it be ? For this would imply several Ishwaras (which is impossible since God is one).

I :—Not that. Ishwar (God) is definitely one. But the personal form of God depends upon the feeling of the devotee. Therefore God with that form is the God of that devotee. It is for this reason that the devotees distinguish between the Lord of Vrindaban and the Lord of Mathura or Dwarka.

We continued to debate like this for some time. Ganeshji thought that one and the same Krishna manifests himself in different forms and I held that Ishwarattwa (Lordism) is only a superimposition on the Ultimate Reality and so the personality of God is entirely dependent upon the particular devotee who superimposes that personality. Therefore the Krishna of each devotee is different. At last we approached

Sri Maharaji and put to him this problem. He said, "Arre, Krishna for each devotee is different. Not only this, each devotee sees a new Krishna every time he has a vision, because Drishti is Srishti (the world is not different from the mind). Every vision is a sport of mind and the Vision of Krishna is no exception. Therefore every time the devotee single-mindedly identifies with a particular form of God he has the vision of a newer personal God every time. God is one as well as many. To Himself, He is one and to his devotees many"

—Translated by 'Vishnu'