Voices of India
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ACCOLADES

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Gurudeva touched the hearts of leaders across the Hindu holy land

Jayendra Puri Swami,speaks of his guruHis Holiness Paramacharya Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Tiruchi Swamigal,highly respected founder and head of Sri Kailas Ashrama Mahasamsthana, Bangalore: "My guru, a realized jnani himself, has repeatedly said more than a hundred times that Sri Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is an avatar of Lord Karttikeya, the Commander in Chief of the divine army, because he was the leader of all virtues.

"The relation between Tiruchi Swamiji and Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is inexplicable. It was more than friendship. They were a one soul with one goal. Tiruchi Swamiji is a person who rarely gives discourses. But whenever he has spoken about Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, he has discoursed for not less than one-and-a-half hours. He regards him as a very great soul, not an ordinary mortal.

"My guru has always said the disciples of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami and the discipline followed in the Kauai ashram are an example to all the other ashrams in the world. The way it is maintained and the strict adherence to rules is an

ideal example. It was Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's goal to live by the Hindu scriptures. He was able to inculcate that way of living among his disciples.

"He sent copies of his works for review. Tiruchi Swami said of his books, 'No one in India has been able to do such tremendous work.' Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has been able to leave behind a well-groomed batch of disciples who will run the ashram according to the wishes and dreams of their Guru. Sivaya Subramuniyaswami was very frank in his expressions, and we have learned a great deal from him. He drew his strength to be forthright from his tapas.

"This birth of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is a very rare birth. To learn and practice a religion that did not belong to your land;being an outsider and contributing so much to Hindu religion is amazing. He has been able to teach Hindus how to be a Hindu."

H.D.H. Sri Pramukh Swami Maharaji,is the leader of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha in the lineage of Lord Swaminarayan and head of an order of more than 700 sannyasins, or renunciates: "We are all personally grieved to know this sad news. Many of us have shared deep spiritual relationships with Gurudeva. The first duty of all the disciples and sadhus of Gurudeva would be to follow every command of Gurudeva and keep on doing the great work he has been doing in letter and spirit. In Hinduism's tradition the body dies, but the spirit and consciousness of the person who has left the body will continue to guide. I will do special prayers personally for Gurudeva, who has done great

work. The same respect as was given to Gurudeva should be given to his chosen successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami. Gurudeva's spirit will continue to guide his successor. Whosoever comes to his seat would be respected for his qualities of virtue and spiritual worth and not talent and capabilities. Gurudeva's saintliness and spiritual values will continue to guide the whole sampradaya, or lineage. This has been the tradition of Hinduism."

Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirthaof the Sri Sharada Peetam, Sringeri: "Satguru Sivaya Subramuniya Swami was a unique religious leader of our times, very affectionately called 'Gurudeva' by his followers. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami started a lineage of Saivite followers. Fifty years of his dedicated work sparked a Hindu renaissance in the Western world. As publisher of Hinduism Today the role played by Satguru in promoting the cause of Hinduism and beliefs deeply rooted in our Sanatana Dharma is an important one. His saintliness and spiritual values will continue to guide his followers in all time to come. May God grant strength and willpower to all his devotees to uphold and work on the lines initiated by Gurudeva."

Dada Jashan P. Vaswani, spiritual head of Sadhu Vaswani Mission in Pune, India: "Beloved and Blessed One, such was God's Will! Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami was called away from temporal existence on November 12. The Voice that gave comfort to myriad devotees is stilled, but the Message remains. The Form through which God blessed thousands of devotees is gone, but the Light remains. May it be the privilege of Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami and you all and many others to spread this Light, far and wide. Humanity needs it. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami now dwells in the Starland of Silence. From there may he continue to pour his benedictions upon you allÃ and this humble servant hereÃ in rich abundance. Say not that Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is gone. He hath but been united to the "Golden Purusha" of whom the Upanishads speak to us in rapturous strainsÃthe Golden Spirit who, unseen by many, hath His seat in every heart. My humble, loving pranams to Satguru Bodhinatha and all inmates of the Ashram. I bow down to you all and seek your blessings. And may the Lord continue to bless you and your noble work ever-increasingly! In the One Service."

Sri-la-Balagangadaranatha Swamii,head of the Sri Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Mutt in Bangalore: "He preached ahimsa, nonhurtfulness, and changed the attitude of thousands of people in a foreign land and made them see the essence in Hinduism. Even at the

Parliament of World Religions, he was able to impress upon the members of all other nations that we all are children of the same God and peace should be our prayer. He was truly a messenger of peace. I was impressed by Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's forthrightness. He would speak directly about issues relating to dharma and religion. I was deeply touched by his concern for society, especially issues concerning family and children. In many ways he has been of great influence both on me as a person and to our institution. When he visited our educational institutions, he told me that education should not restrict itself to academics like a government program. He said we should teach our scriptures, our traditions and values as well. On his advice we have incorporated this, setting aside time for spiritual items. Sivaya Subramuniyaswami was pained to hear that female infanticide and abortions were being carried out in our hospitals, and he advised me that we should stop this practice. He was instrumental in spreading the message of Sanatana Dharma in many countries across the world. Sivaya Subramuniyaswami was a guiding force towards peace and spirituality in an otherwise materialistic, violence-prone American society. He could convert people to a good life."

Swami Chidananda Saraswati (Muniji),president and spiritual head of Parmath Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh: "Gurudeva was the embodiment of kindness and compassion. A guru is like Ganga, bringing inspiration,

liberation and purity to all whom he touches. Gurudeva was definitely this ideal. I could see that, like Mother Ganga, he gave and gave with no discrimination, no expectation, no hesitation and no vacation. His life was for all, bringing everyone in his midst to purity, upliftment and divinity. He not only taught people, but he also touched people! So many can teach, but only a few can truly touch the minds, hearts and souls of so many. His commitment to the traditional, pure aspects of Hinduism was truly unique and memorable."

Swami Paramananda Bharati,attached to Sringeri Peetam and famous for chanting "Aum" in the Kremlin at the Moscow Global Forum in 1988: "I was shocked to hear that Gurudeva is no more. It was an irretrievable loss to the great work of the international Hindu renaissance. Undoubtedly, no one could equal him in inspiring Hindus all over the world. He was a Siva bhaktar to the core, but without a trace of fanaticism. His vision of Hinduism was total, his approach rational and his love universal, pure, soothing and irresistible. I have never seen a person who is so integral. I join millions of people all over the world mourning his departure. I pray that his life shall inspire the Hindus all over the world to rededicate themselves for the great cause that he lived his life for and march ahead in your

resilient leadership."

Swami Pragyanand,head of the Pragya Mission International, New Delhi: "I can only say that no other saint has contributed as much to Saivism as has been done by Gurudeva. He was an authority on Saivism. I would like to say that he was an emperor amongst the present galaxy of saints. Try to look for one saint who has done so much original writing. I cannot find one. What Gurudeva has done while living in the West is something unique. Gurudeva did not write his books, Siva was writing through him. How else could he write such profound thoughts so well? Such great men come after ages. We can call him the Shankaracharya of the West. Hinduism Today has become a household name in many houses who cannot live without it. The full credit for this goes to Gurudeva."

Swami Gokulananda Ji Maharaj,head of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi: "After seeing Hinduism Today for the first time, a new world was opened to me. A swami in a far-off place was doing

such a spectacular work of propagating the message of Sanatana Hindu Dharma. I always read with great interest his brilliant editorials. And I wish greatest circulation to this most valuable religious journal of the modern age."

Sri T.S. Sambamurthy Sivachariar,a leading member of the South India Archaka Sangam, Chennai, foremost priest and defender of the Adisaiva lineage: "Mere words cannot explain my association with His Holiness Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. He had deep dedication to religion and total surrender to Lord Siva. His love to others was unbiased. His character was immaculate. His support to the Adisaiva priests was great. Gurudeva asked his staff to write a detailed article on the present situation of the Adisaiva priests and what could be done to keep alive this tradition. It was at the time when one of the oldest civilizations was diminishing due to social and political changes. Many organizations, mathas and even the government were discouraging us. Sri Gurudeva has left the mortal body, but he is still with us in subtle form to guide his satsang, or group, to complete the great work he had started for the peace and happiness of the world community. It was He who was dancing in His Holiness Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami to achieve such

great works that other men cannot even dream of."

Dr. Karan Singh,son of the last Maharaja of Kashmir and current member of India's upper house of Parliament: "Sri Sivaya Subramuniyaswami was surely one of the most remarkable and influential Hindu writers and thinkers of modern times. At our first meeting Swamiji took the Aum Namasivaya bracelet off his wrist and snapped it onto mine, where it remained until it almost wore out. From then onwards I had several occasions to meet with Swamiji, notably in world religions conferences at Moscow, Chicago, Oxford, Rio de Janeiro and finally, in the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations in August 2000. Swamiji spent his life propagating Saiva Siddhanta in its universal articulation around the world. He also founded Hinduism Today, which has emerged as the world's most widely circulated and influential international Hindu journal. His books on the Saivite texts are classics in their scope and profundity and represent a high watermark of Saiva scholarship in English. What was particularly impressive about him was the manner in which he organized his ashram so as to ensure that, even after he passed on, the great work that he had undertaken would continue with redoubled zeal. His lectures around the world to Hindu and interfaith audiences always made a deep impression. Although he has passed away, the contribution made by Sri Sivaya Subramuniyaswami to the contemporary

Hindu renaissance is so monumental that it will continue to inspire seekers around the world."

Rajiv Malik,New Delhi correspondent for Hinduism Today: "In 1994, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Delhi, I attended a gathering of top journalists, social workers, educationalists and lawyers organized in honor of a distinguished saint, philosopher, publisher and champion of Hinduism, Gurudeva. I was mesmerized by his persona. Tall, handsome, grand and majestic, Gurudeva in his gold-framed spectacles could be easily mistaken for a Hollywood star. I was simply awestruck. It was love at first sight with him. The next year, after my journalist guru, Sri B. M. Sinha, left his body, I took Sinha's place as Hinduism Today's Delhi correspondent.

"For me it was amazing to discover the impact of Gurudeva among the spiritual people and saints at the Kumbha Melas. Almost every saint I met found it amazing that such good work for Hindu dharma was being done by Gurudeva and his team. A large number were aware of Hinduism Today and its impact on the global Hindu world. Issues raised by Gurudeva, including wife beating and child abuse, were widely discussed by the holy men, and they appreciated

Gurudeva's initiative to abolish these practices from Hindu society. Many would accommodate my request for an interview when refusing others because they felt Gurudeva was doing a good work in the service of Hinduism.

The most memorable moments of my life were spent with Gurudeva in Rishikesh. Imagine Gurudeva, Paramacharya Palaniswami, Sannyasin Arumugaswami, myself and fellow Hinduism Today correspondents M.P. Mohanty and Hari Bansh Jha sitting face-to-face with Gurudeva at a table in the Chotiwala Restaurant, Rishikesh, having a cup of tea over a discussion on how to promote Hinduism Today in India. When I look back, it sounds like a dream or fairy tale, a scene out of ancient times.

One night three years ago, I received a call from Gurudeva himself. I was totally taken aback as this was something I had never dreamed of. He asked me how was I doing in life and what stories I was working on. He told me that he appreciated my work. I was extremely delighted. Just a few days back, I had explained the meaning of the guru mantra Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshvara to my twelve-year-old daughter Palak. I had told her that the guru was akin to God. So when I told her Gurudeva spoke to me over the phone, she said, with child-like innocence, 'Papa, you must

have felt great, God spoke to you tonight.'

"After having come in touch with Gurudeva, I am a totally transformed person. For the outer world, the biggest change came in my style of dressing. Five years ago, when I learned Gurudeva wished his correspondents to dress in a Hindu way, I changed from the standard urban middle class Western shirt and trousers, to elegant kurta-pajama or kurta-churidar. Overnight, just by dressing in the Hindu way, my personality changed. By sheer appearance I was taken by the society as someone who was a leader, intellectual, journalist, an important person. My inner being was also transformed. I became more composed and self-confident and a better Hindu."

Choodie Shivaram,from Bangalore, Hinduism Today correspondent: "Within a few months of my association with Hinduism Today, I received photographs of Gurudeva. The first thing that struck me was the benevolent loving charm on his serene face. He reminded me of a loving grandpa to whom a grandchild could run to for solace and comfort. It is Gurudeva who made me aware of many things about our religion, traditions and culture, which I was otherwise happily

ignorant of. Gurudeva taught me the importance of upholding the values of our culture and religion, of keeping our children in touch with our heritage. It was not until I read Dancing with Siva that I realized what Smarta means. I belong to the Smarta sect, and for all these years no one had told me what it meant. I was overjoyed when I read it, because it gave me the confidence to tell my children about their own heritage. Dancing with Siva has become a bible for us. It has taught us so much; we keep going back to it again and again. I was awestruck by Gurudeva's ability to comprehend so much about Hinduism something that many seers here in India have not been able to do. My association with Hinduism Today and the influence of Gurudeva benefitted my whole family. My son, age 13, is the first one to read Hinduism Today from cover to cover as soon as we get it."

Lakshmanan Nellaiappan,Chennai, an initiated devotee of Gurudeva: "The first meeting was like a lightning bolt struck me. The aura that emanated out of him was so powerful, and he was so kind and affectionate. Very tall, with ever-flowing silken white hair, his presence would mesmerize any soul on Earth, as if meeting Siva Himself. I have met in India and outside India many swamis and spiritual exponents and seekers. But in the

case of Gurudeva and his swamis, what they preach is practiced by them without any deviation. Whenever I find any problem in my life, I begin deeply thinking of Gurudeva and communicating with him as if he is in front of me. The solutions automatically come and the problem is smoothly resolved. His proper explanations for spiritual and ritual activities enhanced my spiritual life. His presence and thinking made my life smoother and more peaceful. Hinduism is a complex religion, and there are many paths in it. To make them easy to understand, even for a born Hindu, is very difficult. But Gurudeva made it very easily understandable with his unique method of approach. For him everybody was equal, irrespective of his or her status and position."

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Swami Gokulananda Ji Maharaj

It was He who was dancing in His Holiness Subramuniyaswami to achieve such great works that other men cannot even dream

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T.S. Sambamurthy Sivachariar

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Choodie Shivaram

Sri Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is an avatar of Lord Karttikeya Himself, the Commander-in-Chief of the divine army.

Sri Sri Sri Tiruchi Swamigal

Gurudeva's saintliness and spiritual values will continue to guide the

whole sampradaya, or lineage. This has been the tradition of Hinduism.

Sri Pramukh Swami Maharaji

May God grant strength and will power to all his devotees to uphold and

work on the line initiated by Gurudeva.

Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirtha

Say not that he is gone. He hath but been united to the

Golden Purusha of whom the Upanishads speak, the Golden Spirit in every heart.

Dada J.P. Vaswani

Gurudeva was a

guiding force towards peace and spirituality in an otherwise materialistic, violence-prone American society.

Sri

Balagangadharanath a Swami

He not only taught people, but he also touched people! So many can teach, but only a few can truly touch the

mind, heart and soul.

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emperor amongst the present galaxy of saints. Gurudeva did not write his books, Siva was writing through him.

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