

A GUIDE AND SEER

(Dr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYER)

Sri Sankaracharya's advent was at a time of spiritual and moral chaos. Feeling that there was a necessity to integrate the Indian thought, he not only traveled all over India discussing and persuading as he went, and not only wrote His commentaries on the **Upanishads**, the **Brahmasutra** and the **Gita**, but also deemed it necessary to establish centres of religious instruction and propaganda in several parts of India. He established Mutts in the Himalayas, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea and in the Karnatic country at Sringeri, which was associated with the name of Rishyasringa. It is to the glory of the Sringeri Pita that from the time of its foundation by Adi Sankaracharya it has had a continuous and uninterrupted series of occupants, who have all along maintained their spiritual purity and contributed to the continuous inspiration of Sringeri as an exemplar and model of devotion and self surrender. Sanctified by the perennial inspiration of Adi Sankaracharya, its history has been singalised by the memorable contributions of lofty personages like Sri Sureswaracharya, Sri Vidyaranya and others.

My father had the privilege of receiving Upadesha from Sri Narasimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri Sarada Pitha, and I can bear testimony to the profound influence exercised by the personality and the teachings of the revered Guru on my father in his later life.

It was a rare opportunity that I enjoyed to have been brought into close and reverential contact with Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Jagadguru who

was not only a profound scholar and an unrivalled exponent of the ideals of Sri Sankaracharya but was also a *Tapasvin* of the most rigorous type.

He was a wonderful example of an evolved soul who habitually lived in a rarified atmosphere of detachment and of absorption in the Infinite. At the same time, he possessed a deep knowledge of human nature and proved, as in my case, a counselor not only in religious matters but in the affairs of the World. Firmly imbedded, as his mind was, in the principles of Sanatana Dharma, yet he was able not only to make allowances but to comprehend alien systems of life and philosophy. His knowledge of Western modes of thought was surprisingly intimate and tolerant.

When I was Dewan of Travancore I extended my invitation to His Holiness to visit Kalady (during the birthday celebrations of Sri Sankaracharya) where certain improvements and renovations were made so as to maintain the great traditions and atmosphere of the past. His visit to Kalday not only created a remarkable enthusiasm amongst the people but resulted in a complete change of heart on the part of many doubters and skeptics. He lived and taught solely as a Guide and Seer.

The late Swamiji was frequently in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the meaning and significance of which were not always appreciated by those around him. Although constantly plunged in concentrated meditation, he was capable of true "Vatsalya" towards his *bhaktas*, and I was privileged to enjoy his elevating conversation and his

inspiring thoughts. I can bear witness to the fact that he could and did definitely predict the time and the manner of his demise.

His successor, the present Jagaduguru, has toured all over South India and has elevated and inspired his disciples and congregations by his lofty, though simply expressed, teaching. It is a matter of rejoicing that out of the offerings made to the Swamiji, a great temple has been building to

commemorate Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Maha Sannidanam. As one of those closely and hereditarily associated with the Sringeri Mutt, I offer my fervent homage to the Pitha and trust that the Mahakumbabishekam will result in the progressively rapid spiritual regeneration of our people and to enable India to face and to surmount crisis that is facing her.
