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## Hari Om

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*Front cover:* Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda, Swami Niranjanananda, Swami Satyasangananda, Guru Poornima

*Plates:* 1: USA, 1982; 2: Greece, 1982; 3: Rikhia, 1991; 4: Rikhia, 1998; 5: Badrinath, 2002; 6: Rikhia, 2003; 7: Rikhia, 2007; 8: Rikhia, 2008



## GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

### Guru's Blessings

People are not prepared to undergo any sadhana for purification and self-realization. They want a magic pill to push them into samadhi. The guru and shastras can show the path and remove doubts, but the direct intuitive experience must be achieved by one's own efforts. A hungry person has to eat for himself; a person who has severe itching has to scratch for himself.

No doubt, the guru's blessings can do everything, but one receives his blessings only by pleasing him. A guru can be pleased with his disciple only if the latter carries out his spiritual instructions implicitly. When the disciple carefully follows the instructions of the guru and acts on those instructions, he will deserve his blessings.

—Swami Sivananda

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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

# The Guru

*From the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati*



The aspirant who is under the guidance of a guru is safe from being led astray. *Satsang*, or association with the guru, is an armour and fortress to guard against temptations and unfavourable forces of the material world.

If you find peace in the presence of a sage and are inspired by his speeches, if he is able to clear your doubts, is selfless and loving, you can take him as your guru.

He who helps you on from where you are and in whose presence you feel spiritually elevated he is your guru.

The company of a guru is a question of supply and demand. If there is sincere demand the supply will come at once. This is the inexorable law of nature. The number of realized souls may be less in the kali yuga compared to the satya yuga, but they are always present to help the aspirants.

A sincere disciple who is living with his guru should not foolishly sit idle, waiting every day for verbal instruction from the guru. The day-to-day conduct of the guru is in itself a living ideal to him who is observant. The disciple must eagerly deserve and learn precious lessons of life from the personality and actions of the guru. The life of the guru is a living sermon. The guru teaches through personal example and the disciple learns through devout observation.



# How to Communicate with the Guru

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

In order to maintain contact with someone who is far away, one needs to control the frequencies of the mind. The disciple has to communicate with the guru by improving, changing, adjusting and regulating the frequencies of the mind. It is almost the same as when one is tuned into AIR and then wants to listen to BBC; the wavelength and frequency are changed. Therefore, one must have a greater amount of control over one's thought patterns, especially during the period of meditation. In day-to-day life when a person is faced with problems he loses control over the mind and faces emotions of sorrow, elation and happiness.

## **Tuning**

In meditation, or any other practice which leads to meditation, like japa, one must be able to handle the wavelengths of the mind right from the beginning. While thinking of *Om*, guru or Sri Krishna one suddenly finds that something else is happening in the mind. It is as if one is tuning into BBC and suddenly one hears other sounds. This indicates that the tuning is not thorough. The mind should be trained to think only one thought and if other thoughts



come in between, the aspirant must understand that another wavelength is interfering with the first one.

The mind must be tuned so that one is only thinking of *Om* and not what is rubbish and unnecessary. Through this process one trains, regulates and increases the frequencies.

Dolphins can communicate at a distance of ten to thirty miles. If a dolphin is in danger, the other dolphins receive the news due to the adjustment to certain frequencies on the subtle plane. Therefore, the two dolphins, though at a great distance from each other, are connected. During my years in Rishikesh I noticed that monkeys were able to know what was happening at any distance. Scientists think that animals belong to a lower kingdom than human beings. As far as technology is concerned they do. A crow is not able to produce an atom bomb.

After reading about dolphins and other creatures and thinking about the experience of myself and my guru and the experience of my disciples and me, I realized that there are invisible wavelengths of the mind which can be tuned and plugged into the atmosphere. There is a matrix, or field, that connects similar frequencies. Minds have to be connected with a field and for that purpose the mind has to become one-pointed.

### **Bhakti yoga**

The methods of raja yoga, kriya yoga, pranayama and other yogas achieve one-pointedness, but the swiftest method is through bhakti yoga using emotions. It happens between mothers and children. When the children are away and something happens the mother knows it due to the same frequency and the love she has for the child. The extreme love of a mother maintains a similar and uniform range of mental frequency with the child.

Bhakti yoga employs one's natural emotions. Emotion is something every *jiva*, every individual, has. No one can say he does not have it. Even if one doesn't believe in God, it does not mean one has no emotions. People have hatred, jealousy

and strong emotions, positive and negative. It is positive proof that they have that force within, which they are using and expressing in different ways.

The various forms of expression of emotions are called *bhava*. Bhakti is a form of bhava which is an attitude. One can channel emotions through these bhavas. *Dasya bhava* is the attitude of a servant; *sakhya bhava* of an intellectual friend; *vatsalya bhava* of affection; *madhurya bhava* of romance, like the emotions of the gopis and Radha.

These attitudes help to regulate emotions and emotions help to streamline the consciousness or mental energy

## Union

Union between guru and disciple can take place. Often the word union is not understood. To be together or united is only external union. True union is when one is constantly aware of the object which is dear, cherished and always on one's mind. To become one with this object is called union, *ekatmata*. It is not only possible for a saintly or virtuous person, but also for a vicious and wretched person whose daily life is not proper and disciplined. Anyone can communicate with his guru.

Spiritual aspirants cannot be saints due to maya which is all around them, but which is also part of Vishnu and Narayana. Therefore, maya is not their enemy. People are not able to stick to the strict rules of spiritual life, but they can streamline their emotions at least for one or two hours like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Mirabai, the Sufi saints or Ramakrishna Paramahansa. They can develop bhakti and find that the guru with whom they are trying to have union is not far, but a part of them and well within.

– Mumbai, India



# Divine Grace

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Grace is an important factor in the practice of bhakti yoga. It is inherent faith which is responsible for the realization of grace. It is said that nature is always benevolent; that the higher laws are always trying to help in every possible manner. However, man in his ignorance violates these higher laws.

## **Innocence**

Grace is a higher law or the law of higher nature. It is present everywhere, in everybody, and in order to experience this grace, one has to open one's mind, heart and spirit. The greatest obstacle in the experience of grace is one's limited ego. Human beings are guided mostly by ego. When one loses one's innocence, one loses touch with grace.



In order to experience grace one should be as innocent as a child. The ego is critical and always tries to prove differences. It tries to like one thing and dislike another. Anyone, including yoga aspirants, who has likes and dislikes, is far from grace. For example, a mother is full of love, but the child cannot experience her grace or love. If he wants to experience her love, he has to improve his mind.

In the same way the higher nature is always full of grace and compassion for all living beings, but man has lost his innocence. He has become



intelligent. This intelligence is not the divine intelligence, but a crooked intelligence of an evil-minded being. This is precisely the reason why everyone is unhappy.

If an opinion poll of all human beings throughout the world were conducted, one would not find a single happy person. There would be something causing unhappiness. Even if he is deeply religious, still he will be unhappy. A priest is unhappy;; a clergyman is unhappy; a yoga teacher is unhappy; yoga practitioners are unhappy; a person living on the mountains is unhappy; a person who has no desires is also unhappy. Only a person who has no ego is innocent and has a simple heart, is happy as he is in direct contact with transcendental grace.

### **Faith**

Grace is not like the beam of light. It is not something which comes to you, for grace is not far from you. It is closer than your breath, closer than your mind. Grace is so close to you that you cannot think about or understand it.

In fact, you exist because of grace. Not only you, but the earth which is suspended in space, exists just by the grace of a higher nature. How can it be experienced? I do not believe that people have experienced grace. Once they have experienced grace they have no fear. People who realize grace in their lives become fearless.

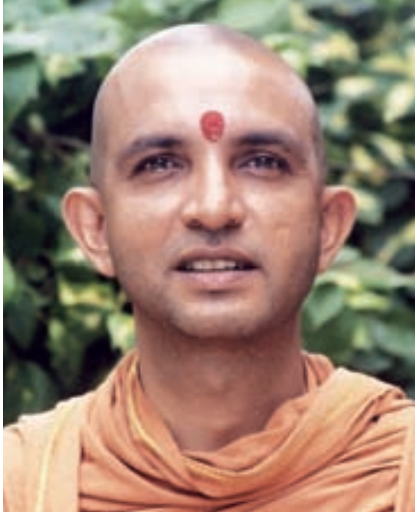
What will happen to my son, my wife and husband? What will happen if I have no money, or do this or that? These thoughts come to a person who has no faith, and therefore, no grace. If one can experience grace even for a split second, one will become a different person.

Do not talk about grace, instead, try to feel it. Try to become like a child, without taboos, without prejudice, without definitions, without categories. Try to be spontaneous in your expressions, your actions and your feelings.

*– Early 1970's, India*

# Contentment

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



We want to become good people. We want to become pure and sattvic, and sometimes we try for our upliftment, purification and the attainment of sattwa. Sometimes we fail to even try. So what is the way out?

The secret of becoming good, pure and sattvic lies not in the pursuit of a desire, but in developing the faculty of contentment in life.

## **Human destiny**

There are many people who want to be good, but they are not content and their mind is going through a lot of conflicts, confusions, expectations and needs. Their desires are being expressed by the mind. These mental expressions take us away from the state of harmony and balance of the mind which represents the state of contentment.

Therefore, we should not make an attempt to become pure, sattvic, good, happy and joyous, but to become content in life. In fact, it is the training that we need in order to fulfil the destiny of human life.

The destiny of human life is not God-realization, the attainment of peace, or being happy and joyous. Happiness and peace are only expressions of the state of mind which is experiencing contentment all the time. If we are content we are at peace with ourselves, we are blissed out. If there is no

contentment, every effort and attempt that we aspire for in life will be futile for there will never be any satisfaction in that. Absence of contentment will never give any satisfaction. Satisfaction will only be attained if we are content.

*Santosh*, contentment, is a quality and a *niyama* which we try to attain in yoga through observation and adjustment in life. The destiny of human life is to discover the source of contentment, and as a result of discovering contentment we will find peace, happiness and joy. However, in order to become established in the state of contentment we have to go through a process of *sadhana*.

### **Sadhana**

*Sadhana* is self-training. Training ourselves to be responsible for our actions and behaviour in life is the yogic concept of *drashta*, the witness.

Many times, when we study yogic literature, we are told to become the witness of ourselves. We have to observe ourselves, we have to become aware of ourselves. This witnessing and observing that yoga talks about is actually the discovery of our nature. In this discovery we become aware of our needs, expectations and desires. We are able to differentiate and distinguish between the just and the unjust, the appropriate and the inappropriate, and by developing willpower we can adopt a path which is appropriate, without necessarily giving us pleasure.

When we think of something appropriate we should not think in terms of pleasure and displeasure. The idea of pleasure and displeasure has to be taken away from the concept of appropriateness. Appropriateness is only an awareness which allows us to discover what is beneficial for us and what is not.

With this understanding, if we walk on the path of yoga, it becomes possible to experience the symptoms of purity and wholeness in life. This is the direction of yoga.

– 25 July 2001, *Ganga Darshan, Munger*

# Discipleship

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Discipleship is a process of preparation. One should not hunt for a guru. It is not necessary to run for a guru. Otherwise one will come across a guru of one's own quality. A disciple has to go through a long process in which the ordinary being is transformed into a real disciple. A disciple is like an object and the guru is like a mirror. One sees in the

guru what one really is. If the disciple says the guru is good it means he is good. If he says the guru is hopeless it means the disciple is hopeless. This has been a difficult point, at least for me. However, one day a great guru told me, "In order to find a guru you must try to educate yourself into becoming a disciple."

Discipleship is an absolute preparation and one has to expose oneself to certain yogic practices. For some time one should be without a guru, just practising yoga. Then one should go to different teachers, obtain the best out of them and have a clear-cut vision within oneself. When the time comes, discipleship becomes powerful within, just as at a certain age passion and emotion become powerful. When the need for a guru is felt, one is able to recognize him.

When time and space are transcended the mind becomes wide and the replies can be had by any guru. Everyone can have the reply but, for that he will have to transcend the mind. Jumping over the mind is important. Try.

– 13 May 1980, Copenhagen, Denmark

# Yoga and Politics

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

There are different types of yoga practitioners. One type is the swami or guru, who should keep himself completely out of any type of politics. There are not many, and even if they do not participate in politics it makes no difference at all. They are the guardians of a sublime culture and must stay away from any kind of politics. This is why yoga was guarded and preserved properly in India and lost elsewhere.

## **The aspirant**

However, other yoga aspirants, teachers or yoga students must participate in their national or local politics. Politics is an important part of society. If everybody ignores it, there will be a vacuum in the political thinking and process. In India, disciples take part in politics and choose their particular ideologies. In the ashram, people belonging to different political ideologies gather together. They understand that the swamis do not belong to any political ideology, either right or left.

I tell them not to discuss politics in the ashram. When the government changes, people ask me, "What do you think?" I simply say, "Some disciples have lost, some disciples have gained." Therefore, one can and should definitely take part in the political process of the national life and should not ignore it just because one practises yoga.



## **The guru**

If you are a guru, have a following and initiate people into



the spiritual culture and sadhana, you should keep your hands off and have cordial relationships with everybody. Only on rare occasions in history did demons rule and good people were completely suppressed.

Therefore, when the good values in society are in decline and inauspicious values are being encouraged and patronized, when adharma is considered supreme and dharma inferior, when the spiritual values are undermined and the people's spiritual aspirations are suppressed, at that time a swami is fully authorized to voice his concern. This, however, does not happen many times in history.

*– August 1981, Chamarande, France*



# Qualities of Guru

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

It is not necessary to talk about myself. It is not modesty, but what to say? I am the transmitter. The knowledge does not belong to me. I am a medium, an agent, the middle man. That is my identity. My guru had chosen me.

My guru was Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. He had many disciples who are now scattered over the world like the fragrance of a flower. They are qualified and wonderful and I am just one among the prominent ones. However, I was chosen in such a way that even my physical frame changed, and my handwriting changed completely and became like Swami Sivananda's.

## **Wireless messages**

I do not like ashrams and never liked disciples. If you have to exhaust your karma and suffer, you must have disciples. Disciples are the agony of the guru. I do not like this business of counting money day and night. I like to be alone even today and I don't like to meet people. That is my nature.

Up to 1963 I was able to do it. And suddenly on 14th July something happened. At midnight I started receiving wireless messages from my guru. Do this, do this, do this, do this. I did not know yoga at all. Yoga was as far as anything from me, for my tradition is Vedanta. I belong to the special order of Advaita Vedanta of the Indian Hindu tradition. I thought that asana and pranayama were just jokes and that drinking water through the nose was useless. However, the messages said, "No, yoga has to be taught, humankind needs it."

From time to time I received those messages. I don't know how to contact him, but he is able to contact me. Sometimes I think it is my fortune and I am blessed. Sometimes I think "Oh, he should not have chosen me, it would have been much

better." I would be sleeping on the banks of the Ganga in a dilapidated Shiva temple, and sleep and sleep and sleep.

### **Meant for a different life**

If you expect any power from me, please don't, because what I am delivering to humanity is not my property. Things happen and many people are helped, but I definitely do not claim it upon myself.

At the age of six, I felt suddenly that my body was there, but I did not feel myself. It was a peculiar experience without feeling the link between matter and prana. It was fast, like lightning and it repeated itself. I spoke to my parents and since my father was also an initiated disciple of a famous swami in India, he knew that something was happening to me, but he could do nothing more.

By God's grace, in those days, in 1929, there were not many doctors in India, otherwise they would have given me tranquillizers and my development would have been finished forever. Ultimately I was taken to a few spirit healers or village magicians who did not know what was happening to me.

Spiritual life, monastic life was something I could never understand. My guru has given me sannyasa and I stick to it out of respect for him. Logically I cannot understand it, as I think everybody can be a sannyasin in coat and pants, trousers, saris and frocks. Spiritual luminosity or enlightenment is not a cadre or a sect. Spiritual illumination can happen to anybody, at any time. One does not have to shave one's head and put on a certain garb.

I was always engrossed in intellectual pursuits, reading from Einstein to the mysteries in the Court of London, from the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, books on sexual sciences, any absurd book. Reading politics, sociology, history and geography, science, day in and day out, that was my life. Or I would go into the forest with a rifle for hunting.

At the age of ten I started hunting and stopped at the age of eighteen, when I first shot a tiger at a short distance. That

was my life. Still today, I do not understand how I became a swami, as there are many religious canons I do not accept.

But that first experience happened again and again. My father referred this matter to four or five people. They said, "Send him to an ashram. Give him to a swami." Well, my father did it. He used to ask me for years, "Are you not going for sannyasa?" I said, "Let me complete my education." As soon as the results were out, he took ninety rupees from his pocket, brought me to the bus stand, put me on a bus and said, "Get out. You are meant for a different life."

### **The shephard**

I met many important yogis in India, but I liked Swami Sivananda. The relationship between guru and disciple is the relationship between the master and the medium. I keep myself open. I have my intellectual personality, philosophy and idiosyncrasies in life, but towards him I am completely open, so that his aspirations and wishes can be fulfilled through me.

Many times Swami Sivananda told me, "You have to go from door to door and shore to shore to meet people and tell them to practise meditation." Maybe it is a sort of hallucination, delusion or self-hypnotism. It is hard to say, but when I remember that I am a *chela*, or disciple, and whenever doubts come into my mind, when I am fed up with all the silly things I am doing, immediately that voice and aura comes, and I receive my next order, "Do it!" I do it and it works.

I am given guidance about my work and people. Many times the people I see, I have already seen. If I have to pick up one among my disciples for my work I know it well, for that face has already been shown to me. I know what I am going to do in which country. This is the glory of the guru and therefore we should try to become good disciples.

Everybody must have a guru. If you are a good aspirant, even a charlatan guru cannot cheat you. If you only wait for a great guru to come, please keep on waiting. Such gurus are

not born everyday like swines and pigs and dogs. Search for a guru and try to correct your inner self.

As many things have happened in my life against my personal wishes, I don't know what is in store for me. Perhaps I do not want things and they are happening. However, I have completely submitted myself to his will, so let things happen. Guru is the shepherd, so let him take care of us.

– 3 April 1982, Casablanca, Morocco





# 1983 Guru Poornima, Raipur

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati, from Mere Aradhya by Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati*

I have been participating in Guru Poornima celebrations since 1964 and this year is my last. Hereafter I will not be participating in any such program. Therefore, this year's Guru Poornima is very significant and I want to make this clear to all of you.

Until last year's Guru Poornima my personality would remain constrained and conditioned, as if it were split into two parts, one outer and the other inner. One persona was that of a sadhu and the other of a guru. I had to fulfil both these roles. It was quite taxing at times, but somehow I managed to play both roles successfully for the last twenty years.

During earlier Guru Poornima programs, I used to wonder whether Guru Poornima was being celebrated for the guru or for the aspirant. You do not realize this difference. You come with faith and faith is so radiant that it dazzles the eyes and you miss many things. Light from fifteen or twenty lamps is enough to dazzle the eyes; in the same manner one does not see any defects in the light of faith. The Guru Poornima that is being celebrated this year is for a free, liberated sadhu, who is not attached to anyone or anything. On this day of celebration there are no awards or rewards for anyone. Free from all duties and responsibilities, I shall now deliver the message of yoga from door to door in India and abroad, and rest anywhere in the lap of Mother Nature. Whenever I feel like coming I will come, otherwise not. I am not beholden or bound to anyone. I have come here only to revive the powerful traditions of your ancestors and tell you the significance of this Guru Poornima that you are celebrating.

## **Awaken the energy**

On this sacred day of Guru Poornima, the sannyasins must reflect and decide what is their duty and obligation, what is

their sadhana and tradition? Asana and pranayama is not our business or profession, rather it is our sadhana. We should remain aloof from the little status and respect we gain during the course of teaching yoga to people. A sannyasin should always be totally unattached and aloof from all things. He has to live like the lotus leaf in water.

Another point I want to stress is that after taking mantra initiation, it is essential to practise regular japa of that mantra. Without sadhana one cannot acquire self-confidence, and without self-confidence one is powerless in the face of the day-to-day problems that crop up in our lives. You have a storehouse of latent energy within you. Through sadhana you can awaken that energy and harness it to eradicate your problems. I don't claim that all of man's problems can be eradicated this way, but to a great extent man can eliminate his problems himself. Make a fifteen to twenty-five minute long sadhana program of asana, pranayama, japa and dhyana for yourself and be regular in its practice. This sadhana gradually awakens *atmashakti*, the divine energy dormant in each and everyone. The sole purpose of the mantra given to you today is to awaken this energy, and this is my Guru Pournima message for everyone.



# To Sri Swami Satyananda



You are an ocean of becoming and a seed of self.  
You are master of motion, eternally still.

No one in samsara knows you.  
No one through happenings and effects.

But

A glimpse, a tear, a flash of light . . .

A flame burns all and everyone.

No distinction of "he" or "me".

With mantra, kirtan, satsang, darshan

May flood waters rise in symphony and

Rip away the trees and roots –

The good and evil,

Leaving

Only the ability to see, to know, to be

You

The self in the Self.

—Swami Uttarkash Saraswati  
24 April 1984, Florence, Italy

# From the Desk of Swami Niranjan

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



## December 1988

People throng to religion, gurus and spiritual organizations for guidance and the achievement of their desires. In return they gain self-satisfaction and many of their desires are fulfilled. The problems of this planet may not be solved, but they have an opportunity to dip into the ocean of knowledge. They derive wisdom, but it remains unexpressed in their behaviour, for the droplets of wisdom which they acquire evaporate in the hot sands of *samsara*, the manifest gross world.

The channelling of sublime wisdom into creative action is a rare gift which only a few extraordinary individuals possess. On an encounter with Sri Swamiji, even if it is a casual one, one is deeply impressed that he epitomizes such a person. Behind his personality flows a stream in which wisdom and action are

the main currents. The realization of the Supreme, from the *Brahma Sutras* and the selfless action of the *Bhagavad Gita*, are a spontaneous expression which have become one in him.

Renunciation, giving of alms, sacrifice and austerities are performed by many people, but it is rarely done with a vision of the future. Rather, we see that it is done more for self-contentment. One kind of action moves, motivates and inspires the world, another is only for self-indulgence.

We are counted in the latter category. To motivate, inspire and provide direction to the world, a leader is required who embodies anger as well as pardon and peace, brilliance and shrewdness as well as simplicity and innocence, down-to-earth awareness as well as far-sightedness. One in whom both the fiery brilliance of Parashurama as well as the astute and calm wisdom of Sri Rama are manifest. One who symbolizes the determination and righteous wisdom of Sri Krishna and Yudhishtira, the glow and warmth of the sun and the silvery, soothing and healing coolness of the moon. Such a multi-faceted, mysterious and practical leader can mould a definite future from the scattered, diverted and dissipated energies.

Upon meeting and seeing Sri Swamiji, we know deep down that he is such a leader. At present he is on a pilgrimage of India and her *siddha tirthas*, sacred places, with a definite constructive purpose. He is infusing the heart and mind with a new energy, a new mantra to unite the future. Be ready to receive him.

– printed in Sivananda Math, Issue 4, 1988

### **August 1989**

There are many different stages in the life of a sannyasin. He builds an ashram at one place and serves; this is one stage. Then he abandons the ashram and his working place; this is the second stage. At first he works with a limited group and then, having been united with the universal consciousness, he works to achieve a universal aim, leaving the limited group.



This higher state is traditionally called *kshetra sannyasa*. The aim of Sri Swamiji in leaving the ashram over a year ago was not merely to visit the different tirthas, but at that time he decided to take *kshetra sannyasa*.

In accordance with Swami Sivananda's instructions, when Sri Swamiji started the work of spreading yoga, he had to stop his paramahansa sadhana for some time in order to make yoga available for all. The first instruction Sri Swamiji received from Swami Sivananda was to serve. When free from this service, when all the inner samskaras are burnt, then sadhana begins.

I had an opportunity to live with Swamiji from 5th to 11th August in Tryambakeshwar. He was living in a small room, 8 ft by 10 ft, which he cleaned himself. He slept on the floor, spreading a mat. He took only sprouted mung for lunch and khichari for dinner which he prepared himself. There was no running water or electricity. He did not meet anyone. He was totally absorbed in sadhana, observing complete silence the whole day.

Swamiji said that a time must come in our lives when remembrance of the name goes on with total awareness. It should not be like ajapa japa where unconscious repetition of the mantra takes place. This japa should be continuous with total awareness. Swamiji told me that the only aim of his sadhana is unbroken repetition of the name. If he can be aware of the name even in the dissipated state of mind, the perception of anahad nada will arise.

However, during this period when the guru's consciousness is directed towards the universal or cosmic dimension, the disciples still wish to meet him at their level of consciousness. This causes disturbance in his sadhana. Therefore, Swamiji does not tell anyone where he is and what he is doing. He will continue his sadhana and austere life, not for one or two years, but for a long period of time. The state which he aims to achieve is total merging with the *atma*, the universal spirit, without leaving the physical body. In order to complete that, he needs our help.

Disciples should not think emotionally about how Swamiji cooks his food and cleans his room himself. Instead they should think about how they can help him to achieve his aim. As disciples, we must follow his instructions word for word. He has given us many instructions, but we only follow those which appeal to us and forget about the others, claiming that we will do it when some inner inspiration comes. This is hypocrisy. If this is the way, it is meaningless to become a disciple. If we follow the guru's instructions in this way, it is because of our ignorance. If we tread the path of ignorance and think we are doing what is right, then there is no solution at all. Such a person will always remain backward in life. Now you have to decide which path to choose for yourself.

– printed in Sivananda Math, Issue 3, 1989



*My Thoughts on*  
*Sri Swamiji, my gurudev*

You are the Supreme Being who abideth in all beings.  
You are Lord of all Lords.  
You are the Atman that lives in me.  
You are my true Self.  
You are the Self,  
The Self in all beings.

You are purusha, the Master.  
You are the end of all sadhana.  
You are the blessing of all the blessings.  
Without You there cannot be peace – shanti.

You are calm and serene.  
You are the moon and the sun, ever shining.

Oh! Giver of shanti, let me bow at Your lotus feet.  
Your sweet lotus feet have walked on my soul, in my house,  
In the inner chamber of my heart.

How can I pay You this infinite debt?  
I am millions of times blessed because You looked at me.  
I saw infinite love in Your lotus eyes.

My bosom bursts in tears.

You are me, I am You.

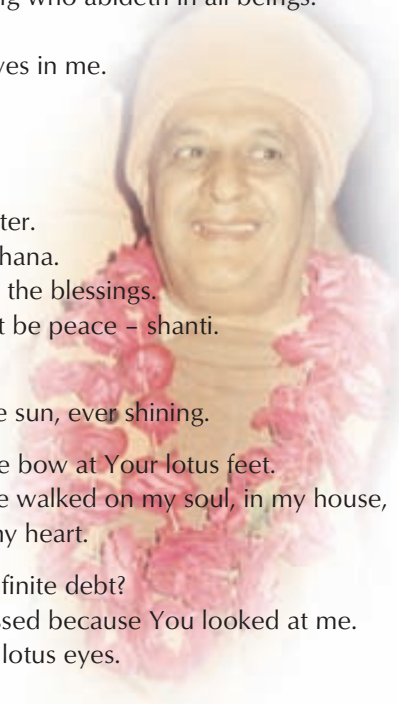
Union, union.

Come union, come the merging.

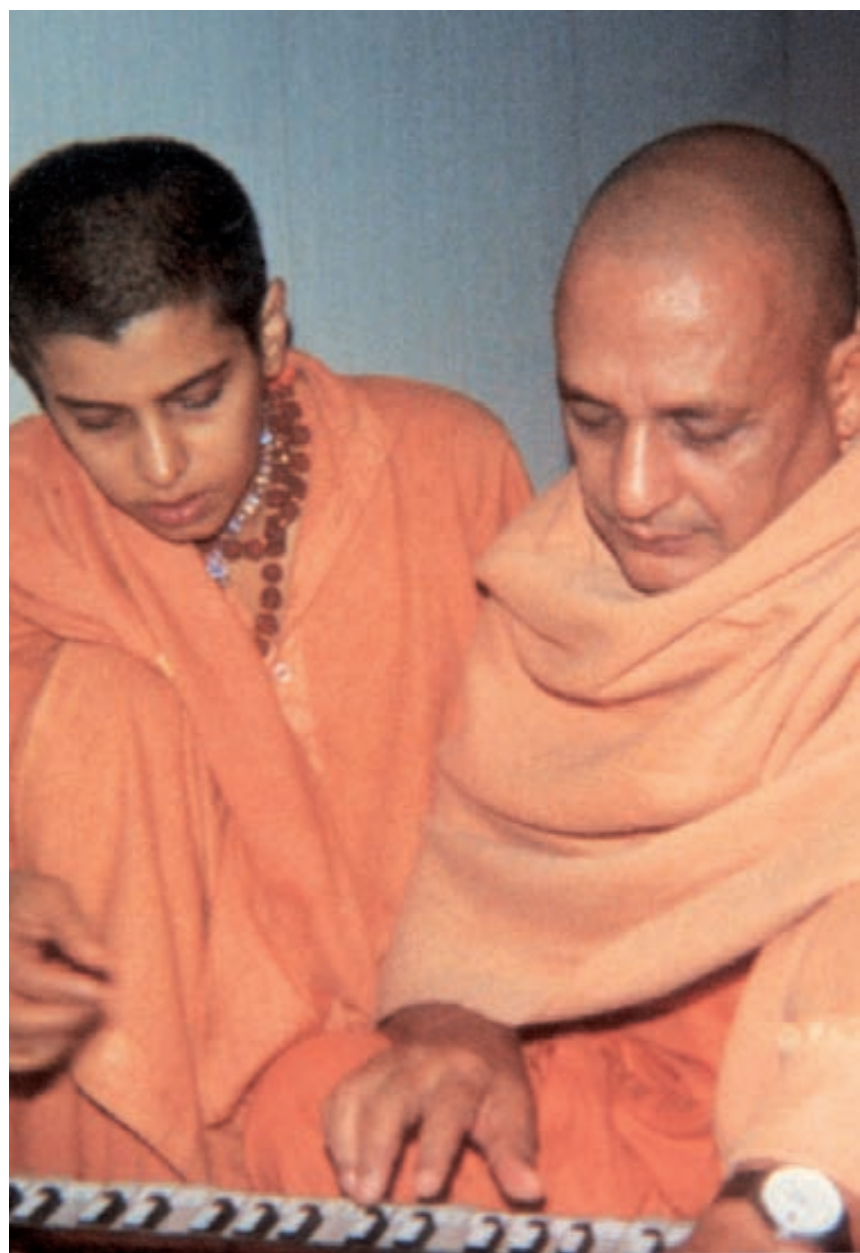
No more but You.

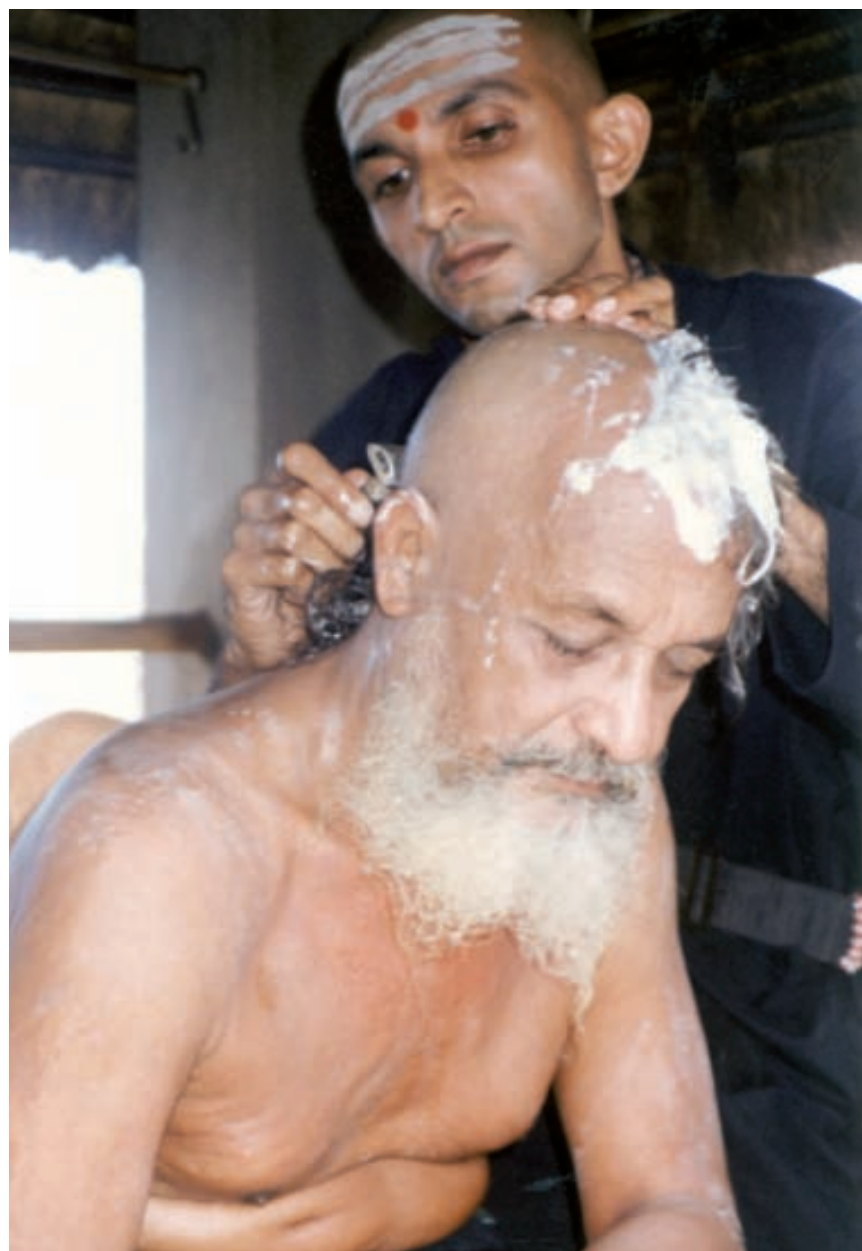
You, the Supreme Self – the Self, the Self – Atman.

I bow and prostrate to Thee.



—Swami Anusandhana  
13 August 1990, Satyananda Ashram, Florence, Italy



















# Guru Tattwa

*From Dharma of a Disciple by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

We are composed of five tattwas, and the spirit tattwa which is inherent within us in a subtle form. However, we are not aware of the spirit tattwa. We are aware of the five sensorial tattwas which can be experienced, but not of the transcendental or spirit tattwa. Yet, we say there is atma, spirit, in everyone. We cannot recognize that spirit as the special sixth tattwa because



it is not composed of earth, water, fire, air or ether. The spirit is the presence of life; it is the presence of knowledge. It is a part of paramatma, the supreme spirit.

The Shanti Mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* states:

*Om poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudachyate;  
Poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevaavashishyate.*

That is full and this is full. Remove a part from the full, what you have removed is full, and what is left behind is full.

In mathematical language zero plus zero equals zero, zero minus zero equals zero, zero divided by zero equals zero, and zero multiplied by zero equals zero. The completeness, the fullness of life is God, and that is full, it is complete. The part which is emanating from God, in the form of spirit, inherent in each being, is also full. That spirit or atma in the real sense is the sixth element called the guru tattwa. The atma tattwa, the spirit element, is also called the guru tattwa. Why?



God is formless, infinite and ungraspable. Something which is infinite cannot be made finite. Something which is ungraspable cannot be grasped by the senses or the mind. However, its shakti, its power, has a role to play. What role or function does the power of God play in our life? Only one: removing the darkness of life.

As we remove layers and layers of darkness, of *avidya*, ignorance, *ahamkara* and *asmita*, the 'I' identities, the 'I' associations, the light of the spirit shines brighter and brighter. As the covering of ignorance and inner darkness is removed and the light shines, there is growth and development at every level. At the mental and emotional levels there is greater maturity, at the physical level there is greater physical balance, at the spiritual level there is greater inner awakening. Everything grows together. Everything moves and progresses together.

God is often perceived as the power that controls the individual and the universe. That is a perception, a thought, but the important point is that it is a presence which is transcendental and infinite, and which is also visible and finite. In the finite dimension, we have the experience of the transcendental shakti within us in the form of spirit. In the transcendental dimension, we experience that power as the cosmic spirit. The cosmic spirit is called God, and the individual spirit is called spirit. The great spirit is paramatma, and the individual spirit is atma.

*Paramatma* means the great spirit and *atma* means the contained spirit. Paramatma is the free spirit which is infinite while atma is contained, finite and bound. This bondage, however, is only of the senses and the extroverted mind; it is superficial, not internal. It is only related to the sensory expectations and desires, the mental, emotional and intellectual expectations and desires. It is the extroverted mind which defines the mental, physical, emotional and intellectual levels. The continuous interaction with sense objects is caused by the natural responses of the extroverted mind. In this state the open nature or the freeness of the spirit cannot be experienced. One remains confined to a limited role and experience of life.



“Me and my family”, comfort and luxury, pain and suffering, achievement and loss – life revolves around these ideas only.

The senses bind and limit the expression of the mind. The removal of the veils is the removal of the influence of the senses from the mind and this makes the mind peaceful and luminous. The more veils you put on your mind with stresses, anxieties, criticisms and negativities, the more lethargic, dull, negative and depressed it becomes and loses its clarity.

The spirit, which is the guru tattwa, is beyond the mind. The cosmic spirit, paramatma, is complete, full. The extension of that paramatma, in the form of the little lights burning for seventy or eighty years, is atma. That is the guru tattwa. That which separates from the full, yet manifests itself as full is the guru tattwa. It is an omnipotent energy and if it wants to manifest itself, it can do so in any form. When it wants to manifest itself in a way that can be grasped by the ordinary mind, it makes matter its medium. Moses saw the burning bush and here at Akhara we saw the guru shakti in the form of a flame which remained lit for eleven days. It indicated that a flame does not burn due to oil or wick, but due to a special energy.

Guru is not a person; it is a force, a power. In Christianity they say that the Christ-consciousness descended upon Jesus, which means that a higher consciousness unfolded in the graspable mind of the individual and Jesus became the Christ. In the same manner, a person becomes enlightened when that guru tattwa, the spirit-awareness is realized, when the spirit descends.

The descent of the spirit does not mean something coming from above into you. 'Descent of spirit' may not even be the appropriate phrase. It is the ascent of consciousness which realizes the permanent existence of the spirit and makes the individual enlightened.

God is complete, therefore the guru tattwa is complete in the form of spirit and those within whom the guru tattwa awakens become the physical gurus. Thus, the Shanti Mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* is indicative of the God who is unmanifest, infinite and eternal and also the guru who is manifest, who can be seen and who is as complete as God.

– 5 August 2010, *Yogadrishhti Satsang series, Ganga Darshan, India*



# Guru is the Guide

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

God is everywhere, but can you experience God everywhere? Can you see God in a tree? Can you see God in a stone? You may say yes, but if I ask you whether you can see God in your enemy, at that point you will say no. If I ask whether you can see God in a person who is maimed and suffering from leprosy, you will say, "Oh, but he is suffering from his karmas." You don't see God in that person.

## **Not a crutch**

The vision and experience of God is not a matter which you can think about intellectually and say, "God is everywhere." People have been saying it for thousands of years and you also think like that, but has it made any difference to you? You still suffer from your hang-ups, anxieties and fears. Therefore, this idea has made no difference to you.

If you think God is everywhere, you should try to experience it. However, somebody has to teach you how to experience the all-pervasive power of God. So far you have not been able to do so under your own steam. It is only a person who has, in one form or another, experienced the nature of God, who can indicate the way. Once you are on the right track, then areas open up where you can feel and experience that godly nature. At that moment the guru simply becomes a catalyst to provide you with the experience. The guru does not go with you until the end of your journey, he puts you on the right track. The guru is only a guide, not a crutch with which to support yourself until the end of your journey.

## **Mind pattern for God**

Therefore, it is not possible to have a direct relationship with God with your present frame and state of mind. You have to

change the mind pattern when you go to different places. When you go to a concert your mind pattern changes, when you go to work your mind pattern changes, when you come home your mind pattern is different, and when you go to an ashram your mind pattern is different. Similarly, when you go to God the mind pattern has to be different. It is impossible to go to God with this type of mind pattern for God is not an object you can see with your eyes. God is not a form you can touch with your hands. God is not an idea you can think about with your mind. God is the totality of life, both living and non-living. In order to develop a relationship you need to have that level of awareness, consciousness and understanding.

At present you can't even understand your own nature, your own fears or desires. You don't know how to handle them and you want to experience God. It is a contradiction in every respect. It is not something easy where you can say, "I know God, I have realized God." It is a state of being. You have to go through the process of becoming. The master can help establish that connection provided you are truthful, sincere, innocent and devoted.

*– printed in YOGA, Vol. 10, Issue 4 (July 1999)*



# Surrender

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

*Shirsh* means head and *shishya* means one who has no head. There is a story about Guru Gobind Singh, who was the last guru of the Sikhs. He had many followers, but he wanted to define what real discipleship was.

Once he called his followers and they came in thousands. He said, "I want people from among you whom I can sacrifice to fulfil a purpose." Of course everybody said, "Forget it, I am not going to be sacrificed."

One person said, "Ok, guru is asking, so I am willing." He raised his hand. The guru called him inside a tent, took out the sword, and outside people heard a big noise, *whack!* The guru came out with the bloodstained sword. He said, "One more." Now everybody's heart was palpitating, wondering what was happening inside. However, somebody was brave enough and said, "Ok, I will sacrifice my life." The guru said, "Come inside the tent," and another, *whack!* Again the guru came out with the bloodstained sword. Like this, he called four people for only four were willing in that crowd of maybe ten thousand. After the four had gone in and were killed, the guru came out of the tent with the bloodstained sword, and said, "Who is next?" Everybody ran away, thinking, "Who is going to be killed by this crazy guru?"

What they did not know was that nobody was killed. Inside the tent only a goat was killed for dinner. All four shishyas were alive and well.

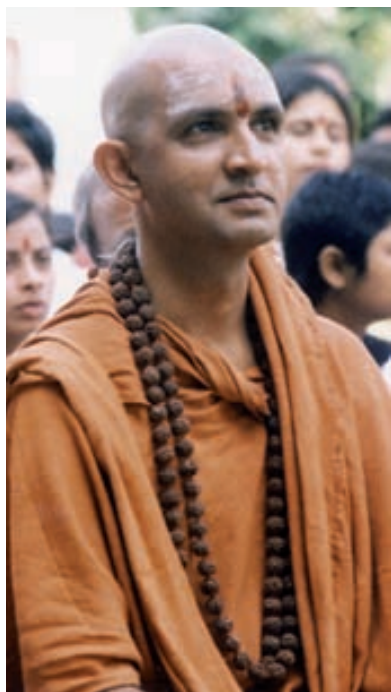
Guru Gobind brought these four people out, and said, "These are my four disciples on whom I entrust my work."

– 18 March 2012, Paduka Darshan, Munger



# Change of Perspective

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



One can develop enthusiasm and efficiency in one's duties and tasks by developing the attitude of karma yoga. Karma is the name of every kind of interaction that takes place. Karma is not physical labour or physical involvement. Karma is an interaction, which happens at lower levels, which happens at intermediate levels, which happens at higher levels. The *tattvas*, or elements, perform karmas. Creation is subject to karma. The mind, when it thinks, is performing a karma. When emotions are expressed it is karma and a limb being

moved is a karma. The senses perform karma, interact and intermingle with each other. The interaction and intermingling of something with something else is known as karma. When the mind associates itself with an object and thinks about that, it is karma. When the mind thinks of an idea or fantasizes that is karma. When aggression, affection, anger, jealousy, peace or silence is expressed it is karma. When one works in society and in life, then that is also known as karma.

## **Towards enthusiasm**

One can develop enthusiasm by being aware that karma is being performed in any position or capacity, in the office, as a

vendor, a doctor, or a sannyasin. Whatever the profession may be there has to be an awareness and understanding of what is being done and the purpose behind it. Normally what happens is that one is not aware of the purpose behind the karma.

If a person works in an office and thinks he is going to receive his pay at the end of the month, money becomes the focus. However, is money the focus or is creativity the focus of karma? Therefore, if one identifies with creativity, an ordinary act can be filled with enthusiasm, optimism and creativity. If one identifies with the expected result or gain once the work is completed, there is no focus on creativity and one's heartfelt expression. Therefore, that action will have no meaning and will be only a mechanical process.

This awareness is the most difficult training that one receives in spiritual life. This training is so difficult that Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* tells Arjuna that nobody has been able to perform karma yoga and nobody will be able to perform karma yoga in the future for it is the most difficult of sadhanas. One has to let go of the idea of gain and result of an action and identify with creativity only. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (5:11):

*Kaayena manasaa buddhyaa kevalairindriyairapi;  
Yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktvaatmashuddhaye.*

Yogis, having abandoned attachment, perform actions only by the body, mind, intellect and also by the senses, for the purification of the self.

Action has to be performed for self-purification and creativity. Once creativity and purity become part of the karma, there is no problem. The effort of karma yoga is to bring in creativity and the feeling of inner purity while doing an ordinary work. According to the yogic perspective, there will be satisfaction, contentment and enthusiasm in every task.

– 1 August 2001, Ganga Darshan, Munger

# Relationship with Guru and God

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*



**I have often heard it said that the relationship between man and God is that of a master and servant. Could you relate this to the guru-disciple relationship?**

No, I cannot. It is possible for us to create an intimate link and relationship with the guru. When the guru is here, we can interact with him on physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels. Guru is a reality, not a concept, but God is initially a concept. We cannot interact with God physically, emotionally, intellectually or spiritually as there is no direction or cohesiveness in our perception, vision and ideas. There is no stability. If we become unstable in front of the guru, guru

can give us a whack and say, "Look, get your act together." However, it takes a long time for God to do that, and when he does it, it is too hard on us, because we do not know how God is functioning and how he is teaching us.

### **Master and servant**

The bhaktas have always maintained that in order to experience God-consciousness it is necessary to develop a relationship with God which is based on purity of feeling and emotion, clear understanding and not a confused rationality. To come to this point we have to deal with our egos, and our fluctuating and flirting thoughts and desires. How do we know that our desires and thoughts are fluctuating? We are not in a position to know that for once we are under the force of a thought it carries us away without any process of discrimination. Often we know that what we are doing is wrong, but we cannot stop ourselves.

The easiest way to relate with God is the master-servant relationship, where our own egos are not manifesting, rather the will of God is manifesting. Our philosophy in life becomes, 'Let thy will be done'. The complete experience of this concept is the culmination of the servant-master relationship. It is one of the most beautiful relationships. I know I do not have to worry or think about what to do next. I am being guided and instructed.

Faith, conviction and belief are there. There is no imposition of personal ideas or ego. Therefore, the bhaktas have maintained that the master-servant relationship is one of the purest relationships with God that one can have.

This is the difference between the guru-disciple relationship and the God and devotee relationship. In the guru-disciple relationship, the same kind of understanding eventually evolves, but after going through a process of transformation which is physical, emotional, rational, psychic, pranic and spiritual.

*– 1995, Mangrove Mountain, Australia*

# Grace brings Peace

*From Bhakti Yoga Sagar Volume 6 by Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

It has always been my tradition not to invite people for entertainment. Previously I used to invite people for yoga gatherings, but now I have left yoga behind. Now I invite people here with only one objective, and that is that grace should descend on them from the Almighty Lord, somehow or other.

Humankind can get everything in life, and he knows the ways, but the most precious thing that humankind needs today is the Lord's grace. It is only by grace that a person can become something and achieve things. Happiness, sorrow, disease, poverty are all part of life. Grace means something different. Did Sri Rama have no suffering? Didn't Sri Krishna pass through suffering? Didn't the saints have to face suffering? They did and they accepted it. But the Lord's grace is the one thing that, if it is there, is present in every situation. Wherever there is grace in any work, in any house, in any family, then at least one thing is always there and that is happiness, peace. That is why our rishis and munis found the way to obtain grace.

Many ways were devised to obtain grace, but the most powerful amongst them all was the worship of the Divine Mother. Mother is always an embodiment of compassion and kindness; that is the pure image of mother love. She is the ocean of forgiveness. Whether it is the Divine Mother or my mother, wherever there is mother's energy it is always in the image of love and kindness, but the most important thing is that she is the embodiment of forgiveness. A child does a lot of naughty things. She may slap him once or twice, but her real form is forgiveness.

We are downtrodden people. We are full of mischief, passion and ill will. The weaknesses are there and some bad habits. The body of course is dirty. The mind too is dirty. We speak positively but the mind is full of poison. Even then we

want to be forgiven, but this pardon we can only get from the Mother. And that is why one form of God is that of Mother.

The form of God as Mother is the form that was there at the beginning of creation. The Divine Mother is the Adi Shakti. She is the Adi Janani of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, and exists in the heart of all beings. This Devi Shakti is the answer to all humankind's difficulties, poverty and sickness. This is what our rishis and munis of India have told us since time immemorial.

*– 23 November 2000, Rikhiapeeth, India*





# Video Camera in the Brain

Tribute by Sri Jaleshwar Mistri (Sannyasi Atmabindu), Munger



It was in 1969 that I first came in contact with Swami Satyananda. During that time I was troubled by a stomach ailment. Tired of medical treatment, my father, the late Sri Rameshwar Mistri, introduced me to Swamiji.

Swamiji instructed me to come to the Yoga Vidyalaya every day by 4 am. As per his instructions, I started going to the Yoga Vidyalaya every day, early in the morning. By that time the Akhand Jyoti Hall had been made ready. It was there that Swamiji used to take yoga classes with some of his students. The sessions would commence with Sri Swamiji

singing a prayer and the rest of us repeating each line after him. The words of that prayer were:

*Bhavasagar taarana karana he,  
Ravinandana bandhana khandana he.  
Sharanagata kinkara bheeta mane,  
Gurudeva daya kar deenajane.*

After the prayer, Swamiji would conduct a yoga class with us for about an hour. This routine went on daily for six months. During this time he also guided us in the practice of shankaprakshalana three times. My stomach ailment soon

became something of the past. After that, I began participating in various programs according to Swamiji's instructions. With regular attendance at Swamiji's satsangs, my closeness to Swamiji grew. He drew me towards himself with a deep feeling of belonging.

### **How did he know?**

Around that time, my father was diagnosed with cancer. With the assistance of respected Goenkaji, he was treated in Calcutta and Bombay. Eventually, he was treated at home with medicines prescribed by the doctors.

On 30 March 1967, there was a satsang with Swamiji at the Yoga Vidyalaya. I took my father's permission to attend and went to the evening program. In the middle of the satsang, Swamiji suddenly called me and said that I should go home right away as my father was calling me. I was sent home in Goenkaji's car. When I reached I saw a big crowd gathered outside. I came to know that my father had passed away. Till today I have not been able to understand how Swamiji suddenly thought of my father and sent me back home in the middle of the satsang.

In this manner, my faith in Sri Swamiji kept growing and a close relationship with him became established. During the International Yoga Fellowship Convention, graced with the presence of learned teachers, I offered my service towards the organization with zeal and enthusiasm, according to Sri Swamiji's instructions. My humble abode has also been blessed by the lotus feet of Sri Swamiji. I was in close contact with him for many years and worked for the ashram as and when required.

### **Hospitality**

I worked as a clerk in the education department. When I was transferred to Dumka, I had to move out of Munger. Whenever I came back for a visit, I always went to have darshan of Sri Swamiji. I continued to practise asana and pranayama with his guidance.

During this period I became associated with the Sri Ramashram Satsanga in Mathura and followed their practices of dhyana kriya. It gave me a lot of peace and joy. I had the opportunity to organize a special program for them in Munger. Many eminent acharyas of Mathura were to attend this program and arrangements needed to be made for their stay here. I met Sri Swamiji and told him all about it. He was happy and gladly offered the use of the rooms on the upper floors of the ashram for their stay and also arranged for their meals. The program was conducted as planned and Sri Swamiji was happy to meet the acharyas. I was richly blessed indeed.

### **Meeting in Rikhia**

My father was not only a social worker but a freedom fighter as well as an artist of a high calibre. On the occasion of Jhoolan at the temple in the Goenka residence each year, there were new and beautiful decorations prepared each day. They used to be made by my father. Occasionally we had darshan of Sri Swamiji. After the demise of my father, I used to make the decorations and over time gained proficiency in this art. After a few years, respected Goenkaji passed away. I was fortunate to receive an invitation from his son, Sri Krishna Kumar Goenka, to prepare the decorations for the Jhoolan programme in Rikhia and with Sri Swamiji's grace I have been doing this for many years.

The first time I went to Rikhia I thought that Sri Swamiji would have forgotten me, but I was delighted and surprised to find that at the first glance, Sri Swamiji called out to me saying, "Jaleshwar, you have come!" He introduced me to Swami Niranjani and Swami Satsangiji saying that my father had been a good artist and social worker. I felt so blessed!

Once, during the first day of Jhoolan in Rikhiadham, I had a strong desire to have darshan of Sri Swamiji. I requested Swami Niranjani and Swami Satsangi for darshan. In those days Sri Swamiji gave darshan rarely, but that day I was promptly called by a sannyasin to go and meet him. As soon as he met me he said,

“Jaleshwar, do you think that I am not able to see you? I have been watching you since you arrived. My eye is on all your activities. There is a video camera in my brain, I see everything that you are doing while sitting right here.” He went on to describe in great detail the decorations I had prepared the previous day and what I was making on that day! I was completely speechless. When I heard his words I was totally astounded. I simply touched his feet and wordlessly went back to do my work with complete devotion.



### **Blessings**

When I had gone to Rikhia for the first time to make the decorations, on the morning of my departure at 5 am, Sri Swamiji called me to his little thatched hut and bidding me goodbye, he gave me a small packet. I said to him that I would not take his leave but begged for his blessings instead. At that time he presented me with some books as his blessings, which enlighten my innermost being till today.

One year I was fortunate to travel to Rikhia along with Swami Niranjanananda in his car. I would like to express the inspiration I received during that journey in my simple, inadequate words and offer this tribute at the lotus feet of Sri Swamiji:

Just as the darshan of a bhakta like Bharatji is the fruit of Sri Ramji's darshan, in the same way I have received the fruit of darshan with Sri Swamiji through the satsang with a guru-bhakta like Swami Niranjanananda. I have received mantra initiation diksha from him and also jignasu and karma sannyasa diksha, and my life is fulfilled.

# Necessity of Guru

*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*



A sannyasin has the same difficulty knowing God as a householder. Both have to find a guru. Seeking answers to questions is only satsang, it is not imparting diksha. One has to accept a guru who shows the path, because everybody has different samskaras and karmas. There is not one husband for all women or one wife for all men. Every father has a particular son and every son has a particular father. In the same way, every disciple has his guru.

A wife without a husband, a husband without a wife, a disciple without a guru or a guru without a disciple cannot move along. Just as a wife is a necessity, a desire and something fundamental for a husband, in the same way a guru is essential for a disciple who has to search for him.

Everybody is not so lucky to find a guru. But every girl finds a husband. Sometimes the marriage fails but that is another matter, but surely the husband has to be searched for. In that search one finds out so many things, and in the same way one has to know more about the guru.

## **Shiksha and diksha guru**

There is no dearth of gurus in the world, nor of disciples. However, one cannot catch hold of a person on the street and tell him, "You are my guru." One drinks water only after it is filtered, and one accepts a guru only after one knows everything about him.

In an aspirant's spiritual life there is one kind of guru who gives knowledge and information, the *shiksha guru*, and another kind who imparts experience, the *diksha guru*. That a rasgoola is sweet is a piece of information, but without eating it this information is incomplete. Only after having eaten the rasgoola will the information change into experience, and there won't be any need for further information. There are some satsang gurus who give opinions and information, and some who will lead the aspirant on the spiritual path, as you lead a child by holding his hand. The guru instructs the disciple, to do this and not to do that, he gives mantra and explains the sadhana. When the disciple is married and has children the sadhana is changed. When the children grow up, he is forty-two or fifty and retires, the sadhana is changed again according to the guru's instructions.

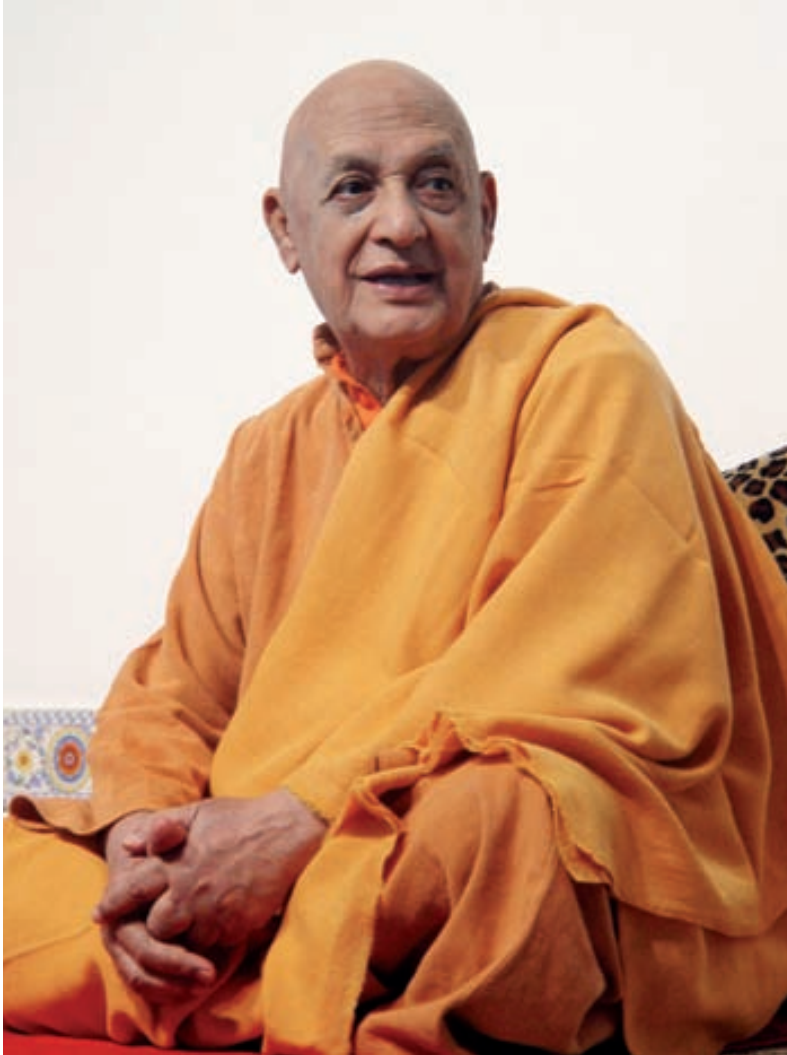
Sri Rama took initiation from Sage Vasishtha, but he also received knowledge from Rishis Vishwamitra and Agastya. While fighting with Ravana on the battlefield Sri Rama got tired, but was prepared to fight. At that moment he was full of anxiety, when Agastya gave him the *Adityahridayam* mantra. By that time Meghnad was dead and Kumbhakarna was killed along with all the rakshasas. Ravana was not dying as his ten heads kept reappearing. Sri Rama stood perplexed in the battle, seeing Ravana before him. At that time Agastya said, "Rama, repeat this mantra and all your obstacles will be removed." Sri Rama repeated the mantra and started to fight until Ravana was killed. Does this mean that Sri Rama had three gurus? It does not matter, as *vidya*, knowledge, can be learnt from anyone.

Dattatreya had twenty-four gurus. Good knowledge and thoughts can be acquired from anyone, who, like Agastya, comes at the appropriate time, and whose knowledge cannot be denied or ignored. During his exile in the forest Sri Rama went to Sharbang ashram where he received a lot of knowledge. He went to Shabari who directed him towards Pampa lake. After all, it is the guru's duty to show the path. Through Shabari Sri Rama's path was cleared.



There can be many gurus, but the diksha guru should be one. Sri Rama's diksha guru was Sage Vasishtha while Sandipani was Sri Krishna's diksha guru. The final statement of our great saints and rishis is that, just as the lifespan and the time of death is fixed, so the guru is decided. This is the truth.

*– 12 April 2009, Rikhiapeeth, India*



# Discipleship

*Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati*

Today is the fifth day of the month, and on fifth December, in the year 2009, my guru – I am not using the word ‘our’, I am using the word ‘my guru’ – Sri Swami Satyananda attained Mahasamadhi. Every fifth of the month is celebrated in Ganga Darshan as the day he attained his union with Shiva consciousness. And five also happens to be the number of Shiva. The mantra of Shiva also numbers five: *Na, mah, Shi, va, yah*. The sixth was the day when he was given bhū samadhi and six is the number of Shakti.

Today, after performing Rudrabhisheka as we commemorate the day when he attained Mahasamadhi, I started to think about one attribute or one quality of my master which inspires me the most. That is discipleship. There are two types of disciples in the world: one who has his own agendas and the other who has no agenda of their own. The people who have their own agendas associate with their guru for a limited time, extract whatever they want to extract from the guru, and then go their own ways to fulfil their ambitions and needs.

There is another group of people, who have no agenda of their own, but who simply live for the sake of living with the guru. They make the vision of the guru their own vision, the agenda of the guru their own agenda, and they become one with the guru tattwa as they identify more and more with the vision and mission of the guru.

Decide, look at yourself and find out in which category do you fall: person with no agenda, or person with their own personal agendas.

## **Rishikesh and old BSY**

When Sri Swamiji came to live with Swami Sivananda, he and the group of disciples who had gathered around Swami

Sivananda were people who had no agenda of their own, who just wanted to live in the presence of the master and surrender their life to their master. Do you know what the meaning of surrendering life is? Surrender your ambitions, surrender your youth, surrender your needs, and identify only with the vision, the needs and aspirations of the guru. That surrender is not easy for it makes you lose yourself completely. You are finished, and the only thing alive in your memory and mind is the guru.

A group of disciples who came to Swami Sivananda lived that kind of life. They became the foundation stones of the Divine Life Society, and propagated the vision and the mission of their master. Swami Sivananda initiated hundreds and thousands, but only a few names stand out for they were the ones who did not have a personal agenda, but were committed to spread the light, as guided and instructed by their guru. Sri Swamiji was one of them and that is the type of discipleship he lived. He was not attached to anything, no comfort, no luxury, no post, no position.

I first came to the ashram, in the early sixties. We were a group of sannyasins and what did we want to do? We did not want to become yoga teachers. We did not even know what sannyasa was. We only had one awareness and one aspiration: to be with our guru, that's all. We did not mind whether we ate or starved. We did not mind whether we were comfortable or uncomfortable. We did not mind whether we had clothes to wear or nothing to wear. We did not mind whether we were taught anything, formally in a class, or just told to work twenty-four hours of the day, like a donkey. No, that was not our agenda.

In that category fall many people, who are still following the path of sannyasa and discipleship. Whatever we learnt was because the opportunity was given to us to express our ability. This is one group of people who identify with the vision and mission of their guru and have no personal life and agenda.

## Disciples with agenda

There is another group of people, the so-called disciples, who have their own personal agendas. Some become disciples for they see yoga and ashram as an opportunity to launch their careers in life, who want to take training, become sannyasins, karma sannyasins, then go back and establish their own ashrams and centres. In the garb of selfless service to humanity, they live their own ambitions. They use yoga, ashram and guru as their launching pad to become established in life. There is no intention of even identifying with the vision or mission of the guru. Many people fall in that category today.

There are people who want to be propped up and given post, power and position. They fight with everybody for respect and tell people, "I am a senior. Give me your respect." Those people are guided by their ambitions and ego, and want to be supported. They want to be told, "You are this, you have this authority, you have this power, you have this position," without even being capable of maintaining the dignity of the post they want to be propped up. They expect the ashram, the guru and yoga to provide them that opportunity and post, where without having any ability and maturity of their own, they wish to be recognized and worshipped by all as



somebody great. That is another group of disciples, who do not identify with the vision or mission, but want to be held up.

Another group of disciples are always crying, are over-dependent and do not work to improve themselves, but express negativity towards themselves. As they encounter the cleaning of their emotions, mind and spirit, and the stuff which is there as samskaras and karma, as archetypes of so many lifetimes, they fall prey to the influences of those samskaras when they surface. They lose their balance, as they have never made the attempt to correct or rectify their defects in life.

### **Real disciple**

A disciple is one who corrects and rectifies his own mistakes in life, and tries to become better every day, to become better at every step that he or she takes, rather than falling prey to the whims of the mind, desires and passions. There is a constant effort to improve which is lacking in the personalities of disciples today.

By taking initiation, don't call yourself a disciple. By wearing geru, don't call yourself a disciple. As long as you have your personal agenda, don't call yourself a disciple. You are only an opportunist in the garb of a disciple, like a donkey in the garb of a tiger. The real disciple identifies with the spirit of the guru and lives that spirit.

Sri Swamiji was one such person who identified and lived the principles, the teachings and the spirit of his guru. And that is my sankalpa, therefore I call him my guru. You call him your guru because he is nice to you, but I call him my guru because he is the inspiration to me, to become like him. It is that memory which I hold most dear in my life.

*– 5 May 2013, Ganga Darshan, Munger*







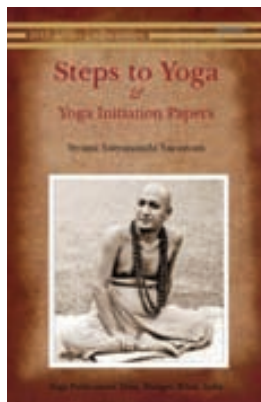
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## Satyananda Yoga Websites



### [www.biharyoga.net](http://www.biharyoga.net)

The official website of Bihar Yoga. Includes information on: Satyananda Yoga, Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Sivananda Math activities, Sita Kalyanam events, Yoga Publications Trust catalogues.

### [www.rikhiapeeth.net](http://www.rikhiapeeth.net)

The Rikhiapeeth blogspot posts a satsang of Sri Swami Satyananda daily on a wide range of topics concerning spirituality.



### [www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/](http://www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/)

Dedicated to the vision and mission of Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, the spiritual successor of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, it contains news and articles.

### [www.yogamag.net](http://www.yogamag.net)

The official website of YOGA magazine. Includes worldwide links to Satyananda Yoga centres and teachers, a brief history of *Yoga* magazine, news and more.

### [www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/](http://www.biharyoga.net/living-yoga/sannyasa-peeth/avahan/)

Provides online access to *Satya ka Avahan*, the bi-monthly magazine of Sannyasa Peeth, which contains the higher teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda, Sri Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda, along with the programs of Sannyasa Peeth.



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## Ganga Darshan Events & Courses 2013

<i>Jul 18-21</i>	Guru Poornima Aradhana
<i>Jul 22</i>	Guru Paduka Poojan
<i>Sep 8</i>	Sivananda Janmotsava
<i>Sep 12</i>	Swami Satyananda Sannyasa Diwas
<i>Oct 23-27</i>	Golden Jubilee World Yoga Convention
<i>Every Saturday</i>	Mahamrityunjaya Havan
<i>Every Ekadashi</i>	Bhagavad Gita Path
<i>Every Poornima</i>	Sundarkand Path
<i>5th &amp; 6th of every month</i>	Commemoration of Sri Swami Satyananda's Mahasamadhi
<i>12th of every month</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamans

### *Important Announcement*

Due to the forthcoming Golden Jubilee of Bihar School of Yoga and the World Yoga Convention, which will be conducted from 23rd to 27th October 2013, the courses conducted at Ganga Darshan, Munger, will be suspended during 2013. The following course will be conducted at Rikhiapeeth:

*Aug 1-15* Health Management Course - Diabetes (Hindi)

Please contact Rikhiapeeth directly for more information.

Rikhiapeeth, P.O. Rikhia, Dist. Deoghar, Jharkhand, India, 814113

Telephone: 06432-290870 / 09304-488889 / 09204-080006

Email: rikhiapeeth@gmail.com Website: www.rikhiapeeth.net

### ***For more information on the above events contact:***

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Tel: 06344-222430, 09304799615, 06344-228603 Fax: 06344-220169

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