

YOGA

Year 9 Issue 7

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Hari Om

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2 & 3: Guru Poornima 2020 Munger, tribute to Swami Sivananda Saraswati
4: Swami Satyananda Saraswati



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Need for a Guru

How will you get God's grace? When you discipline yourself. How will you know how to discipline? By observing others that have walked the path successfully to the goal of perfection. Who are these men who have walked to the goal? It is these that are known as Gurus. So you need their help, their personal example, their encouragement and their grace. Thus, we have come round to the answer that a Guru is necessary as well as his grace. Everything is necessary – Atmakripa, Gurukripa and Ishwarakripa.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

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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 ॥

For Frontline Heroes (FFH)

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

In the fight against Corona, while the majority of people remain safe in their homes under lockdown, across the world thousands are active in the service of their nation and humanity. Despite great personal risk to their own health and safety, these dedicated people have come forward and stand as the front line of defence. They fight on two fronts, against the external onslaught of the pandemic, yet they also face anxiety and loneliness if alienated from their community. They work for the welfare of all humanity, and the future of humanity today depends upon their efforts and faithful commitment.

Doctors, nurses, police, central and state government departments and administrators, volunteers and municipal workers, farmers, traders and even the rickshaw and thela walla who deliver food and necessary items have become the first line of defence for their society. The superhero of today does not have special superpowers, fly through the sky or wear a cape. It is the ordinary person who attends upon isolation wards, delivers food, provides medical treatment and makes every effort in the most adverse conditions to give their all in the service of others.

In gratitude and appreciation for their selfless service and sacrifice, Bihar School of Yoga is honoured to release an app of simple yoga practices to help the frontline workers manage the effect of the extreme conditions they face every day. Practise of these will help to alleviate physical, mental and emotional stress and allow one to manage situations with a calmer, clearer and more positive response. The techniques are simple, can be done anywhere at any time, and do not require more than fifteen minutes maximum.

Available for **android devices** at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.biharyoga.android.ffh> and for **iOS devices** at: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/for-frontline-heros/id1508949961>

FFH download summary: May–June 2020



India	Kazakhstan	Oman	Slovakia
Italy	Serbia	Indonesia	Denmark
Bulgaria	United Arab Emirates	Qatar	Czechia
United States	Peru	Kenya	Malaysia
Spain	Slovenia	Sri Lanka	Botswana
Colombia	Kuwait	Mexico	Luxembourg
Greece	South Africa	Venezuela	Mauritius
Ireland	Belgium	Norway	Costa Rica
Argentina	Ukraine	Dominican Republic	Jamaica
Uruguay	Portugal	Bhutan	Uzbekistan
United Kingdom	Switzerland	Bahrain	Bangladesh
Australia	Hong Kong	Iraq	Cyprus
Brazil	Thailand	Guatemala	Georgia
Germany	(not set)	Taiwan	Maldives
Sweden	Iran	Turkey	Montenegro
Nepal	Japan	Morocco	Nigeria
Singapore	Austria	Myanmar (Burma)	Northern Mariana Islands
Netherlands	Russia	Poland	Puerto Rico
France	Lebanon	Vietnam	Senegal
Romania	China	Finland	St. Kitts & Nevis
New Zealand	South Korea	Lithuania	Bosnia & Herzegovina
Canada	Tunisia	Egypt	Philippines
Israel	Chile	Saudi Arabia	Azerbaijan
Croatia	Panama	Cuba	
Hungary	Tanzania		

Facing the Lockdown with Good Cheer

Sannyasi Dharmajyoti, New Delhi

In these times of lockdown due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Satyananda Yoga practices have proved to be the means to remain sane, healthy and optimistic.

Being a yoga sadhaka, one had the opportunity to immerse oneself in yoga, with less distractions and hardly any social commitments and interactions with the outside world. The physical body had an opportunity to heal as the pace of life was reduced drastically. The mind naturally had an environment with much less sensorial stimulation to quieten, taking it towards the state of pratyahara, in which the cobwebs of the mind started clearing.

In this situation, the tools of Satyananda Yoga become the means of a disciplined life, and having a routine is extremely important. Beginning the day with the Three-Mantra Sadhana with the sankalpa and ending with the Review of the Day, is psychologically very practical and beautiful for we begin with positivity and end by clearing the slate of the mind.

The weekly shatkarma practices of kunjal and neti help clean the pranic blockages which develop due to stressful situations in uncertain times. Asana and pranayama practices are ideal to remove lethargy. They give the required stimulation to the muscles and organs to function optimally in these days of confinement at home, bringing a sense of balance and harmony in the energy systems which leads to equanimity.

The yoga nidra practice in the afternoon is a wonderful scientific practice to disconnect the mind from its continuous flow of thoughts leading to the removal of tension from the physical, mental and emotional realms. The evening mantra sadhana with the resolve for positivity and protection for

everyone is an optimistic way to deal with pain and misery widespread due to the pandemic. Locked in our own homes we are mostly not in a position to help. The mantras are a constructive way to deal with this distress. So, integrating these practices in one's daily routine makes the day disciplined and positive.

The treasure of yoga for all, the Satyananda Yoga Prasad website, with publications, practices, audio and video satsangs of the masters is a wonderful instrument for any sincere aspirant in these times. The Yogic Lifestyle program given in satyamyogaprasad app (SYP app) and the simple audio guided practices in the For Frontline Heroes app (FFH app) are immensely helpful resources given to humanity to cope in these extraordinary times. The meditation practices given in the Yogic Lifestyle program are profound yet so easy to practise and follow. I have been doing the Long Shavasanas, Ajapa japa practice, and Review of the Day regularly.

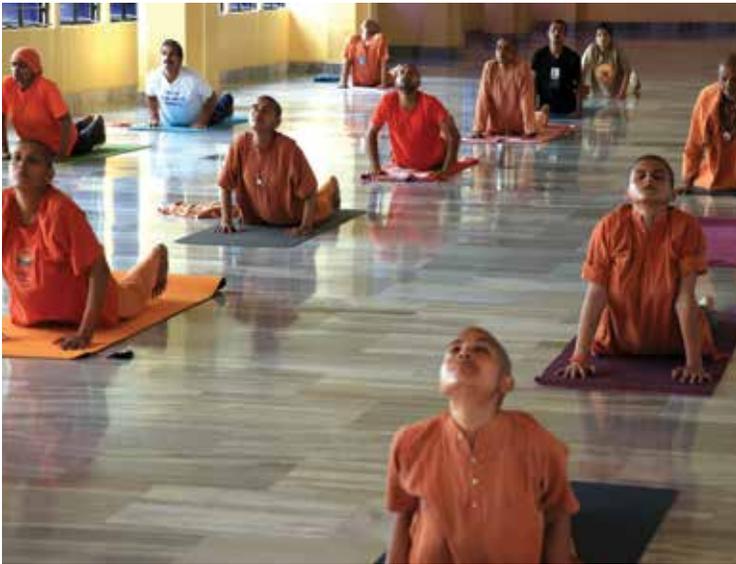
The FFH app is so convenient that people can rejuvenate themselves by simply investing ten minutes and practising the guided shavasana, between shifts either at home or while working on the frontlines. Overworked homemakers with increased work at home or stressed students coping with online classes can use it for recharging during the day.

These practices have given me a positive mental state, even when my daughter was flying back from abroad with the risk of catching the infection during her long international flights. Our family quarantined for a fortnight. It was a time when we, as a family, used to do chores together, maintaining a cheerful environment. We enjoyed the days together. We were able to include two lifestyle changes inspired by the Satyananda Yoga tradition which will have a major impact on our overall wellbeing and health. First we integrated the habit of having dinner before sunset. The second change was that we started doing the evening mantra chanting of the 32 names of Durga, Mahamrityunjaya mantra and *Hanuman Chalisa* together after dinner. It is an addition to the Mahamrityunjaya havan every

Saturday which has been a part of our family time for many years. Even when my daughter was abroad she regularly joined us online.

Taking online classes on skype is also an interesting addition during lockdown adapting to the changing times. Though I feel it lacks the energy of a regular group class,

All these positive changes are a result of our unshakeable faith in Guru which has made this journey possible. Guru and his directions have been the biggest inspiration to enable us to cheerfully manage life especially in these times.

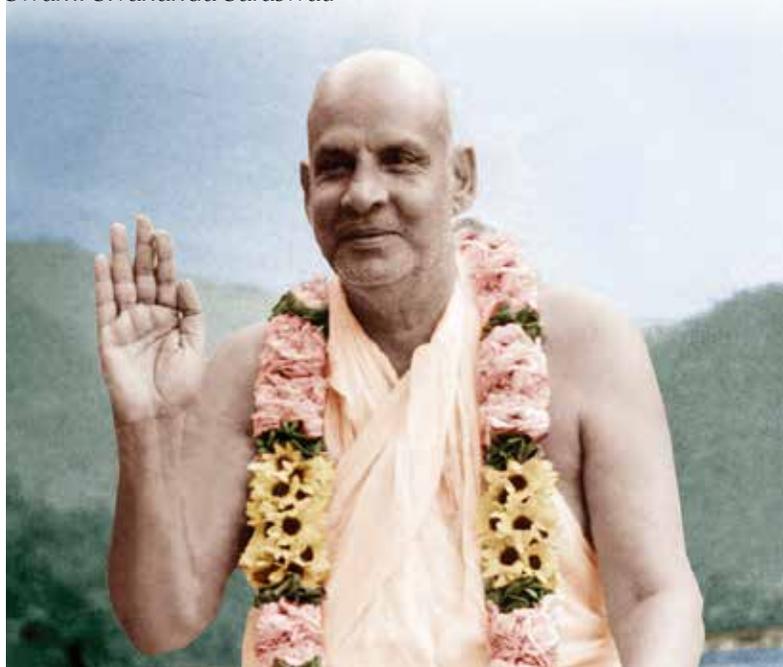


Discipline is always seen in a negative context as it contradicts your selfish desires, needs and search for power and position. Material life is rejection of disciplines. Spiritual life is made up of disciplines. Discipline must be practised with respect to body, mind, diet and sleep to acquire physical, mental and emotional health. The method which yogis discovered for attaining discipline is yoga.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Who is a Disciple?

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

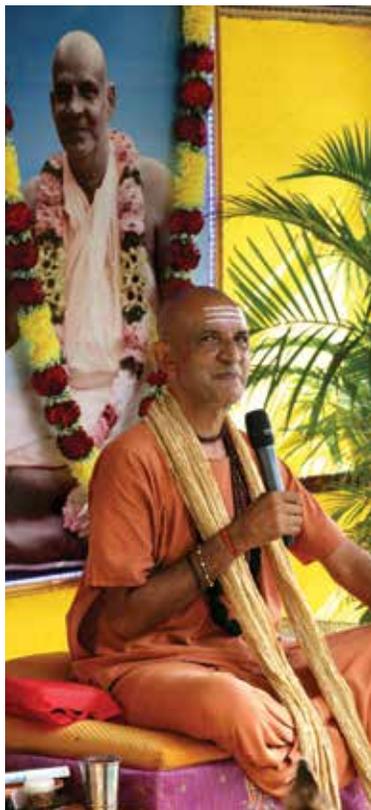


A disciple is one who follows the instructions of the guru to the very letter and propagates the teachings of the guru to less evolved souls on the path, until the end of his life. A true disciple is only connected with the divine nature of the guru. The guru's actions as a person are not the disciple's concern. The nature of a saint is unfathomable and his actions are based on universal vision. The guru in the physical form is the main source and embodiment of good in the life of a disciple. The disciple should realize the supreme necessity of keeping his faith in the guru pure and firm. True discipleship awakens the dormant faculties, opens the vision and kindles the spiritual fire. Then guru and disciple become one.

– *Printed in Bhakti Marga 2, Connecting with the Divine*

Divine Life Society

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



In the 1940s during the Second World War, the message of Swami Sivananda was not of atma and paramatma, not of the discovery God. He had a practical message: 'Improve the quality and the condition of your life. Come out of the negative quagmire and attain divinity in life'.

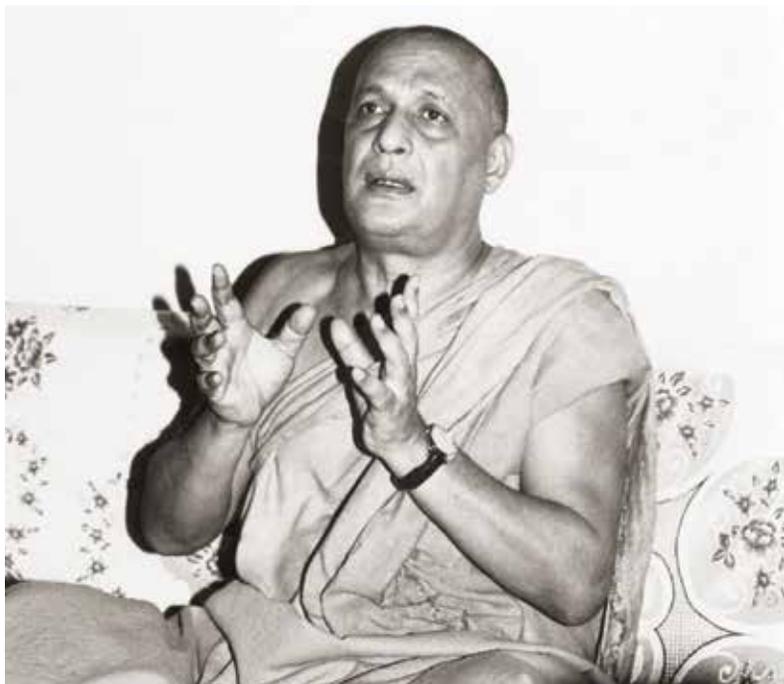
Swami Sivanandaji did not name his ashram 'yogashram' or 'vidyashram'. He said, "This is the place where you can come to overcome, transform and transcend your limitations and negativities. You come to connect with the positives in life, and once you begin to express the positive, your life becomes divine." Therefore, 'Divine Life Society' was the

name of his organization. The name was not 'ashram'. It was a society, a group of people who were making the attempt to overcome their limitations, their tamasic nature and attain sattwa and creativity. This did not happen because they were meditating, chanting mantras and practising yoga. This transformation and change happened in them for they were able to follow the teachings of their master.

– 25 July 2018, Guru Poornima, Paduka Darshan, Munger

My Guru Swami Sivananda

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



When I was with Swami Sivananda I was absolutely stunned. My intellect did not function before him, because he was like a child. If you have a little kid of two years what intellect can you show to him?

He was a very kind man. He did not mind what his disciples did, he never punished anyone, he never criticized anyone.

He was an out and out God-believer. He used to go to the temple of Shiva and prostrate flat. He used to bow down to every picture. He was such a simple man, but at the same time he was the highest of Vedantins.

He was a Vedantin because he saw himself in all. Therefore, whether it was a temple deity or whether it was a Rama or



Krishna or Shiva or Durga or a photograph, he had absolute reverence for everything. He used to touch the feet of anyone on the road. It is very difficult and for a man like him – he was so famous!

He had a handsome personality and natural tanned skin and a very tall figure. He was a very stout man, with a very loving smile, shining eyes and a very artistic body.

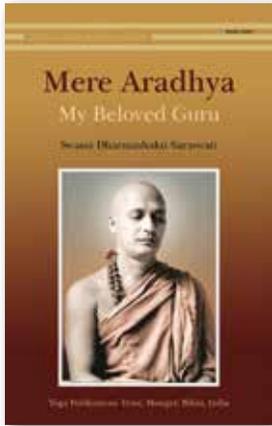
I have never come across a man with such natural beauty and natural goodness. You may be a good person, because you want to be a good person, because you think it is good to be good, but if you were taught it is good to be bad, you would be bad. However, in his case the beauty was very natural. I believe you will not come across a man like him.

Swami Sivananda was great because he was like a child. His kindness, generosity, charity, love and compassion were a natural manifestation of his samskara.

– 3 July 1985, Raja Yoga Vedanta Centre, Antwerp, Belgium

A Guru's Love

Swami Dharmashakti Saraswati



Swami Satyam is overcome by emotion whenever he talks about his guru. His voice grows heavy with emotion, lending an air of gravity to the atmosphere. Glory to the great guru, Swami Sivananda and glory to his equally great disciple, Swami Satyananda!

Swami Sivananda used to say, "Physical labour is also a sadhana. It exhausts one's samskaras, thereby making one's mind one-pointed." The guru is great and the disciple, born and brought up in the lap of luxury, educated in an elite convent school, now having embraced discipleship, is busy imbibing his guru's each and every word. Great indeed is the disciple as well, who climbs up and down hundreds of steps fetching sixty or seventy bucketfuls of water from the Ganga, carries heavy loads of bricks, stones, lime and sand on his back, gathers firewood, bel leaves and flowers from the jungle, walks many miles to the market and brings back a heavy load of vegetables on his head. He who had never washed a plate in his life is now busy cleaning pots and utensils bigger in size than him. It is not easy to clean pots blackened by charcoal soot.

After all their labours, the food they got was barely enough to fill their stomachs. But the disciples treated the coarse, meagre food as nectar itself. Surviving on rice and rasam, brahma khichari and buttermilk, these young men could run around all day long doing all kinds of strenuous tasks. After a refreshing dip in the Ganga, they could stay up all night long, singing kirtan or meditating in padmasana or translating

books. This extraordinary capacity for work was an outcome of the guru's blessings, and the disciples' own devotion. Mental prowess is definitely strengthened by physical prowess.

When Swami Satyam sat down to do translation work, he would not know when the day ended and night began. He would continue writing well into the next day. Then Guruji would have to intervene himself. Here is an interesting anecdote . . .

Once Swami Satyam had sat down to translate a thick book. Foregoing meals and sleep, he was writing without a break. At such times, his face would light up with an indescribable radiance. Mata Krishnananda was repeatedly telling him to take a break and eat something. But he used to be in a samadhi-like state while writing. Krishnananda noticed that for the second consecutive day, Swami Satyam hadn't got up for rest or repast. She found some milk in the kitchen and, putting it on his table, she said, "You haven't eaten anything since yesterday. Please drink this milk and then continue your writing." When Swami Satyam did not answer, she insisted, "Please listen to me and drink it quickly."

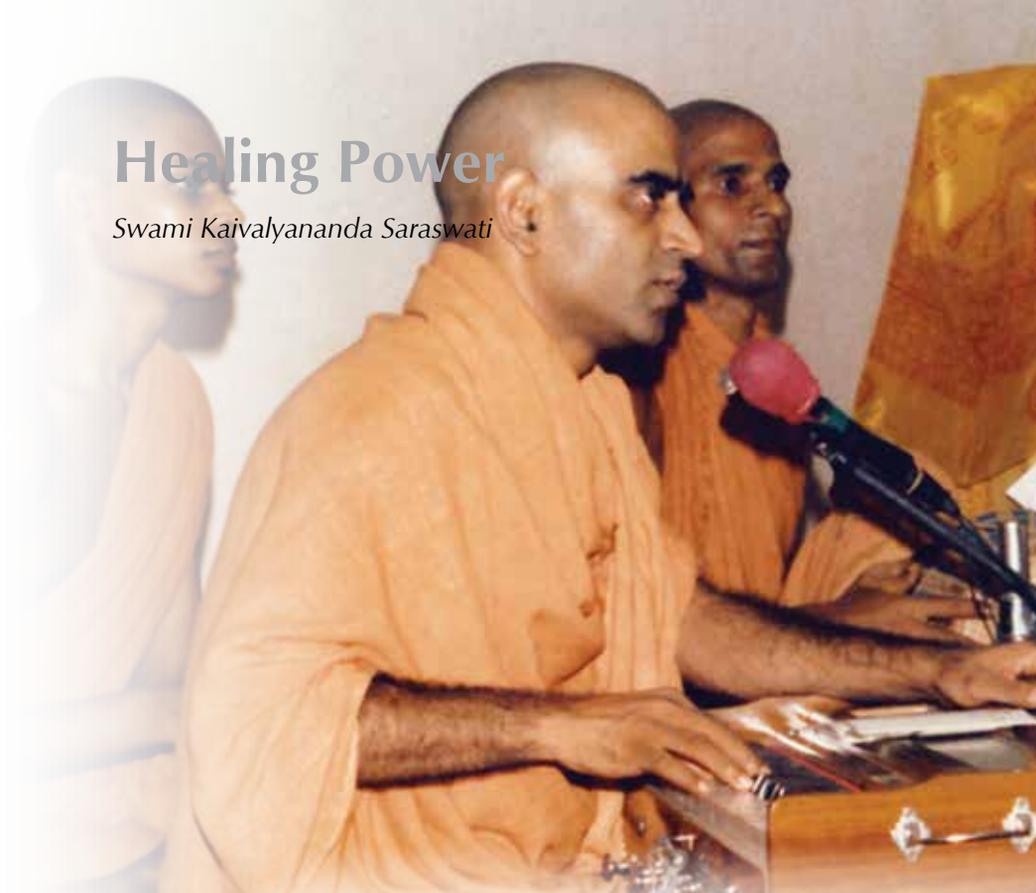
Swami Satyam was greatly annoyed by this repeated obstruction to his writing. Shouting, "Don't disturb me!" he loudly banged his hand on the table. The glass of milk fell over. Mata Krishnananda quickly left the room. Swami Satyam's face had become red. He shut the door, tied a sheet around his head and went to sleep.

His guru bhais were greatly concerned. When Swami Satyam did not open the door despite repeated knocking, they went and reported the matter to Guruji. He immediately came to Swami Satyam's room and called out his name. Swami Satyam opened the door and bowed to Guruji. Swami Sivananda patted him on the back and said, "O Swami Satyanandaji, please come to my kutir after having your meal." And in order to ensure that he had his meal, he served the food himself and then took him to his kutir. He talked about a few general things and gave him some specific tasks. When



Swami Satyam returned to his translation work in his kutir, he was again in high spirits. Such was the love and care that Guruji showered on his disciples!

– *Printed in Mere Aradhya*



Healing Power

Swami Kaivalyananda Saraswati

Most of the people in the world are not with themselves, they are separate from the subtle laws of nature, and this is one of the greatest causes of all kinds of physical, mental and emotional problems. Every individual has the healing capacity and most of the sicknesses can be managed by the individual. Our Guru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, says that in the course of time by the practice of yoga one can become one's own doctor, *vaidya*, psychologist and psychiatrist. By the practice of yoga the body becomes flexible and the flow of prana is clear in all the 320,000 nadis. The person increases intuition and attains subtle knowledge of body, mind and emotions.

The mind is predominantly negative. Most of the diseases are due to mental and emotional tensions. A single positive thought can cure a person and a single negative thought can cause the most serious diseases.



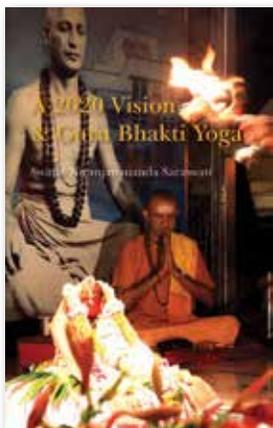
In 1970, I had an infection all over my body. The doctors said that my legs and arms had to be removed in order to keep my life. They advised me to take many antibiotics and injections. I refused to take medicines. When my Guru knew of my decision, he asked me to fast for about one week, then have only vegetable juice for another week and then live on fruits for the third week. He also gave me a mantra to repeat constantly. Within one month I started recovering and in three months I was completely all right. The mantras are a very powerful means to change the negative mind into a positive mind, and one can develop strong will power and confidence.

There are two kinds of mantras: one is a universal mantra and the other is a personal mantra. Every individual has some kind of negativity in life such as diseases, problems, difficulties, which can be minimized by the repetition of a mantra which is according to the person. This mantra should be received by an expert in the science of sounds. We call him a Guru.

With a mantra your life will be smoother. You will easily proceed towards your aim. Your resistance power will increase and you will develop a healing capacity for yourself and later on for others. When your inside is changed, your outside will automatically change. Yoga and mantra can change the entire structure of your life.

Ganesha and Sri Swamiji

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When Paramahamsaji describes his first encounter with Swami Sivananda in 1943, he says, “The moment I saw him, my mind became totally empty. There were no questions, no thoughts. Only the awareness, the knowing, that I had found the one I was looking for and I had no need to search anymore.” It was this mind-set of Paramahamsaji, which carried him through his discipleship while living in Sivananda Ashram.

In an ashram people of every mind-set come. Not everybody is a good and pious person in an ashram. There are different personality traits that come and stay here for a few months. Others will stay for one year, others will stay for five years depending on what they want or until they have a breakthrough. When they have the breakthrough they leave. As there are so many different personalities and natures, living in peace is a distant dream in an ashram. There is always conflict, clash of interest, personalities, mind-sets, thoughts and ideas. One has to find balance, for in the ashram everybody has to grow together, nobody is an exception.

People in general are unable to confront the many ways of their own ego expressions. If one is free from that ego, then no matter what the difficulties, good and bad times, the feeling is always there ‘I belong and it belongs to me’ – I belong to this place; this place belongs to me. I am responsible for it and this place is good for me. I belong to my Guru; my Guru belongs to me. I belong to my God; my God belongs to me. I belong to my truth; my truth belongs to me’. That belonging awareness of ‘I belong’, indicates the absence of ego. As long as ego is



there, you will find fault and you are not that. As long as ego is there, there is expectation and desire waiting to be fulfilled, and there is separation from the intention and the person. In his life, Paramahamsaji went through all the difficulties much more than what people go through today. There is much more comfort now. In the difficult and the good times, his ego never once separated him either from the ashram or from his Guru. And he lived that state of discipleship all his life.

Who is a guru? Does anybody declare, 'I am a guru'? If they do, it is their ego which is declaring it. There is no such thing as guru. There is only one thing – proper living. As disciples we try to live properly. That has to be the effort. As followers and aspirants, we have to try to live properly. That has to be the effort, with right understanding, with right awareness and with the right hero. Everybody has a hero. In society those heroes are multimillionaires, film actors and actresses, or other achievers in life. Everybody has a hero and everybody tries to emulate some quality of the hero in their behaviour, action or lifestyle.

When I look at my life and at Sri Swamiji's life, who was our hero? Our hero was our Guru. The hero in Sri Swamiji's life was his Guru, and they became one. The hero in my life

is my Guru and I am making the effort to become one. It is as simple as that. That effort, idea and identity of a disciple, 'I am an aspirant, I am a traveller, I am making the journey, following the mandates and the guidelines as given by the tradition of the masters' -is simplicity and staying away from ego.

Without the basic inkling of what spiritual life is, people use the term 'guru'. In reality guru means the person who is established in the transcendental nature of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. This is the energy the guru radiates. However, even in that state the guru is always a disciple connected with the inspiration, the master and the aradhaya. This is one quality I have seen in my guru's life.

As we celebrate Ganesha today this thought came to me, 'Who is Ganesha?' A person who has removed all aspects of I-ness and is connected to higher wisdom. Who is a true disciple? One who is able to remove all traces of 'I' and connect with the higher reality, the *guru tattwa*, the guru element,

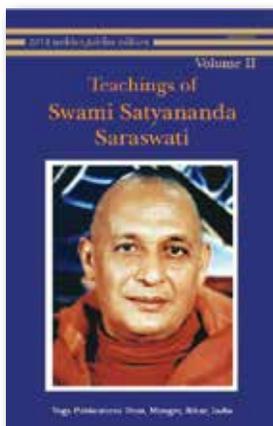


the God element, the pure element. This is the beginning of a journey to attain Ganesha's grace. To become egoless is the beginning of the journey in the life of a disciple. Otherwise, the guru says, "You do this," and the disciple says, "No, I am not going to do it. I am going to do something else," yet the disciple still expects the guru to continue to guide. That is not possible or practical. Therefore, Ganesha and discipleship go hand in hand for to become egoless is the first need of the disciple.

– 4 January 2020,
printed in A 2020 Vision & Guru Bhakti Yoga

Message for the Swamis

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



As sannyasins, you are dedicated to the dissemination and propagation of yoga, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, religion and politics. This is a very difficult task; it is easy to say, but hard to do. You will have to leave your personal life behind, even as a caterpillar breaks out of the cocoon and transforms itself into a grand butterfly, wafting through the air freely. In the same way, you will have to understand that a sannyasin has no personal life,

no personal relationships, no personal love or hatred, no private property or assets, no personal religion or politics.

We have chosen to wear this robe not for our salvation, emancipation or the growth of our spirit, but in the language of Buddha, "To keep on moving as a mendicant for the good of many, for the happiness of many, for the welfare of all human beings." For you there are no frontiers, no continents, no differences. You may get disciples, but you are not a guru. You may get money, but that is not for you. You may get a home, an ashram or a school, but that is not your property. You work not for the fulfilment of ego, nor the accomplishment of name and fame, but because you are the one who can dedicate yourself completely. You are the full-time servant of mankind. The one duty that is left upon you is to promote yoga, to teach yoga, to talk yoga.

Day by day, let this cloak of avidya fall away and the dross of ignorance be cleansed from your personality. The pure spirit must shine through in this frame. For you there is no wife, son, sister or mother. For you there is nothing that could be called



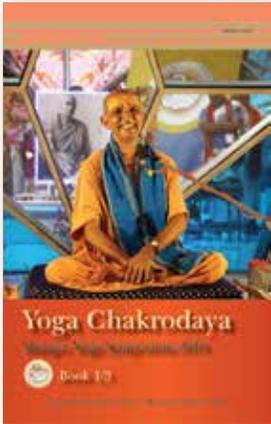
mine. For you there is only one thing – yoga: yoga for health, yoga for mental peace, yoga for spiritual illumination, yoga for mankind. Your heart must be filled with compassion for all living beings, because everybody is your sister and brother; everybody is your relative, and as long as these people do not understand how to live the life of yoga, your sannyasa is not complete.

I am not a guru. I am dedicated to the promotion of yoga because I am under an instruction, and the moment that work is finished I will not be with you. For me greatness is of no consequence and name has no relevance, because many great people have come and gone. Sweeping time has removed them from history. There are millions and millions of great people in history. I may be one among them, but who is going to care for my name? The one satisfaction that I'll get at the time of departing from this body is that I have finished this job, and the job of a sannyasin is just four letters - YOGA.

– October 1980, *International Festival for Yoga and Health, Bogota, Colombia*, printed in *Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Volume II*

Living the Connection

Swami Gorakhnath, India



When I came to Munger, I brought my body in a half-pant and a half-shirt, but I did not bring anything in my mind. I came with an empty mind. Whatever I have received and learnt in life, it is due to the grace of guru. No previous learning has ever been useful in life, not a single one.

When we came to Sri Swamiji, we had no idea about how to behave with a guru or offer him respect, as he would never project his gurudom. He would never act like a great guru, he would be like a normal person; our relationship with him was like that between father and son. We would play together, laugh together, eat together, never realizing what a great guru he was.

Yet, when it came to discipline, there was never any compromise. If you did not arrive on time for a meal, you would not get any food. Sri Swamiji himself followed this: if his food arrived even one minute late, he would not have the meal. If some mistake was committed, you could not get away with it. In fact, the ashram discipline and the lifestyle was so strict that on many nights I would think, 'Maybe I should go away from the ashram.' But in the morning, I would say to myself, 'So why did you come? What for? Follow the purpose for which you have come.' Immediately I would become peaceful and get back to my duties. It was hard, yet it was the most rewarding experience of life.

Through all this, I came to realize that without guru kripa, without his shakti, nothing is possible. This is something I have experienced throughout my life. When we would work with

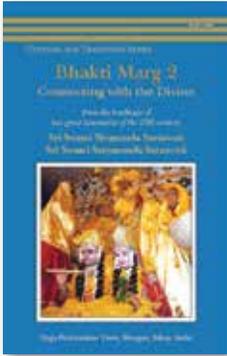
Sri Swamiji, we would never get tired. On the contrary, it was as if the energy would increase manifold. There was balance between difficulty and ease. Guruji would keep us on a tight leash and also make us feel that 'he loves me the most'. In this way, he would make us experience the different facets of life: joy and sorrow, day and night. It is when you live these things in a practical way that the mind becomes empty, not otherwise.

– 20 October 2019, Munger Yoga Symposium,
printed in Yoga Chakrodaya Book 1/3



Illusion of Duality

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The relationship between guru and disciple is like the relationship between an electrical cable and light. Guru is the energy, or the spiritual shakti, and the disciple is the revealer of that shakti. Therefore, every chela must develop his spirit and consciousness. When the spirit and consciousness become deep, the disciple realizes the Self. The spirit unfolds within and there is enlightenment.

The guru and disciple are essentially one and not two. The consciousness of the disciple is always plugged into the guru. This is called devotion or bhakti. On that plane they are one and totally united. By constant spiritual practice purity is attained, the dross of the mind is removed and the disciple can realize the guru within.

For a disciple the guru exists outside as well as inside. The external guru is one aspect of his devotion and the inner guru is another aspect of his realization. When he meditates on his guru, he tries to communicate with his inner guru. Therefore, it is said that guru is the most important aspect in spiritual life. However, it should be remembered that the disciple has to belong to a higher category. The higher the disciple's spirit, the quicker will be the enlightenment.

As the pure water in the pond can reflect the moon in the sky, in the same way, the purity of heart of the disciple can reflect the glory of his guru. There are three important steps in the deeper relationships between man and God. The empirical relationships are between child and parent, brother and sister, man and woman, but the relationship with guru includes them all. It is at once empirical and transcendental. At one level they

move as two individuals, one knows and the other does not, but at a higher level they move as one.

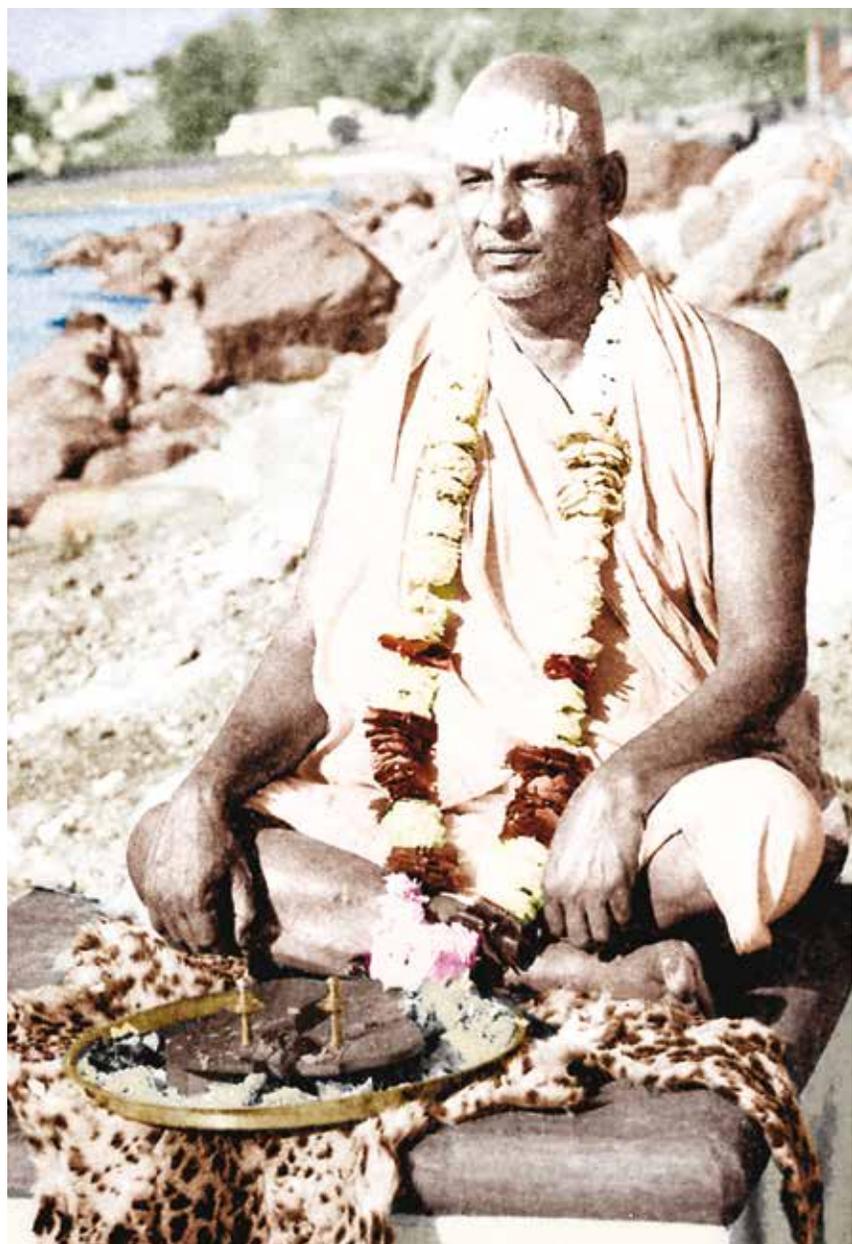
Guru and disciple are like one soul living in two bodies. One is always aware of the other on the spiritual plane. External communication is no longer necessary here, because the disciple does not function on the level where he needs the guru's physical presence. He has the guru's spirit within him, which illumines the dark corners of his being. What need is there to talk to him or see his face?

As Kabir said, "If your beloved lives abroad, do write him a letter; but if your beloved dwells within, there is no movement, no emotion, no question of even being together. Wherever you are, you are always close." Guru and disciple are two, but in truth they are one. The duality is only an illusion. In truth there is no duality, and therefore, if guru and disciple are one, where is the difficulty in communication? This is the principle and philosophy that has to be understood.

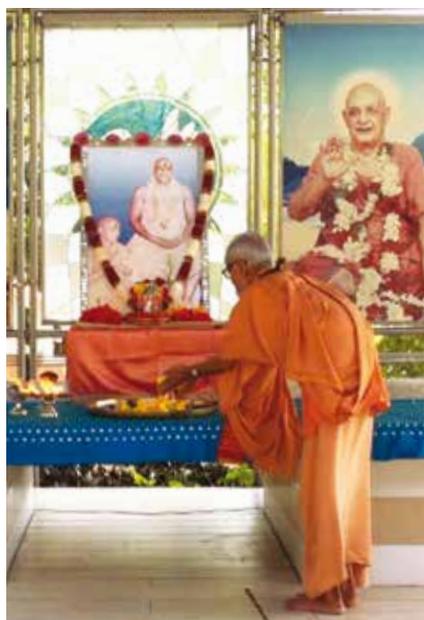
In modern physics also, there are similar principles. There is a totality of matter, that is to say, there is no diversity in matter. You see so many million people, so many million animals, so many million birds, and many other things on this earth. They are not many. The diversity which one experiences is on account of one's limitations. In fact, there is only unity. There is only one electricity here, but my microphone is working and his microphone is working, and the tape recorder is also working. You can put ten tape recorders and ten microphones. One electrical energy is flowing through all. Diversity is there, but unity is the base.

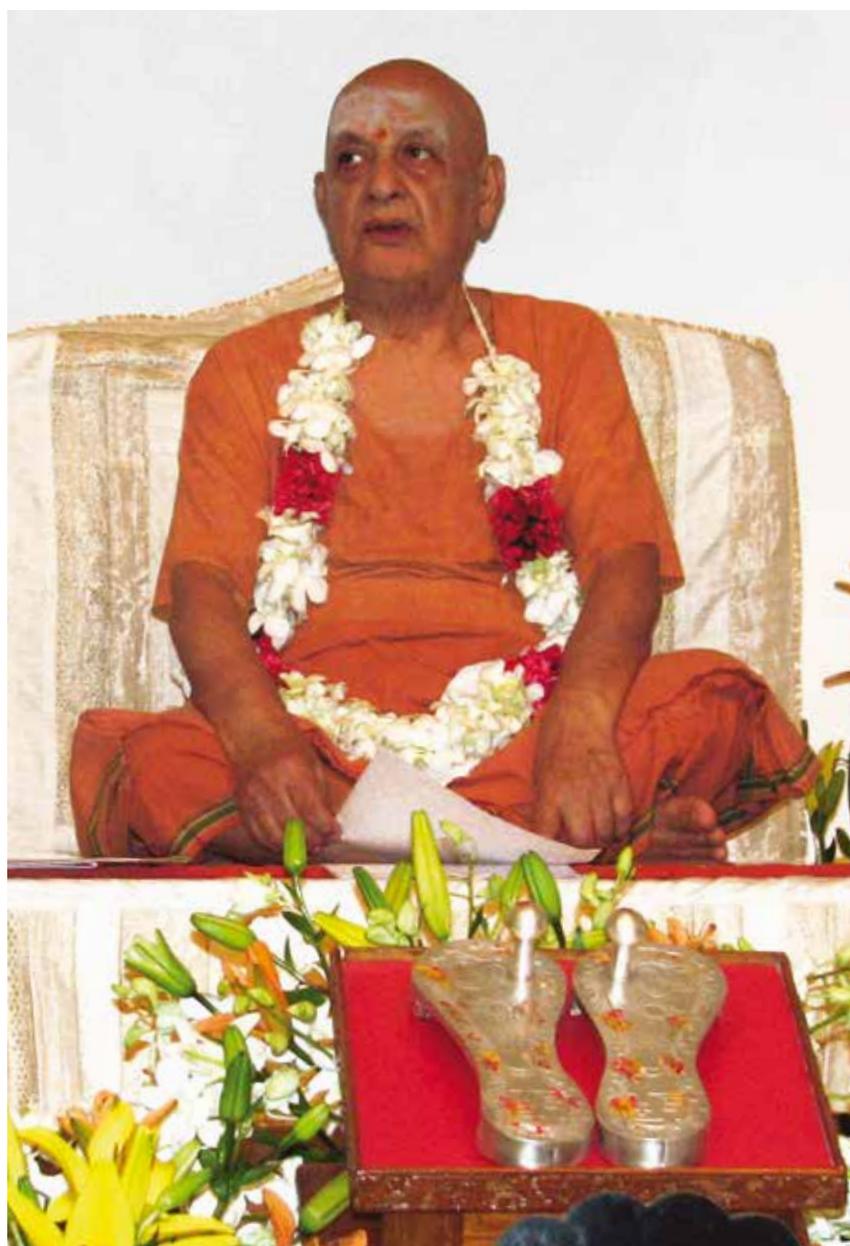
There is one energy between guru and disciple, not two energies. It is true that there are two bodies, but modern physics does not even accept that there are two bodies. Quantum theory says that even the difference of body is illusion. In the latest modern physics, scientists have come to the point that this experience which you are having is not true. It is purely an experience.

– *Printed in Bhakti Marga 2, Connecting with the Divine*









You have to slurp

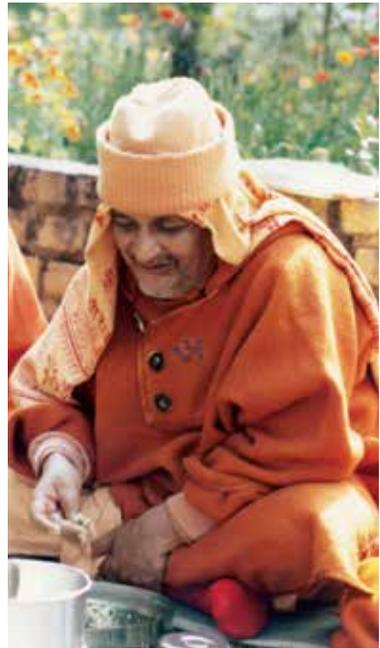
Swami Vijayananda Saraswati

In the early days of the ashram, there were many young men, both Indian and foreigners. Their table manners were not always the best. Especially liquid khichari or rice with curry sauce would be a noisy affair. This used to annoy most of the female swamis.

One day, we were having lunch with Sri Swamiji on the lawn outside Yoga Arogya. It was a day of rice and curry. Sri Swamiji cleared his throat and said, "Now when you have rice and curry, you do not eat it, you have to slurp it. So all of you, please try." What to do, it was Guru's orders.

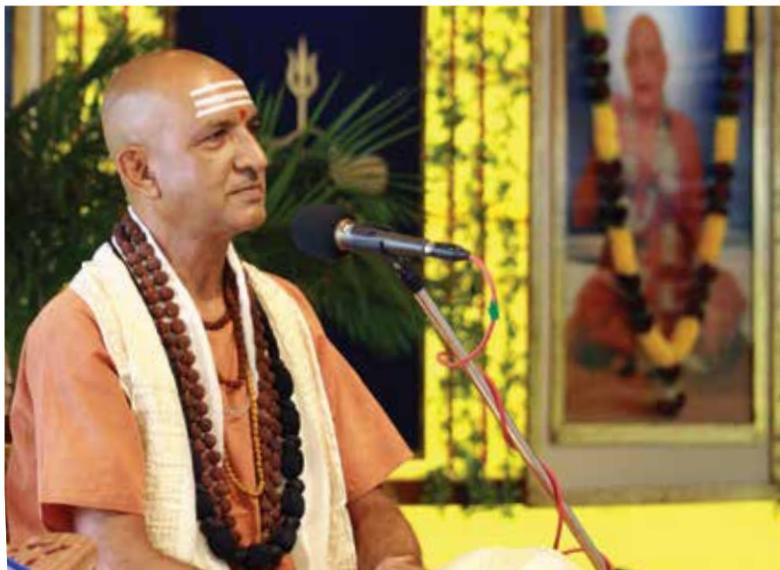
He mixed the curry with the rice, took a handful and slurped it up with great delight and a lot of noise. The boys, knowing what to do, followed in the same manner. There was nothing left but join in – and slurp. It was one of the funniest meals as each of us was trying to make as much noise as possible.

This was Sri Swamiji's way of practical teaching. He showed us the useless nature of our personal likes and dislikes and how to overcome them. He lived totally in the moment and always enjoyed it to the fullest. He showed us the way to make the most of every situation, to see the opportunities, the good and positive and experience happiness, fellowship, and have a good laugh.



Guru Pournima

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



The aim of the Guru Pournima celebration is threefold: connecting with *satyam*, *shivam*, *sundaram*, the real, the auspicious and benevolent. Then one is expressing inner beauty and appreciating outer beauty. It is *satyam*, *shivam* and *sundaram* that remove the darkness from the life of an individual, not the teachings of the books, but what you are able to imbibe and experience.

That is the connection a disciple develops with the guru. Previously, disciples would hear the instructions and try to live them. Today, they read but are unable to live. That is the normal social trend – read and know, but live according to your choice. Spiritual discipline says, ‘Learn, imbibe and live what you have learnt in a harmonious and disciplined manner’. This is the difference between the aspirations of the material life and spiritual life.

People face problems when they come to spiritual life. They are not able to manage the mind-set and discipline of spiritual life, and they are not able to harmonize it with their material life. Therefore, they become more aware of strife and struggle rather than developing awareness of satyam, shivam and sundaram.

If the idea and the inspiration of satyam shivam sundaram is alive within us, then maybe one day we can ignore the logic and move into the area of experience which can make us enlightened. That is the reminder of Guru Poornima - to become the full moon whose cooling light brings peace and solace to all souls. That is spiritual life.

Material and spiritual life

In ancient times, gurus or masters taught the material and spiritual sciences together to have a balance in the behaviour and expression of society. In modern times, the spiritual subjects have been taken away from the material subjects leading to a condition in which we do not appreciate the beauty and bounty of life - we exploit it.

People lived with material needs and desires in the past as well, yet they were able to regulate and balance their needs in life with spiritual precepts and disciplines. Today, in the absence of spiritual precepts and disciplines, nothing is left to check and balance our lives except materialistic motivations. Greed and exploitation take a toll on human civilization and on planet Earth. Therefore, it is important that we bring spiritual understanding and spiritual awareness into our life to balance the greed and exploitation which is leading to our destruction and death.

If we are able to balance our nature with positive spiritual qualities and disciplines, there is hope for our future generations to live a life of dignity. If there is no check to this material hypnosis, then death and destruction of the human race is imminent. Now the choice has to be made: let us balance the material with spiritual.



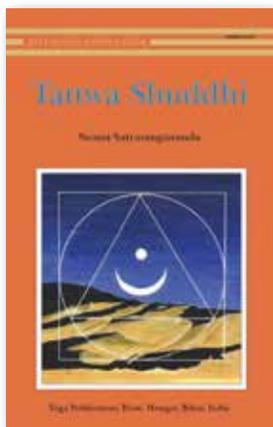
Our choice

Let this Guru Poornima be the time when we can make the choice, apply the change and have conviction, trust and faith in what we do, in ourselves and in the guidance received from past and present masters. Let us work together to make our society a pleasant, harmonious and positive society. Let us think about it, plan it and then take an oath on this Guru Poornima day to help ourselves, our society and our world. This will be the biggest tribute we can offer as novices to the tradition of enlightened, luminous spiritual masters, who have come time and again to tell us, "Watch it, be careful, balance, tread carefully for your own good." With positivity, positive convictions and positive efforts we can definitely honour the people who have inspired us to achieve the best in our life.

– 5 July 2017, Guru Poornima, Paduka Darshan, Munger

Guru

Swami Satyangananda Saraswati



In the *Shiva Samhita* (3:11), it states, “Only the knowledge imparted by a guru, through his lips, is powerful and useful, otherwise it becomes fruitless, weak and very painful.” In fact, all the ancient texts state that for spiritual sadhana, especially the higher esoteric practices, the guru is indispensable. From all points of view this is a logical claim. We need the guidance of a teacher to gain knowledge of all faculties or sciences. Then why doubt

the necessity of a guide for the spiritual sciences?

Guru means one who dispels the darkness, i.e. ignorance, and brings illumination. Therefore, the guru is more than just a teacher. A teacher can only give you academic knowledge to satisfy and stimulate your intellect but the guru gives you intuitive knowledge through intimate experience. He is one who has realized his true Self by the dint of his own sadhana and rigorous disciplines. He has travelled the same path which we are stumbling along and knows the pitfalls and dangers that may befall the disciple.

The path is hazardous, narrow as a razor’s edge and few who have traversed it know the way. We are not even sure of the destination, so how can we assume to know the way? However, the guru has been there and has returned to show us the way is part of his grace which, as sadhakas, we should humbly acknowledge. The divine powers have unfolded in him and revealed the unknown mysteries of spirit. Not only has he discovered the hidden reality for himself, but he can also transmit the experience to others to encourage them on

the same path. In fact, such a guru lives for just this purpose: to awaken the yearning for spiritual knowledge in others.

In India, which has upheld the tradition of gurus from time immemorial, a guru is regarded as divinity incarnate. Indians believe that a guru, through his spiritual accomplishment, is the closest thing to God that is amongst us. If God exists, that is all right, but has anyone seen him? The guru is the only manifestation of the divine that we have witnessed and, therefore, he is humbly acknowledged as a guide and preceptor. The greatest intellectuals, thinkers and philosophers have bowed down before a guru who has had the experience of truth, for what is academic knowledge before experience?

As adults in a so-called civilized society, we revere the supremacy of the intellect, thereby ignoring any other source of knowledge, even if it is more accurate. We are not to blame, for that is how we have been trained from childhood, but in spiritual life one has to transcend the intellect and bypass it through the sublime emotions of faith, love and devotion. In order to progress in spiritual life, one has to unlearn everything because the spiritual experience is beyond intellect and does not follow the logical and rational codes of behaviour. This is why one is often told to be as innocent as a child who is not bound by the logical claims of the intellect.

The basis for all spiritual sadhana is the personal evolution of the sadhaka. Culturally, socially, racially and politically we may all be the same; even from the point of view of religion we may be alike, but in terms of spiritual evolution no two persons are at the same point. Who can know at which rung of the ladder you are poised? Your spiritual sadhana has to begin from the point you are at. It is the guru alone who can judge this, by examining the karma and personal evolution of an aspirant, and give a sadhana on that basis. This insight is very important as your progress depends upon the suitability and efficacy of the practised sadhana.

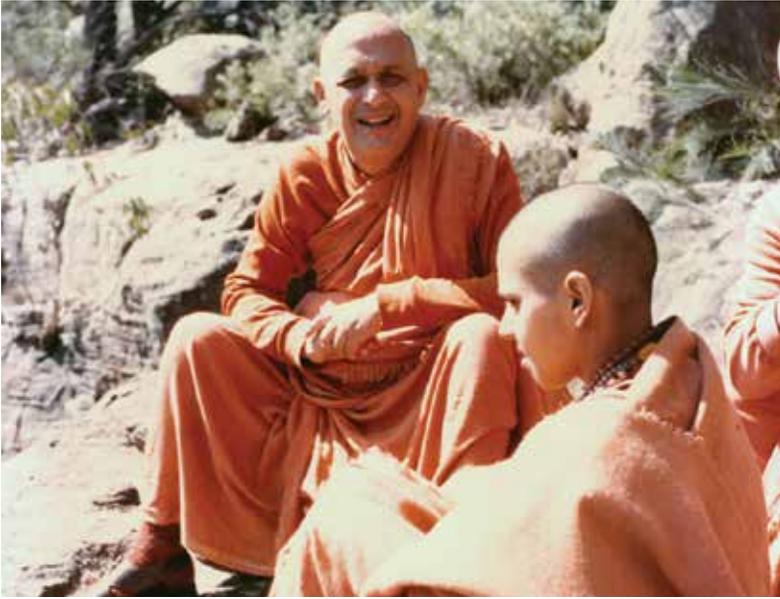
Very often people complain that they cannot meditate. However, they have failed to understand that without



fulfilling the preliminary disciplines to evolve the body and mind meditation is not possible. The body is not capable of maintaining steadiness for more than ten minutes and the mind is continually wavering from one thought to the next. Then how can meditation be possible? The fault is not in the practice of meditation but that you are trying to 'fit a square peg in a round whole'.

Sometimes the aspirant may have already evolved through sadhana done in previous lives, but in order for him to pick up the loose threads he requires the hand of a master craftsman. In spiritual life, the power with which you are playing is the same power that has created you, that of consciousness. A delicate matter, no doubt requiring the skill of a professional. The guru has the skill to do this. Spiritual sadhana can never be chosen on the personal whim of the sadhaka. It is guru alone who has the authority, insight and experience to judge which sadhana is best for an aspirant.

We are all amateurs in the *lila* or game of life, in spite of which we think we can etch the finest creations. Moreover, the path of spiritual sadhana is through the deepest layers of the mind, where all the skeletons of past experiences are residing. An encounter with them can be dangerous for your equilibrium, if it is not done under the watchful guidance of a guru.



It is the guru who initiates you into sadhana and gives you the inspiration to remain on the path in spite of any difficulties that may assail you. Initiation is an important factor before beginning any sadhana. The guru's initiation is power-charged and creates a suitable atmosphere and mental equilibrium to fulfil the obligations of the spiritual practice and thereby receive the merits of sadhana. It is stated in the tantra shastras that without initiation from a guru, sadhana cannot induce the desired results.

Sadhana given by the guru helps to extract the ego and eliminate the karma of the disciple, if it is practised without expectation. Acceptance of the guru's guidance without anticipation of any merit implies subjugation of your ego. Whatever you decide to do yourself involves the ego. However, when the guru instructs you, it is not your desire but his order that motivates you. When there is no desire, there is no expectation, no delusion, and through this subtle process the disciple evolves.

– *Printed in Tattwa Shuddhi*

Swami Niranjan

Swami Anandananda Saraswati, Italy

Swamiji is the embodiment of excellence. When observing Swamiji's life in every aspect, in every phase, in every role, what emerges is the tendency and expression of excellence. He is an excellent human being with all the most refined qualities of humanity.

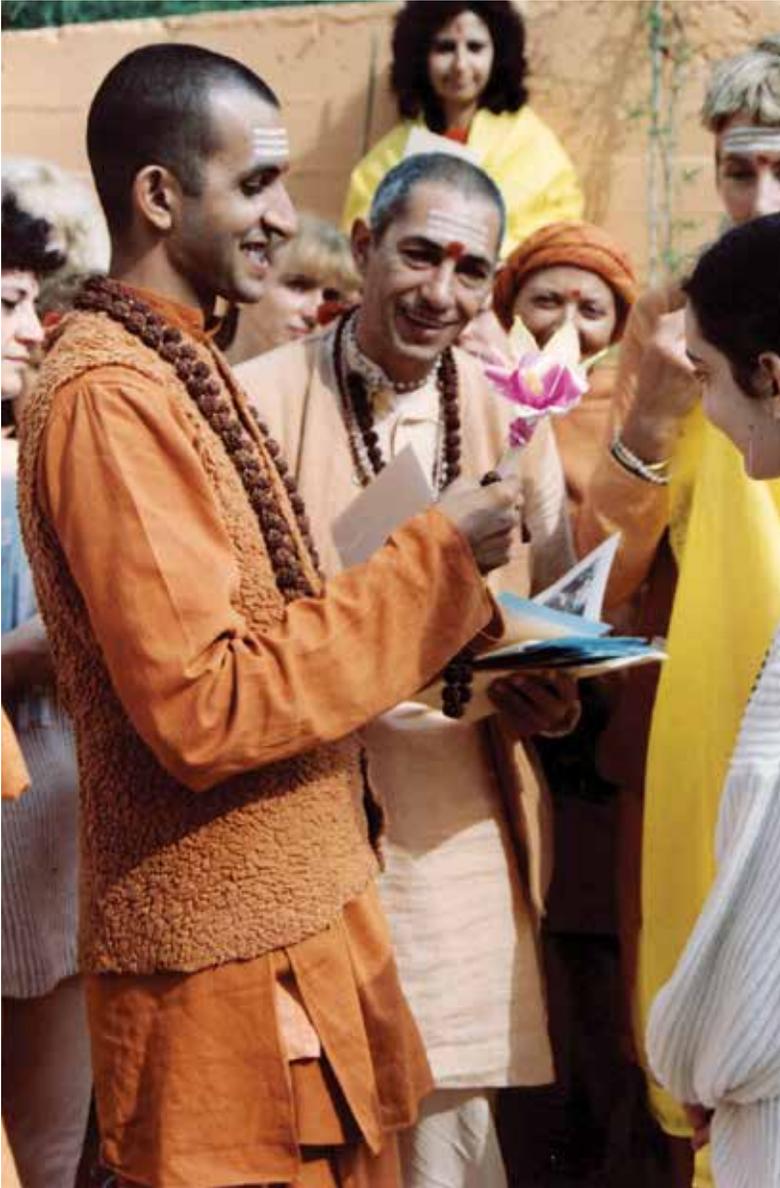
This is how I would define Swami Niranjan from the perspective of what is the apparent, manifested expression of his personality.

He plays and jokes with us and the world while his awareness is connected to Sri Swamiji, to infinite knowledge, to timeless time, to the core of life and existence. Whoever sees him or hears his voice is touched in the heart and spirit, he can take us to just love him and love all his expressions in such a way that the intellect is rendered inadequate, silent, inadequate.

What a great fortune and honour to have met Swami Niranjan in my life. Every single person who has met him feels a sense of gratitude towards the higher forces and to Sri Swamiji for this unique opportunity in life. The gratitude is for having met a living example of an excellent disciple, an excellent sadhaka, an excellent yogi, teacher, visionary, friend, an excellent human being.

Swamiji is showing us the way towards understanding and real unconditional love so we become worthy disciples of Sri Swamiji. Sri Swamiji has always been the only important aspect in Swamiji's life which is obvious in his behaviour, expression, teachings and undertakings. What a model for future humanity, future sannyasins, future civilizations.

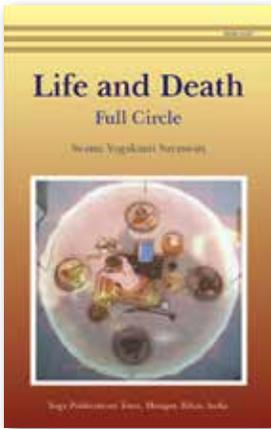
Only this much can be expressed in words, but there is much more about Swami Niranjan. Words cannot describe the experience of sentiment, affection, or feeling that brings a smile from the heart when thinking of him.



Swami Satyananda has given us the most precious gift in the form of Swami Niranjan. Jay Ho Sri Swamiji, Jay Ho Swamiji!

Looking at the Circle

Swami Yogakanti Saraswati



While researching the life of Adiguru Shankaracharya for the book *Living Shankara*, I became intrigued by what appeared to be authentic evidence of him living at quite different times. It began to be clear to me that this great yogi had taken birth several times over the last three and a half thousand years or so. Each time he had been recognized as a great authority by his contemporaries, and had continued the work of preserving and teaching the ancient wisdom or *vidya*. This led to renewed reflections on rebirth, and how rebirth is accepted in many eastern traditions but is often rejected or regarded skeptically in the West.

I wondered if many of the emotional problems of people in the West, and the way western society has become so estranged from nature, could be traced to this view that our present life is the only dimension of consciousness that we will ever experience. It's a very isolating perspective; in fact, it's hardly a perspective at all. A much wider perspective is that reality encompasses and transcends this present existence, and that death is a portal into the next phase of our evolution.

Humans, and human society do not have to be ruled by materialistic concerns, the consciousness of humankind can be expanded to incorporate concern for all human beings and for all of nature. It's an unsettling experience to come face to face with embodied consciousness in the form of a dog, an elephant, or some other animal that society treats as unaware, and to realize that this denigration of other life forms is happening routinely around the world. Human sensitivity needs to evolve

beyond 'me and mine', and we need to be able to maintain this sort of expanded awareness if we wish to evolve into human beings who are ready for the next step in evolution.

The scriptures speak of the soul evolving as it takes birth in the form of various creatures, and in various dimensions. It's a long journey through expanding states of consciousness, but we can start work on ourselves right away. Swami Satyananda Saraswati in 1976 had the slogan, 'Yoga is the way to uplift the consciousness of mankind.' He was speaking about how one can live with more awareness – but to complete the circle, we have to die with more awareness too. And in the end, he also demonstrated how to do that – transforming death into mahasamadhi.

How to deepen and expand awareness

We so often avoid communicating with people on the subject of death, even if they are dying, or suffering because someone they love has just died, but we need to learn how to die well, as a peaceful conclusion to a well-lived life. Death is not defeat, and the attitude towards death that people have as they are dying is crucial to the actual process of dying, and to what happens to the spirit after death and in the next birth.

We should embrace the perspective that life and death are part of a full circle. We may not be able to approach such mastery in life or death right now, but even lesser yogis, who are not enlightened but who have experienced out of body experiences, or faculties such as telepathy and clairvoyance, which operate beyond the senses, are more likely to understand and accept the scriptural view that the body is merely a dwelling place for a spirit that is multi-dimensional.

Ramana Maharshi and Paramahansa Ramakrishna remained peaceful and concerned with the welfare of others throughout their long and painful fatal illnesses – and transformed their deaths into mahasamadhi. Swami Satyananda voluntarily, willfully, raised up his pranas while chanting *Aum* and dropped his body while his consciousness achieved mahasamadhi. His mastery was such that, when he died, he used the

opportunity to perform this greatest of all the kriyas as a teaching for all of us. It led to wanting to know what the teachings concerning death are in our own tradition of yoga and Vedanta.

The longer we live, the more often we meet death, whether of family or friends or of people we hardly know at all, and our own experience of death is coming closer each day. Why not look into this subject of death more closely? Why not try to overcome

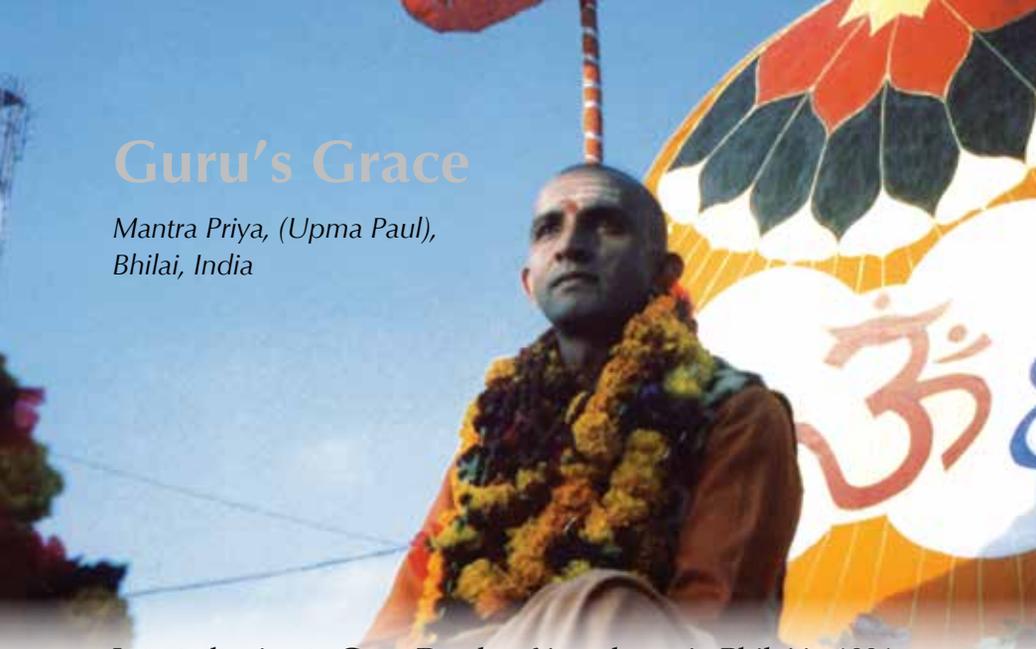


our fears and build up sure understanding of how we can help ourselves and others through death into new dimensions of consciousness?

Once I began talking with people about death, I found many have had out of body experiences, or experiences communicating with the dead, or have remembered past lives, but have not 'put them together' to form a larger picture of reality. It is necessary to integrate this deeper understanding of who we are so that we can live this life better, and so that we can help those who are suffering as death approaches.

In this learning process, I particularly found the satsangs of living masters to be most helpful. Hardly surprising as they are not here because they have to be; they have chosen to return to preserve the ancient teachings and wisdom about the journey of the soul, and to establish goodness. They not only give techniques from their different traditions that we can practise to strengthen the mind and increase our awareness and concentration in life and death; they emanate wisdom, confidence and joy in life, and unshakeable faith in the divine connection guiding us through.

– *Printed in Life and Death – Full Circle*



Guru's Grace

*Mantra Priya, (Upma Paul),
Bhilai, India*

I started going to Gyan Darshan Yogashram in Bhilai in 1994 and became a regular student there. Later I started teaching in the ashram and went to Munger and did my TTC in 2011. In 2006 Swami Niranjana came to Rajnandgaon and I attended all the sessions. It changed my pursuit or perception of yoga from physical to spiritual.

In 2013, I went to Canada to help my son. Everything was new and we struggled to settle in a new country without much support. We moved to a remote city in the north of Canada, a very cold place with few Indian families. We lived there for three years. When I look back, I feel my Guru's blessings were with me at every step giving me the strength to face that difficult period.

Spreading the teaching

Gurujī showed me the path and ways to do seva. I was surprised and still can't believe how I had the chance to teach yoga in the YMCA. After that there was no looking back. I had more and more classes to teach and Satyananda Yoga became a popular name in that small town in northern Ontario. Then I had opportunities to teach this traditional form of yoga and meditation in a college and in community centres.

In a hospital I was asked to teach yoga to patients in the mental health unit. I feel so blessed that I could bring some peace and a spark of hope into the lives of people who were suffering from depression and other conditions. Initially, they came very reluctantly as they had weird notions about yoga which was a westernized yoga. When I started teaching our traditional yoga, they were happy and used to wait for me for their weekly class. We did simple asanas, pranayama and yoga nidra. I felt Guru's grace on their calm and relaxed faces after the class and thanked Guruji for making me the medium of this.

A particular incident touched me to the core of my heart. A 58 years old man came to my class in the hospital and became a regular participant. Later when he was discharged from the hospital, he started attending my classes at the YMCA. After three years when we moved from this town, that man came to me and confessed that he was on the verge of committing suicide and yoga had changed the course of his life to a positive direction. That day I realized why I was sent to this place and how Guruji blessed my efforts and seva.

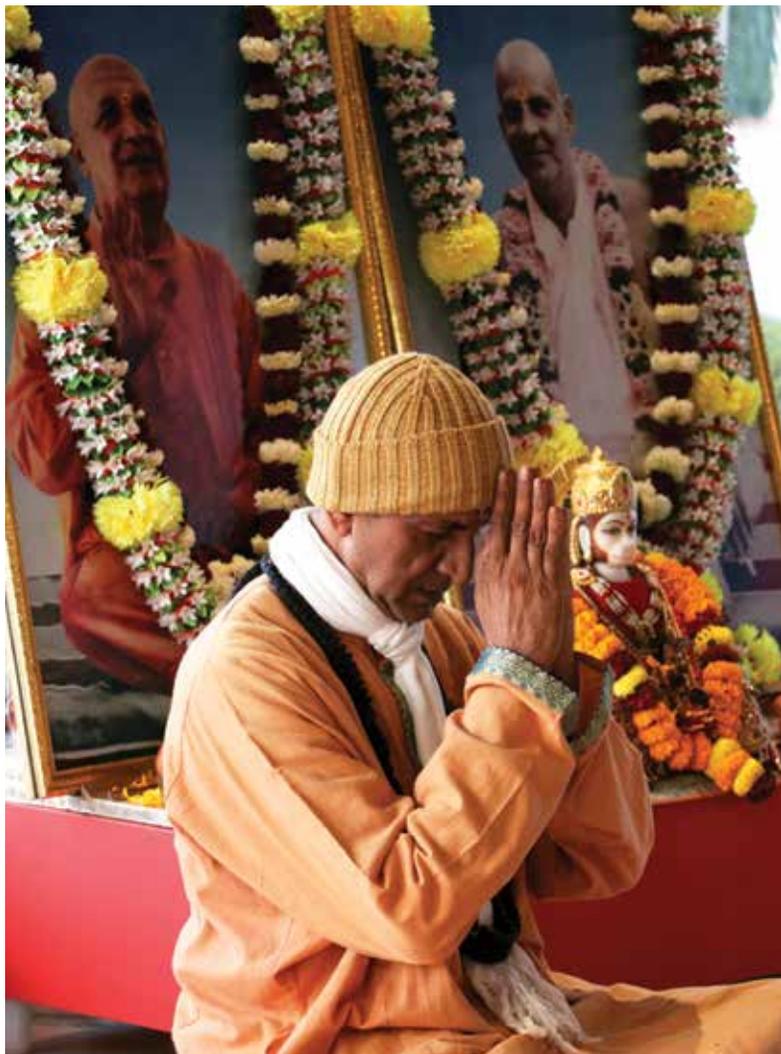
Those three years were difficult years in our personal life. All these classes and seva gave us courage to be strong and positive in testing times. I earned so much love and respect and made many friends. It was an all-white community and I feel blessed that I became the medium to spread Satyananda Yoga in that remote town of Canada.

In 2017, we moved to Toronto where there is a large Indian community. I started teaching yoga, meditation and yoga nidra in various places including a centre for senior citizens and everywhere my classes were well received and appreciated.

My heart is full of love and gratitude that Guruji chose to shower his grace on me and gave me the chance and opportunities to do this seva which touched many lives in that corner of the world. I pray that Guruji keeps showering his grace on me and my family and gives us the strength to follow his teaching.

What is the Role of the Guru?

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



People say that the guru is the remover of *avidya*, darkness or nescience. Where does this *avidya* lie? What does it mean?

The darkness, the nescience, the avidya, is the covering over the light, which has to be removed. The centre of this light is the heart, not the mind. From unconditional light it has become conditioned light, from unconditional love it has become conditioned love, from unconditional feeling it has become conditioned feeling. There are many such coverings over the heart and the guru aims to remove them.

You have to deal with the mind yourself. The process of dealing with the mind has been defined in the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali: "Management of the mental modifications is yoga," this is the second sutra. "After you have managed your mind you will establish yourself in your own nature," this is the third sutra. Personal effort is emphasized in order to deal with and manage the mind. However, when you want to remove the conditionings from life and express the unconditional nature, the guru comes in.

For the practice of yoga and for managing your mind, you do not need a guru. Systems have been defined clearly. You can learn and practise yoga at home from any teacher, and you will get some benefits. However, when it comes to removing the veil of avidya from the heart, it is the guru who tells us how you can let go of your ego, how you can surrender, how you can develop your faith, how you can develop conviction, how you can develop clarity of perception, action, thought, speech. The spiritual teaching that is imparted by the guru is to develop the unconditional heart, not the unconditional mind.

The role of the guru is to open the heart. The role of yoga is to open the mind. The role of an ashram is to open the perceptions that allow you to involve yourself with effort. These roles are predefined. In the ashram you practise effort, *purushartha*, you learn to control the mind through discipline and to awaken the *bhava*, the emotion, towards the guru. These are the three components: ashram life for discipline and motivation; yoga for mind management; guru for opening the heart.

– Printed in Bhakti Marga 2, Connecting with the Divine

2020 – A Year of Change and Equal Vision . . .

Sannyasi Amargeet

2020 seems to be a life changing year, not only in my life but a change for the entire world.

We never know what and how future or destiny unfolds, but there's always a reason for how it unfolds. For life is a never-ending process, life always maintains its cycle of BIRTH-GROWTH-DEATH. I think the soul and life are two different powers. The soul is a divine spirit which supports the individual nature; whereas mind, life, body are the instruments for the manifestation of the nature.

When the true soul comes forward and begins first to influence and then govern the actions of the instrumental nature, then man begins to overcome desire and grow towards a divine nature. Life is a journey and the journey teaches us many things, develops understanding of one's own self and helps overcome our break-downs and problems.

In the same manner, my life's first trip came like an opportunity. Of course all thanks to my beloved 'Swamiji'. Swami Niranjan has always been my guiding star, my companion in every phase of my life. My soul for sure had fallen in love with him from the moment I saw him. Swamiji's flamboyant personality has always influenced me in every way. My deepest gratitude and *Hari Om* to him for letting me break my own shell of limitations.

My first trip to Colombia, South America, was also my first time out of India. I was excited and nervous at the same time. Excited to see the whole new world, and nervous about how I would face the change and challenges of cultures and society. I had never thought that the change would occur in such a manner.

My journey started from the ashram and I was accompanying Swami Prembhava. She came to India the same year I was born, in 1996. And since then she has been like a mother, a friend. At times we think so alike, speak and exchange the same thoughts as if we share the same genetic chain. It was such a beautiful and wonderful experience travelling with her.

For the first time I felt that this world is one and we are one family. As a family we stand together, we stand strong and we stand as one.

We had two seminars in Colombia, on the topic of yoga ecology. Swami Prembhava first spoke on yogic lifestyle, about how we can live a sattvic life in harmony with nature. In the second seminar, she spoke on water as an essential part of life and the necessity to save every drop of it because water is life and life is nature.

We did chanting and sang lots of kirtans, showing others the current situation and how we can save it from destruction through the medium of music.

Our world is changing. Life has become so fast, changing every minute, innovation in every moment. I say innovation and development go hand in hand as it gives opportunity and motivation, but in the 21st century the human race has been under threat, not from the aliens but from among ourselves. With globalization man started neglecting Mother Nature. Nature who provides us with food, shelter, water, who nurtures us in every way. Mother Earth herself gives strength to protect and cherish her family. All we need to do is just take a step to cherish and respect every gift of Nature.

Colombia is a place growing under the watchful eyes of Mother Nature. The mountains, the valleys and rivers have such a powerful and positive effect on 'Head, Heart and Hands'. When I visited the old mountain ranges, it felt like they have been standing there for ages looking over all living and non-living creation. They have witnessed era after era, century after century, asking nothing in return just being the drashta.

All we can do is offer our respect and prayers to them asking for their blessings and protection. I observed no matter where we went that nature speaks the same language. There might be many different species of trees and plants but their roots are the same. In the same manner, we humans might have or follow different castes, creeds, colours, religions and live in any corner of the world, but we all belong to one family, our own human family. We take in the same food, water and sunlight to stay alive. In this trip I also visited many old places like churches and museums, and learnt so many things about ancient history, how humans evolved with time and space.

While I was in Colombia one of the deadliest virus Covid-19 started spreading on a large scale. I never thought that this would reach to such a height affecting so many lives. It felt like Mother Nature is rebooting herself in her own ways and time. We humans have neglected her for so long that now we have to pay with the cost of life. All the boundaries of different countries started to shut down, we were scared yet keeping ourselves positive and motivated. Swamiji called us back home at the very right moment because it felt like it was now or never. Keeping guru in mind and heart we reached home safely.

Once again I would like to thank everyone on Earth and in space who had helped in putting up such a wonderful trip and programs. Special thanks to those where we couldn't go and had to cancel programs due to the emergency. And my love and prayers to everybody out there. Last but not the least, a few lines of inspiration:

Life is simple and precious at the same time. So, let us surrender everything to our Master. We should try to live yoga from moment to moment. A yogic lifestyle can help us to overcome all difficulties. By adopting a yogic lifestyle, we can live in harmony with nature.

Today the world is driving on the edge of a knife, so the change has to be now. We humans have to open our eyes and look up towards a new dawn, because tomorrow starts this



very moment. Let us take a step, unite and make our world a better place for all of us and the entire human race.

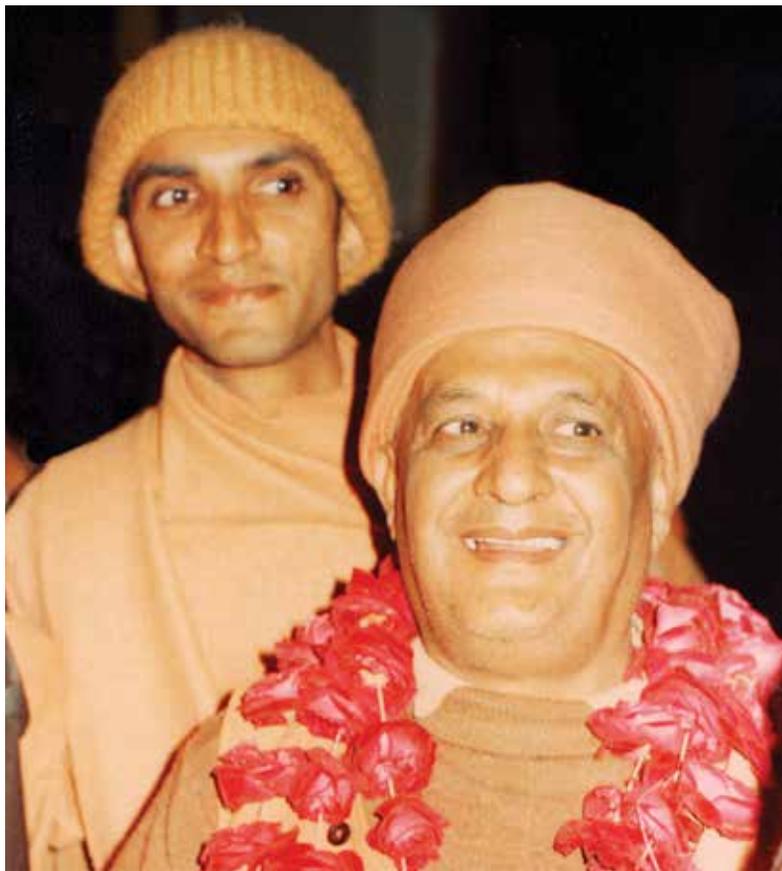
Human Race

Into a hidden region of the heart, to face the difficulties,
To share the suffering and endure earth's wounds.
This in us laughs and weeps, suffers the strokes,
Exults in victory, struggles for the crown;
Identified with the mind, body and life.
It takes on itself their anguish and defeat,
Bleeds with fate's whips and hangs upon the cross,
Yet is the unwounded and immortal self
Supporting the actors in the human scene.
Mother Nature gives sympathy that partakes of others'
grief.

And the little strength, we have to help our race.
We who must fill the role of the universe
Acting itself out in a slight human shape.
And on our shoulders carry the struggling world,
To uplift from light to light, from power to power
Till on a heavenly peak it stands a self.
In its heart an invincible might,
It climbs stumbling, held up by an unseen hand,
A toiling Spirit in a mortal shape.

Heart-To-Heart Relationship

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Many different types of guru-disciple relationships have been defined. It is important to believe in only one and that is a heart-to-heart relationship. If you can follow that, you don't have to worry about any others. In order to develop a heart-to-heart relationship, it is important that first of all you become aware of your own idiosyncrasies and nature. Speaking from personal and practical experience, I have seen that disciples variously

make their guru into a rubbish bin and expect the guru to become a miracle worker; or expect the guru to represent the epitome of morality and spirituality; or make the guru into a cardboard person.

Guru is not a person on whom you can dump all your rubbish. Guru is a person who inspires you to lead your life in a creative, efficient and effective way so that there is development of self-awareness – what I can do, what I can't do, how I can be, how I can't be, what is the right thing to do, what is the wrong thing to do, how to understand other people's attitudes and concepts, and how not to impose my own ego and ambitions. This is the basis of the guru's teaching.

When I first came to the ashram Sri Swamiji told me, "Look, never come to me with your problems. If you have a problem, if you have a difficulty, if you have a conflict, work it out. Work out different solutions and bring them to me. Once you have told me what your solutions are, I will decide which is the right one for you to adopt or follow."

In this kind of relationship, firstly, I became aware of the problems and difficulties which I faced in my life – in relationships, in work, in communication, in interactions, in my emotions, in my mind – and secondly, I would think of different solutions as to how I could work them out. Then I would go to Sri Swamiji and say, "Swamiji, I have this problem and these are the solutions I have thought of – A, B, C, D, E, F, G." He would say, "Follow F," and I would follow F. It was as simple as that.

This relationship is important. In any relationship with the guru it is the solution which has to be discussed, not just the problem. The solutions which you think of are your own product according to your capacities, nature and beliefs. The guru simply channels them. There is never any conflict between the guru and disciple. This is how a heart-to-heart relationship eventually develops.

– *Printed in Bhakti Marga 2, Connecting with the Divine*

Guru

Guru is the channel through which
flows the grace of God.

Guru is the place of pilgrimage.

Guru is fire.

Guru is the sun.

Guru is the whole world.

Guru is the vehicle through which
the Eternal moves in the world.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati





Yoga Publications Trust

Sivam Satyam Sundaram

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This pictorial tribute presents the unique relationship of two extraordinary people: the perfect guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, and his perfect disciple, Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Their bond is expressed in the words of a devoted disciple and a loving, committed guru.

May all those who chance upon this publication see the invisible bond of love, trust, dedication, faith and oneness that guru and disciple have for each other, which makes them complete and an instrument to create beautiful melodies in God's hands.

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



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Blessed Self

Hari Om

This is to inform you that due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns affecting all, the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, has not printed or dispatched the *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines after April 2020 issue.

However, all current issues of *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines are available online on the **Bihar Yoga, Satyam Yoga Prasad** and **YOGA magazine** apps and at www.biharyoga.net and www.satyamyogaprasad.net free of cost.

The current paid subscribers to the printed *YOGA* and *YOGAVIDYA* magazines will receive their back copies when the situation becomes normal.

Please check out the new books, video and audio recordings which are uploaded and available in satyamyogaprasad.net. Use this special time to discover old and new treasures of spiritual yogic wisdom and live yoga moment to moment.

Bihar School of Yoga apps (for iOS and android devices) now available:

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<i>Bihar Yoga publications:</i>	Satyam Yoga Prasad
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<i>Bihar Yoga lifestyle:</i>	Yoga Lifestyle Program For Frontline Heroes

With prayers and blessings of Sri Swami Satyanandaji for your health, wellbeing and peace.

Om Tat Sat
The Editor