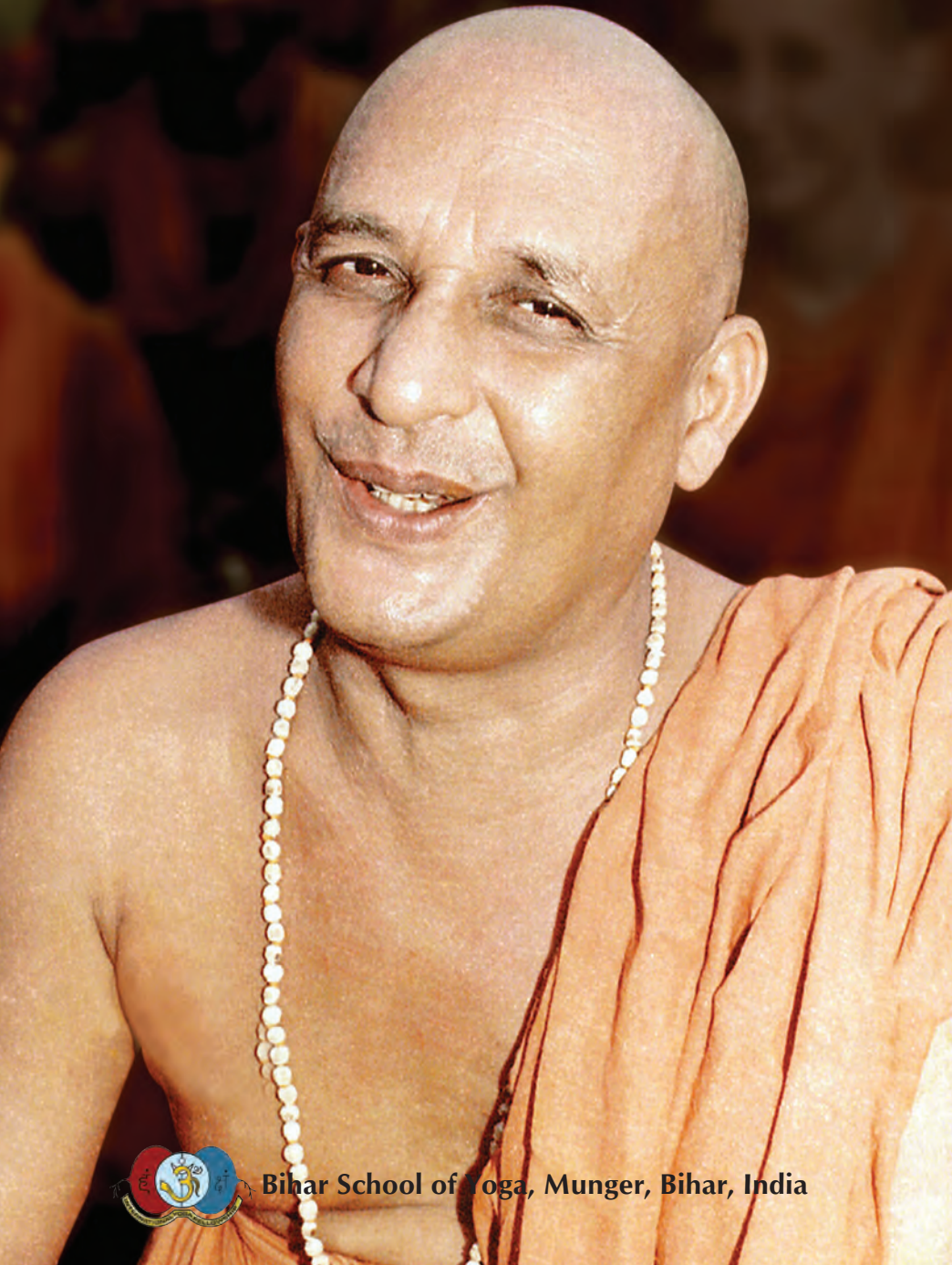


YOGA

Year 12 Issue 7
July 2023



Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannyasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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2–3. Swami Satyananda Saraswati
4. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



TRIBUTES BY SWAMI SIVANANDA TO SATYAM

Divine Spirit
July 1962
Greetings!

I send my heartiest congratulations to you all for starting the International Yoga Fellowship Movement. May God Almighty grant total success to this noble mission of yours. I am sending the prasad of Lord Vishwanath for the same.

Remove the hatred, greed, delusion, selfishness and jealousy deeply ingrained in human society and spread the message of inner peace. Only inner peace can lead to world peace. That alone is true service of humanity. May God aid and assist you in the great task that lies ahead of you.

—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 ॥



Today

Yes, you belong to realms unknown
And have returned to your True abode.

And like those who travel to faraway lands
You often send postcards, emails and sms
To those you love
Or those who love you dearly.

But today rest for a while with me,
The cave of my heart yearns for your fragrance.
Although you have much else to do
Today do not deprive me.

Today I yearn to bask in your presence
To see your beloved form with my eyes
To hear your laughter
To smell your fragrance
To awaken to your touch
To taste the nectar of your sweet embrace.

The memories come alive,
Now the delightful forms and motions are transparent.
I look through them and see myself as You.

You leave so that we two can do one dance.

—Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati

Continuing the Lineage

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

The Indian culture has always been guided and made rich by the teachings of the gurus, and not by the teachings of religion. This is something that each one has to understand properly and carefully. Gurus guide the aspirant on the spiritual path. It is a practical process of educating oneself about one's own nature, personality and inherent quality. This has been the role of gurus since time immemorial, as they have provided us with an understanding to realize the causes of our pain and suffering, to overcome them, and to experience the transcendental and the divine nature within all of us.

Religions say, 'Believe in God', but gurus have said, 'Discover divinity within you.' This is the main difference between religion and spiritual life, although today people confuse religion and spiritual life. They believe it to be one and the same, yet these are two different paths. In the Indian culture, religion is a personal belief and experience, it is not confined to a belief in only one; each individual can believe in different aspects of divinity. This is known as polytheism. This experience of divinity comes by following a path in which we are able to discover ourselves and remove the garb, the covering of ignorance and experience the light and luminosity within. This is also the meaning of the word Guru. *Guru* does not mean teacher, but dispeller of darkness.

Today many people like to call themselves gurus, yet guru is a qualification which is given to those people who have walked the path themselves, who have attained purification themselves, who have attained the experience of the divine within themselves, and who are able to guide other spiritual aspirants on the path of positivity, creativity and luminosity. This is the tradition that we follow in India. Although many Indians today do not understand this concept of guru,



right from time immemorial this concept has been given predominance in our life.

Lord Shiva was the first guru. He is considered to be the first master, who taught his disciple Parvati, his consort, the way to overcome suffering, realize the causes of suffering and attain freedom from suffering. He defined many different vidyas or aspects of knowledge, which lead to transcending the gross, lower nature which is negative, limited and which is suffering, and to identify with the higher, transcendental nature which is pure, benevolent and creative.

The tradition of gurus continues since that time, and society has been guided by the teachings of these masters, not by religious precepts. The teachings and the lineage of these masters are remembered. We chant:

*Om namo brahmadibhyo Brahma vidya sampradaya kartribhyo
varnsharishibhyo namo gurubhyaha.*

The tradition begins with Narayana and comes to Shankaracharya. There is a whole lineage of these luminous masters:

*Narayanam padmabhavam vasishtham saktim cha tatputrapa-
rasaram cha.*

*Vyasam shukam gaudapadam mahantam govinda yogindra
mathasya shishyam.*

In this manner, the whole lineage of enlightened gurus is remembered for they are the guides, the ones who have told us how to cultivate positivity in life; they have told us how to



live harmoniously in life. How much we are able to, is up to us. The path is clear and the path is straight.

In this lineage comes our Paramguru, Swami Sivanandaji. Swami Sivanandaji is a very special personality. To know him, you have to understand the history of his birth. There was great saint in South India, Appayya Dikshitar, who was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. One day during his worship he had the vision of Lord Shiva, who appeared before him, in front of the eyes of his mind, and said to him, 'I shall be born in the seventh generation of your lineage.' After that the vision dissipated. Sure enough, in the seventh generation a special child was born, who was called Kuppuswami by his parents.

This child exhibited extraordinary qualities and personality from his birth, and endeared himself to everyone. He was educated, and in those days he was one of the few medical doctors in the country, as education was very limited. He went to serve in Malaysia. While he was serving in a hospital in Malaysia, one sadhu came for treatment. This prodigy, Kuppuswami treated the sadhu who became well. At the time of departure, the sadhu presents a book to Kuppuswami, *Brahmavichar*, Thoughts or reflections on God.

Kuppuswami read this book and it became the matchstick which lit the flame of spirituality in his life. After reading the book, Kuppuswami left his work, profession, returned to India by ship, as that was the main mode of travelling at that time, and went straight to the railway station. There he handed over

all his personal belongings to a friend whom he had called and said, "Please take this to my home and tell them that I have another destiny." Then he travelled north, to the Himalayas, in search of an enlightened guru. In those days, there were no roads, vehicles or cars, motorcycles or scooters, not even bicycles. People had to travel on foot, bullock carts, elephants, or just keep walking. He came close to Rishikesh, searching for somebody who could guide him in spiritual life.

Before reaching Rishikesh, he felt tired, sat down against a tree to relax, and closed his eyes. One does not know how much time had passed, but suddenly this doctor, this aspirant felt a shadow fall on him and he opened his eyes to see what the shadow was. When he opened his eyes, he saw a sannyasi standing before him who asked, "Who are you? What are you doing here? What are you searching for?" Respectfully this aspirant doctor told the sannyasi, "I am in search of a master, a guru, who can guide me on the spiritual path." The sannyasi said to him, "I am your master and I will initiate you into the tradition of sannyasa." He gave him the initiation, a few instructions and then walked away. The name of this master was Swami Vishwananda Saraswati, who named the aspirant Swami Sivananda Saraswati.

Vishwananda means master of the universe, *vishwa*, the world. He was an emissary of Shiva or maybe Shiva himself, who came to inspire and guide his 'part', his offspring, and named him Sivananda. The encounter between Swami Vishwananda and Swami Sivananda was a very short one, lasting about twenty to thirty minutes only. This was the only time that guru and disciple were together. The instructions given by Swami Vishwananda to Swami Sivananda were followed by him with absolute conviction, faith, sincerity, commitment until the end of his days - to live like a sannyasin and to serve like a sannyasin. That was the inspiration Swami Sivanandaji carried with him all his life.

– 12 July 2022, Ganga Darshan, Munger

Four Traditions

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



My tradition is not the guru-disciple tradition, but the family tradition. My mother inherited the hatha yoga tradition from Nepal. When I say Nepal, I mean the Natha yogis like Gorakhnath, Matsyendranath. They are called the nine yogis who are supposed to be the founders of hatha yoga.

Gorakhnath was a Nepali sadhu, sannyasin, yogi. His guru, Matsyendranath, the founder of the hatha yoga tradition in our times, was also from Nepal.

Another tradition of mine, which comes from my grandmother, is from Tibet because she was Tibetan. I inherited the Buddhist tradition of hatha yoga from her. In western countries, the Buddhist tradition of hatha yoga, of 84 yoginis and yogis, is not known at all. Milarepa, was also linked with that tradition, as was Naropa and Tilopa; all these great yogis (84 in number) in the Tibetan tradition are known as Master Yogis.

The third tradition which I received was at the age of sixteen, when a yogini, a lady sannyasini, came to our family and stayed with us for a period of over six months. She initiated me in the practical side of hatha yoga and into every practical aspect of tantra.

It is through these traditions that I have been teaching hatha yoga to everyone, even after having read other books. In hatha yoga there is a tradition: if the book says one thing and guru tells you another thing, you go by guru and not by the books. I have always gone through the traditions to which I am directly linked – Nepal, Tibet and that yogini.

After that, the fourth tradition came into my life – my guru. Swami Sivananda was my guru, for he gave me the deeper and abiding understanding of life, matter and everything. He pulled me through the quagmires of life; he pulled me through the limitations of life, and gave me a deeper understanding of Vedanta, the non-dual aspect of the whole creation. So he is my real guru.

– 2 March 1985, Dulwich, England

No Flirting

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In the ashram, the central figure is the Guru. It is not the kitchen-in charge, not the office-in-charge, not the money-in-charge, not the accountant, not even the secretary. Guru is the central figure and that Guru is not a worker. Of course, he does join you in the office and in the kitchen, but he is not a worker.

Guru is an inspirer, Guru is a transmitter and Guru is sometimes a tutor. This inspiration sometimes works through everyone.

If the gurus were to flirt a lot with their disciples and gossip endlessly, they could not transmit. They have to be alone, all by themselves. They have to practise their sadhana, strengthen their willpower and with that raised willpower they have to help the disciples, devotees and admirers who come to them.

Guru as Role Model

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

The truth is that the real guru is in everybody. Guru is not an external reality, I am not the guru, and nobody is a guru. We are indicators to the inner guru. Not only that, the inner guru is beyond the reach of everybody. The guru is within you. The external guru is not necessary. Can you talk to the internal guru, can you hear him, can you understand him? He is telling you so many things, he is guiding you, he is waking you up, but you don't understand it. You are deaf and he speaks silently. This is the greatest gap, this is the greatest distance between you and your inner guru. This is with everybody in the world. Therefore, you must realize the truth in contradiction.

Number one, the guru is in me and not outside, but you are my guru. This is how we have to understand the truth in total contradiction, in total paradox. Many times I tell people, the external guru is the detonator, he helps you to explode, to awaken the inner guru. Just as you have a detonator for a bomb, if there is no detonator the bomb will never explode. In the same way, the role of external guru is clear. What does he do? He just explodes the awareness of your inner master. And that's what we have been doing.

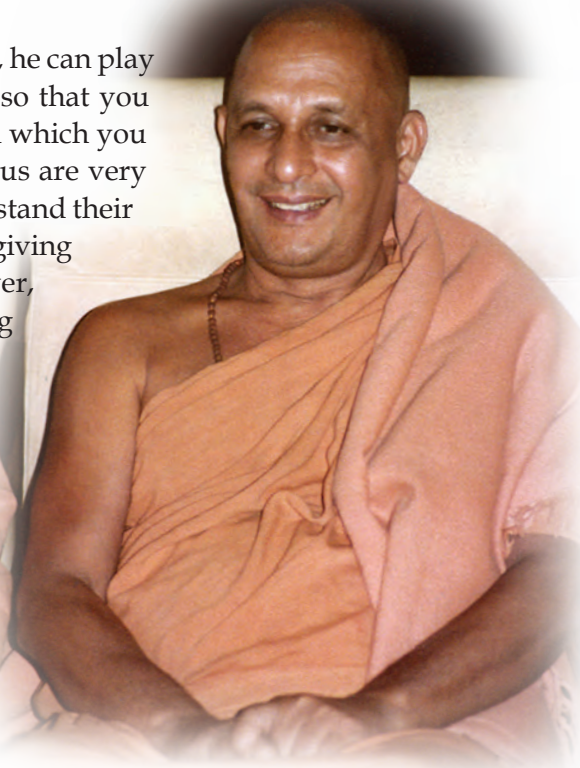
But at the same time we must remember, when a man approaches the aspirations of spiritual life, he approaches with incompleteness. Sometimes he is neurotic. Now do you think that a person who has no father or who has missed a father, or a person who has lost his beloved, or lover, or has no beloved and lover, should not go to a guru? No, this is not the condition. Anybody can go and approach a guru. And the guru will understand him.

First of all the guru will fill up the vacuum. It may be a psychological vacuum, it could be an emotional vacuum, it could be a philosophical vacuum. He could be your guide, your

friend, your philosopher, he can play all the roles in your life so that you may not feel the vacuum which you had in your life. But gurus are very alert people. They understand their mission very well. While giving the love of a father, or lover, or beloved, while fulfilling the role of a friend, guide and philosopher, guru knows only one thing that they will have to awaken the guru inside the chap.

What is the meaning of guru? Master? No. Professor? No. Teacher? No. Preceptor? No. Guru is the lighter. Guru means who lights the lamp; there is a candle, I light it, there is a lantern, I light it, there is the bulb, I put on the switch. That is the role of the guru. Where is the light? It is in everybody but you do not know where is the switch. The candle is in you, but you don't have the matchbox. Therefore, guru is a combination of two letters. *Gu* means darkness, *ru* means dispeller, so the etymology is dispeller of darkness, remover of darkness, killer of darkness, this is the negative expression. What is the positive expression? The bringer of light, the lighter of light, so there are two aspects of guru. Do not miss these two aspects, do understand these two aspects.

One is the negative aspect, the other is the positive aspect. The remover of ignorance or darkness is the negative aspect; harbinger of light is the positive aspect. When guru fulfils the role of a father etc., that is his negative aspect, that is his negative definition. When he becomes the instrument of inner



light, that is his positive role. Therefore, you should be very clear in expressing who a guru is.

There is a story in the Upanishads: Once a great sage approached his master. The guru said, "Why have you come here?" The sage said, "I want knowledge from you." He said, "Okay, come tomorrow." He went back. Next morning what did he do? He filled his motor car or wagon, or whatever you may say, with a lot of books. There were the books on philosophy, theology, theosophy, yoga, tantra, etc. Thousands of books. He went to his guru and told his guru, "Sir, these books I have mastered, now you know what you should teach me." The guru said, "What exactly you want tell me?" He said, "I want the inner light." He said, "But what do the books have got to do with that?" The disciple could not answer, because so far he was thinking that books will light his lamp.

So long he was thinking that all the knowledge he was gathering would ultimately culminate into illumination. And here this guru is telling something else. Then he said, "All these books which I have been reading, have I been wasting my time?" The guru said, "No, no it has not wasted your time, these books have brought you to me." There is a necessity of theoretical and intellectual knowledge. You can't burn all the books. But if you think that books alone can make you a guru, impossible. And thus, the story goes that, the guru gave him enlightenment.

In the same way, the external guru has to be capable of helping you to light the inner lamp. Even as you see the subtle microbes through a microscope, without it you can never see them with the naked eyes, the inner eye has to be opened. If the inner eye is opened, then you can see the glory of your inner light. Of course, if the psychologists can give a spiritual turn to the life of the individual, and if they do not leave the individual half the way after treatment, and if they can definitely fill the vacuum created by the absence of father, if they can explain it to him at all, then they are also gurus. And if there are such psychologist gurus, I will remove my hat for them, in reverence, in worship.

After all there is so much of difficulties in our emotional life. Even if you have your father and mother living, if you are emotionally full, and intellectually full, and if you are financially full, if you are full and full and full, still you are incomplete unless the inner awareness is handled and grasped.

One has a beautiful body, good health, brilliant, obedient, lovable wife, eminence, fame, all over, and alot of money in American and Swiss banks, but if one has not known the glory of guru and his role in life, these things are not going to make one complete.

I was given a poem this morning, it is in Sanskrit and it is a hymn to guru. There are six hymns, and these are addressed to the inner guru, not the physical guru, the guru that is beyond darkness, and the hymns say, "Guru is the creator, guru is the preserver and guru is the destroyer. There is no one beyond guru." To such a guru I salute. What are the attributes of guru? Full of absolute bliss, transcendental ecstasy, and knowledge absolute beyond conflicts and controversies, without any fault, the totality of all emotion, whom the three gunas do not touch at all, who is the essence of man's existence, to him I salute. You see this is the ode to the inner guru by the disciple.

First of all, we present this ode to the guru whom we know. We present these ideas to him, full of devotion and full of divine attitude. And through him the whole thing comes back to me and it goes deep into my spirit and that awakens the guru. So therefore, you can say the guru is my father, he is my lover or beloved, he is my son or brother, my boss or secretary, he is my friend, guide and philosopher. You can consider him whatever you like. But you must remember the ultimate purpose. If you forget that purpose, then all those relationships carry no meaning.

– August 1981, Chamarande, France

Relationship

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



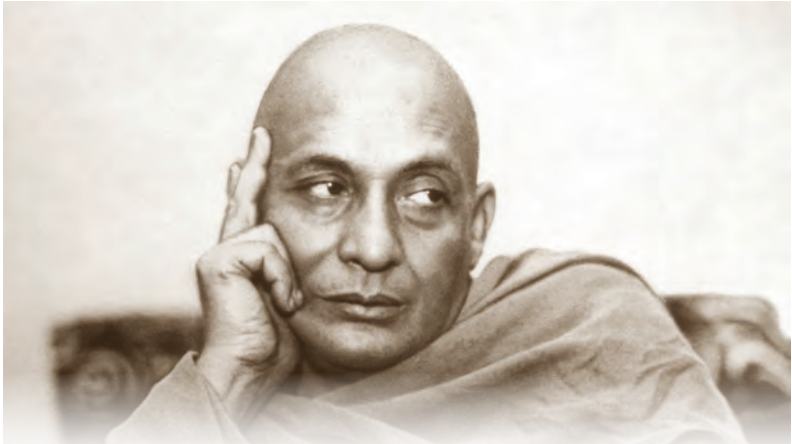
The relationship with your guru shouldn't be just a formal one. You should allow him to know you. So unless you expose yourself to him, he cannot know you. Just as you expose yourself before the x-ray and the x-ray tells you that the bone is broken, in the same way, don't maintain reservations with your guru.

There you are like a child and he should be like a mother. He should not be like a God, because he will punish you otherwise. God punishes, that is what we are told. I don't know but a mother will never punish. Even if she gives a slap to a child, she starts crying after that, because for the mother, the child is an emblem of love.

A disciple is a child, not just a devotee, and guru is like mother. If this relationship is established between the two, there will be some communication. Then, like a doctor, he knows what your malady is and he gives you the prescription, 'You can practise kriya yoga.' After some time, kriya yoga does not work. You tell your guru, 'Kriya yoga does not work.' He will think and say, 'Okay, practise only hatha yoga.' This is why the relationship with guru has to be established on a very non-religious basis.

More Change

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



In all the ashrams, the money and the property is managed by other people and not by me; even my letters I don't see. Once the accountant of one of the ashrams told me that he had been to a picture last night. I got angry with him. So what did he do? He did not tell me later, but he still used to go. I did not know where he got the money from. It was ashram money. I wanted to know what to do with him. I could not go on dismissing accounts.

So I phoned one cinema proprietor and asked him whenever a new picture came to send me two first class tickets. He was surprised but he knew there was something in my mind. Every time I used to give this disciple two tickets. That's all, and the whole thing changed. He remained a good cashier and accountant.

Still I think much more change has to come in me. I wanted to accept the whole creation. I don't want to know the two sides of creation. I just want to know it as one. I don't care who cheats me. I don't mind if one betrays me and I don't care if one loves me. That state of mind should come and it will come.

The Middle Man

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

It is not necessary to tell everybody about myself. It is not out of modesty, but what to tell you about myself? I am the transmitter; the knowledge does not belong to me. I am a medium; I am 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. They are scattered over the world like the fragrance of a flower, qualified and wonderful. I am just one among the prominent ones, but I was chosen. I was chosen in such a way that even my physical frame changed. I don't say that even my mother would not be able to recognize me. Even if I would tell her, 'I am your son,' she would say, 'No, you are an impostor.' My handwriting changed completely, like Swami Sivananda's. I don't know what exactly this is.

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

Up to 1963, I was able to do it. Suddenly on 14 July something happened. At midnight I started receiving wireless messages from my guru. Do this, do this, do this, do this. You will be surprised to know I did not know yoga at all, yoga was as far as anything from me, because my tradition is Vedanta. I belong to the special order of Advaita Vedanta philosophy in the Indian tradition. I thought asana and pranayama were all jokes. I thought, 'What are these people doing, drinking water through their nose?' I thought it was all useless, but the messages said, 'No, yoga has to be taught, mankind 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; I am blessed. Sometimes I think 'Oh, he should not have chosen me, it would have been much better.' I would be sleeping somewhere on the banks of the Ganga in a dilapidated Shiva temple, and I would sleep and sleep and sleep. What a joy there is in sleeping! You understand? You don't enjoy anything and you don't want it at all. That is a little about myself.

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

How did the things happen? When I was six years old, I suddenly felt that my body was there, but I did not feel myself. It was a peculiar experience. I did not feel the link between matter and prana. It was very fast, like lightening and it repeated itself. I spoke of it to my parents and since my father was also an initiated disciple of a very 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 my country, otherwise they would have given me tranquillizers and so many things and my development would

have been finished forever. Ultimately I was only taken to a few spirit healers, village magicians, as you call them. But they did not know what was happening to me.

I could never understand what exactly spiritual life and monastic life was. My guru has given me sannyasa and I stick to it because I have respect for him, but logically I cannot understand it. I think everybody can be a sannyasin in coat, pant and trousers, saris and frocks. Spiritual luminosity, spiritual enlightenment is not a cadre, it is not a sect. Spiritual illumination can happen to anybody, at any time. For that, you don't have to shave your head and put on this garb. I knew it very well, still I did it.

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

At the age of ten, I started hunting and stopped at the age of eighteen, when I shot the first tiger at a distance. That was my life. I did not understand, even today I do not understand how I became a swami.

That experience repeated itself again and again. My father referred this matter to four or five people. One was Swami Shraddhananda of Arya Samaj, a very powerful swami in that era. The second was Ma Anandamayi, a lady saint, who recently left her body, and a few more. They said, 'Send him to an ashram. Give him to a swami.' Well, my father did it. He used to ask me for years, 'When are you going?' Every time he came back from his duties, he said, 'Are you not going for sannyasa?' I said, 'Let me complete my education.' When the result was out, he took 90 rupees from his pocket, brought me to the motor stand, put me on the bus and said, 'Get out.' He said to me, 'You are meant for a different life.' So I think I was supposed to be the medium of my guru.

During my sojourn 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 own intellectual personality, I have my own philosophy, and I have my own idiosyncrasies in life. But towards him I am completely open, so that his aspirations and his wishes will 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 to tell them to practise meditation.' I don't know, it may be a sort of hallucination also. Maybe I am deluding myself, maybe it is self-hypnotism. It is very hard. When I remember that I am a *chela*, a disciple, whenever the disbeliefs come into my mind from time to time, and when I get fed up with all these silly things that I see I am doing, immediately that voice comes, the aura comes, and I get my next order, 'Do it' and I do it. It works.

I get guidance about my work and about people. Many times the persons I see in the future, I have already seen them. If I have to pick up one among you for my work, I know it very well. That face has already been shown to me. I know what I am going to do in which country. This is the glory of guru and therefore we should try to become a good *chela*, disciple.

I think everybody must have a guru; do not doubt. 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 every day like pigs and dogs. Have your search for a guru and try to correct your inner self.

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

– 3 April 1982, Casablanca, Morocco

Guru Poornima 2022

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



When Swami Sivananda was initiated, he came to Rishikesh and lived alone in a cottage, performing his sadhanas and serving the sick and destitute, the travellers who would pass through Rishikesh on their pilgrimage to Yamunotri, Gangotri, Badrinath or Kedarnath. He had a beautiful routine. He combined sadhana and seva in perfect harmony and balance. Most of us who want to have spiritual awareness and experience indulge ourselves in sadhana only and shun seva, thinking 'Oh, it is work, it is not necessary. I am practising my own sadhana for my enlightenment.'

Swami Sivananda blended seva and sadhana. The life he lived was austere, a Spartan life. One single room, sleep on the floor, two geru dhotis, and that was it. In the winter he would submerge himself in the freezing waters of Ganga and stay there for hours practising his austerities, sadhana, japa.

In the summer, he would light fires and sit in front of the fire, practising his sadhana, his austerity, his japa.

He would also serve all the sick and needy. Eventually his name spread through the region. Like many moths are attracted to the flame, in the same manner many people were attracted to his luminosity and became his disciples. In the course of time, Swami Sivananda established the Divine Life Society. He was a swami, a sannyasi all his life, and not a yoga teacher. He taught people how to avoid the pitfalls of life, which are holes made by our own raga and dwesha. They are made by our own kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya. Everybody has those holes in their life and everybody invariably falls into those holes, practically every day. People are not able to extract themselves from these holes. They become jealous, fall into the pit of jealousy and cannot extract themselves. People get infatuated by comforts and luxuries and cannot extract themselves. They are willing to die for the sensorial pleasures of life and cannot extract themselves. This is our story.

Swami Sivanandaji gave lessons of how to avoid these pitfalls, how to become aware of these pitfalls, how to cultivate higher positive, constructive qualities in life. He says, 'Avidity, cupidity, stupidity, audacity, irritability, eccentricity are all different obstacles to spiritual life. Duality, multiplicity, plurality, individuality, *ahamkarity*, *raga-dweshity*, *abhiniveshity*, sensuality, sensitivity, sentimentality, inactivity, rotundity are the obstacles of life.' Which master can be so clear and say these are the obstacles and you have to avoid the obstacles and pitfalls? Everybody talks about ethics and morality, which they cannot follow nor understand. Swami Sivananda gave a clear guideline on how to avoid the pitfalls of life and what to cultivate to progress on the spiritual path.

Meditation is not the path to progress in spiritual life. Self-correction and self-awareness become the path to progress in spiritual life. This was the lesson that Swami Sivanandaji gave to all. He lived a life of a sannyasin of the highest order. He was beyond Paramahansa, he was beyond duality, he was one

with the cosmic awareness. He was a *trigunatita* sannyasin, one who had transcended the three gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, and was established in the divine nature. There have been very few people like him. As disciples came to him, he taught them the way to live a spiritual life. He taught them how to become self-aware, how to correct themselves and recognize the faults of nature, the mind and personality; how to discover harmony and peace inside, and experience luminosity inside. That was his sannyasa life. When people used to come to him knowing that he was a doctor, could understand their sickness and help them, Swami Sivanandaji used to dispense medicines, but not like an ordinary doctor.

My guru, Swami Satyanandaji tells us, 'If a person came to Swami Sivananda for treatment, he would give him a medicine. After some time, if Swami Sivananda thought that the medicine given was improper and another medicine would be better for the sick person, he would give the new medicine to a disciple and say, "Go and find that sick person and give him this medicine." Can you imagine a disciple going through the roads, looking for a person who had left the ashram three or four hours earlier, find him, give the medicine, come back and say, 'Yes, I have given the medicine.' That was the nature of Swami Sivananda. If he thought that something else would be beneficial, he would make sure that the person would be the recipient of that which was more beneficial to him.

He also knew that most of the illnesses and sicknesses are psycho-somatic and somato-psychic. Psycho-somatic begins in the mind and affects the body and in Sanskrit is known as *adhyatmic*. Somato-psychic begins outside and affects the mind, *adibhautik* and *adidaivik*. The *adibhautik* and *adidaivik*, the external factors causing suffering and illness, and *adhyatmic*, the inner stuff causing sickness, could not be helped only through medicine.

So he started training his disciples in yoga, and said yoga would become the means for people to attain, physical, mental, psychological, emotional and spiritual health. He told them

that in the coming times they would have to spread out in the world and bring the teachings of yoga to human society across the nations. Many disciples asked Swami Sivanandaji, 'Yoga is not our vocation. We are sannyasins. We follow the path of Vedanta.' Swami Sivanandaji advised, 'In your personal life you are sannyasins, but in your public life you are servants of humanity, and you have to give what humanity requires. If somebody is sick and ailing from respiratory problem and is having difficulty in breathing, what will you do? Will you teach him Vedanta and say, 'You are not this body, you are not this mind?' Will Vedanta help the person who is sick and suffering? No. You have to give the person who is sick and suffering the right tool by which he can overcome his sickness, his weakness and attain health. Vedanta will not give you health, yoga will.'

Therefore, he instructed his disciples to teach yoga and no other philosophy of life. All his disciples became frontline teachers of yoga at a time when nobody in the world knew what yoga was. This was the instruction he gave to Swami Satyananda, our master, 'You go out and spread the message of yoga from door to door and shore to shore.' At that time Swami Satyanandaji said, 'I don't know yoga. How do you expect me to teach yoga?' Swami Sivanandaji said, 'I will teach you yoga. Come with me.' He took him to a room, taught him kriya yoga and transferred all his knowledge to Swami Satyananda. You may wonder, 'How can knowledge be transmitted by one person to another person in a few minutes?'

When you eat food, you use your fingers or spoons. The spoon becomes the medium to bring food to the mouth. The food goes down and it fills your stomach. The fingers become the medium to pick up the food, bring it to the mouth, then the food goes down and fills your stomach. Just as a metallic spoon or four fingers and thumb become the medium to eat food and satisfy your hunger, kriya yoga became the medium for *shaktipat*, for transference of knowledge from Swami Sivananda to Swami Satyananda. Endowed with this

knowledge, Sri Swamiji left Sivananda Ashram to fulfil the mandate of his guru. Swami Sivananda, the guru, said about his disciple, "There goes my true successor, who will bring the light of Siva into the world." This he did not say about anyone else. "There goes my true successor, who will bring the light of Siva to the world."

This happened because Swami Satyananda had become Swami Sivananda. Swami Sivananda had merged himself into Swami Satyananda. The example is the hard drive of a computer. When the hard drive of a computer is full and you want to make a copy of that hard drive into another empty hard drive, when you transfer the information from this full hard drive to the empty hard drive, it becomes an exact replica of the original. Nobody will be able to tell the difference which is the original and which is the copy except the person who has done the transfer. Otherwise everything is the same, every byte is the same. There is no difference. This happened to Swami Satyananda because he was able to empty himself and allow Guru's grace to fill his being.

This is not possible for everyone. There are people who make gurus, who become disciples and they want to sit with the guru for hours talking about their problems, difficulties, sufferings and pains. They talk for hours and days just about themselves to the guru, thinking, 'Guru doesn't know me. I have to tell him everything.' If that is the attitude, then you have misunderstood the whole concept of guru and disciple relationship. There is no need for you to sit and describe as in a dictionary or an encyclopaedia every little ache and pain you are having in the body, in the mind, every little suffering you have faced in your life. People tell the guru, 'You don't know what I have suffered in my life.' That is only a misconception that they live.

Swami Satyananda and other disciples of Swami Sivananda were not like that. They never sat down with their master to tell him of their problems and difficulties or ask for consultation. They believed that their master would always help them









overcome their limitations. Sri Swamiji says, 'If one can die for the sake of the pleasures of the world, let me die for the sake of my master.' That was the awareness and attitude that sannyasins had. The sannyasins of Swami Sivanandaji did not practise meditation for eight hours, six hours, three hours, four hours, no. They did not practise japa, repeating so many thousands of mantras, no. Swami Sivanandaji guided them on the path of sannyasa which, for Swami Sivanandaji, was commitment to seva. That was his sannyasa.

He laid down an eightfold path for sannyasins, in which the first step is *seva*, serving; second step, *prem*, loving; third step, *daan*, giving; fourth step, *shuddhi*, self-purification; fifth step, do good all the time, *acchha karo*; sixth step, be good, *acchha bano*; seventh step, meditate, *dhyān karo*; eighth step, realize, *atmasakshatkar*. Nowhere in this teaching for sannyasins does the word sadhana appear. Sadhana is a selfish thing. You only do it for your on pleasure, not for your transcendence. What kind of sadhana do you do anyway, when you are not even able to manage the fluctuations of your mind? When you are not able to manage your kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya, ghrina, raga, dwesha? What kind of sadhana, what kind of meditation is going to be beneficial to you? Like an ostrich, you can put your head down in the sand and think nobody in the world is looking at you, but remember, the big bum is sticking up. That is what we are. In the guise of sadhana we hide our head in the sand, yet all the negatives of life always shine brightly in our life. Therefore, if you understand what I am saying, you will know the secret of success. Swami Sivanandaji lived this life and he taught this life to his disciples.

Many of you may not agree with what I am saying, but what I am saying is the truth, and people don't understand truth. Swami Sivanandaji was not a yoga teacher. He inspired people to teach yoga to benefit humankind, yet he lived the life of a sannyasi. He inspired others to live the life of a sannyasi, to develop the awareness of the higher qualities leading them to live the divine life. In the same vein, Swami Satyanandaji



was not a yoga master like the world thinks. In the span of his eighty years of life, he taught yoga for only twenty; the rest was his sannyasa life. When only one-fourth of life is yoga, how can you say he is a yoga master? He was a sannyasin who lived his life for sixty years and served yoga for twenty years.

In these twenty years, the contribution of Sri Swamiji for the development of yoga is unchallenged. He was the master and he could give the lessons of yoga in a manner that no sage of the past had done. It was Swami Satyanandaji who brought all the aspects of yoga to life and made them practical, scientific, experimental and experiential. Therefore, his contribution is unparalleled in the history of yoga, past, present and future. He stands unique as the master of *yoga vidya*, the total science and subject of yoga. However he was a sannyasi foremost, first and last. Yoga was his contribution as per the mandate of his master. It was the inspiration of Swami Sivanandaji that flowed through Swami Satyanandaji. They are our inspirations. These two are our masters, whose life and teaching is an example for us to emulate, follow and realize.

– 12 July 2022, Ganga Darshan, Munger



In the Innermost Chamber

Where do guru and disciple unite?
Not on the physical and emotional plane.
They unite in total darkness
When everything is finished,
In the innermost chamber
Where everything is dead.
There you do not hear a sound
Or see any form or vision.
You are aware of nothing but the guru,
Shining like a lofty light.
That is how guru and disciple
Must commune with each other.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Birthday Celebration



On 23rd December 2022, Sri Swamiji's birthday was celebrated for the first time on this date. During Satyam Poornima, his lunar birthday was celebrated on the full moon night of Margashirsha which was on 8th December, and 23rd December corresponds to his solar birthday. Swami Niranjana conducted a havan in front of Chhaya Samadhi and later sannyasins spoke about their experiences with Sri Swamiji.

Swami Niranananda Saraswati: Sri Swamiji many times said, 'I am a heart surgeon.' He used to open blocked hearts and do heart surgery. He used to say, 'I do that.' After his mahasamadhi, the last surgery he did was to open the hearts of people, and he sat in their hearts by becoming the experience of love. That was the last surgery which he did.

Most of us feel it, because we know the history, we know the background, we have been associated with him. For that, there is no word to express any gratitude or thanks, because

you can be grateful or thankful to somebody who is different to you. How can you be grateful and thankful to somebody who is in you, and that too in such a beautiful manner? He established himself in the form of love within our hearts, and it has made our life meaningful and whole.

Swami Kaivalyananda Saraswati:

The most inspiring person in the world for me is Paramahamsaji. He was kind, he was compassionate, he was generous, he was affectionate, he was lovable and inspiring. It does not matter how you meet him, even if you do not meet him. If you think about him, you will be inspired. Why? I want to tell you one point. I never saw him criticizing



anybody – even the bad persons, thieves or robbers. He used to find a good quality in each and used to guide that person, and that person used to grow. There are examples of many persons who were thieves and robbers in Munger and in other parts. They are totally transformed.

This was something very important for me. We should also try not to criticize anybody. He said that you have no right to criticize anybody until you are self-realized. And once you are self-realized, why are you going to criticize? Then you see God everywhere. This is one quality which inspired me a lot.

Swami Yogakanti Saraswati: I first met Swamiji in 1976 when he came to Australia. He was talking about how yoga was the way to uplift the consciousness of mankind, and we had to do that. That was a wonderful message for me, because I had been wondering what to do with my life, because so many things

seemed to be out of kilt. Things were not good environmentally, and I was thinking about where to devote my life. What would be a useful thing to do with my life? When he said 'Yoga is the way to uplift the consciousness of mankind,' I thought 'That's It! Of course! Uplift the consciousness of mankind and everything will be much better.'

He was doing the great World Yoga Convention in Sydney. It was in a huge hall and everybody was enthralled by him. Everybody was totally silent, totally inspired, just soaking up his wisdom, his enthusiasm and his sureness. There was this sort of vibration of love.

Many people's lives were changed that day. There was no need to think about it. That was what we had to do and he knew how to do it. So, we just had to do what this man was teaching. Find out what he was teaching and do that. So, that sureness, love and world understanding is what impressed me first.

Swami Anandananda Saraswati, Italy: When in January 1980, I was leaving the old ashram, I went to Paramahamsaji's room to give my pranams, and I said, 'I am going to Italy.' At that time, I asked him, 'Swamiji, I would like to take sannyasa from you.' He said, 'You are a sannyasin.' I said, 'No, but I want to be *your* sannyasin.'

This was revolving in my mind today. I found that it has very much to do with a sense of belonging. I wanted to belong to his mission, to his tradition, as I had accepted him in my life. Swami Satyananda has given a direction to my life. This I know for sure. He had given me a clear, good, positive and useful direction for life. If I think about what I would be, if it was not for Swami Satyananda, I don't know. All I know was that I wanted to be part of his mission, his work, to help and support. I was in Italy and Swamiji was in India, but I kept the feeling, the connection, I kept thinking of him, I kept working for him, whatever I did for yoga was all for Swamiji's mission, to support, help and contribute.



There have been instances of something that he would say, and it would have a direct meaning, touch the core of my being and give me some direction in life, hope, strength, encouragement and inspiration. He was living inspiration. Whatever he did, whenever I could see him, translate for him, he was perfect. I saw perfection in every single act he did. He has shaped the direction of my life. The essence of the connection, I cannot rationalize. It is a mystery to me, but I know that Paramahamsaji, Sri Swami Satyananda, is present, he touches my soul. I do not know what has happened somewhere down there, but that only he could do.

Sannyasi Sivadhara: I realized over a period of time that Sri Swamiji knew the keys to the locks which we possibly didn't even know existed within us. He knew how to oil those locks because they were, and still are, quite rusty. He has also taught Swamiji the skill of oiling the lock and turning the key very well!

This morning when Swamiji said that today, ninety-nine years ago, Swami Satyananda's physical body manifested, I felt that somewhere our destinies were also born. Whether

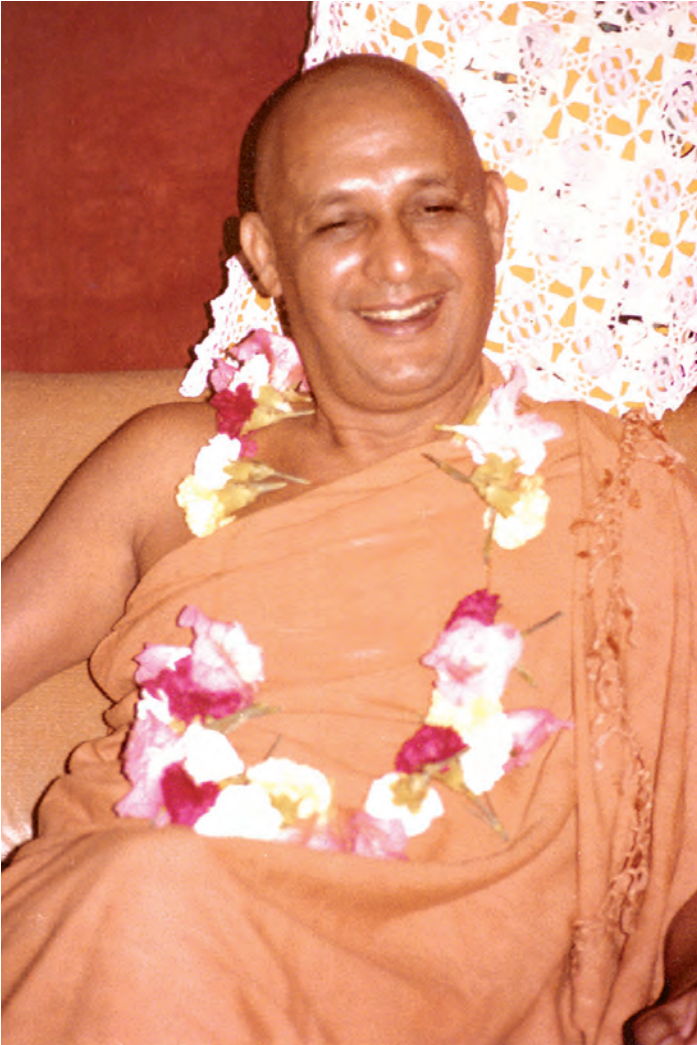
we were physically born or not is not relevant. Time really is not 'past, present, future', it is everything all the time. When a great soul like Sri Swamiji incarnates, it ignites a tiny spark in each and every being and it is up to us to take it and protect it and to nurture it, so that maybe somebody else will see some light at some point in something we do, and then it passes on. I think that the best way that we can begin to thank Love is by sharing it.

Swami Bhaktananda, Hungary: When I think of Sri Swamiji, the first thing that comes to mind is that he gave me the most precious thing in my life, which is my guru. I didn't know anything about gurus. I didn't know anything about yoga. I did not have any experience. I came here and one day I just saw Swamiji and that was it. It is like the strike of lightning, when the mind is empty, you cannot think. What develops in the silence is love.

I met Sri Swamiji a few months later in Rikhia in 2002 during the Sat Chandi Mahayajna. I had never seen anything like it in my life. The yajna is beautiful and something very ancient. I felt an attraction to it immediately, but the daan, the giving aspect, was really mind-blowing. I didn't understand how this could happen? Thousands of people were coming every day and received prasad that they could not carry – it was so big and so much. I asked one of the swamis, 'Who is doing this and why?' He said, 'It is Swami Satyananda. This is what he took on to help people. He just wants to help people.' My jaw dropped, 'What a beautiful aim. I want to do that.' It was such a beautiful inspiration and still is.

What else is it but love, and he radiated love all the time. Since I met Sri Swamiji and I met my guru, Swamiji, I have not had a day without love. It is a big thing, because there are billions of people in the world who have never experienced love, positivity or happiness. We have the good fortune because someone shows us the way, and sometimes someone tells us, 'You have to do it better.'

Forever Grateful



In the realm of divinity, where wisdom transcends,
On this auspicious Guru Pournima, our hearts blend,
We gather to celebrate, with reverence and cheer,
The birth anniversary of Sri Swami, so dear.

A century has passed since your sacred birth,
A beacon of light, spreading wisdom on earth,
Your teachings have touched countless souls,
Guiding us towards spiritual goals.

With humility and grace, you lead the way,
Through your words and actions, day by day,
You've shown us the path to truth and light,
Nurturing our spirits, keeping them bright.

In the depths of silence, we find your voice,
Whispering truths, making our hearts rejoice,
Your presence is felt in each gentle breeze,
In every moment, bringing us inner peace.

With unwavering faith, we bow at your feet,
Grateful for the blessings, so pure and sweet,
You've ignited a flame within our hearts,
A divine connection that never departs.

On this joyous occasion, we offer our gratitude,
For your infinite love and boundless magnitude,
Your wisdom has shaped us, transformed our lives,
Forever grateful, as each moment thrives.

As we celebrate your 100 years of grace,
We embrace your teachings, in every place,
Through the journey of life, hand in hand,
Forever guided by your divine command.

Sri Swamiji, on this blessed day,
We honour you, in every single way,
May your light continue to shine so bright,
Guiding us through darkness, with eternal sight.

Happy Guru Poornima, with love and devotion,
Celebrating your birth, with heartfelt emotion,
Thank you, Sri Swamiji, for all that you do,
We are forever indebted, forever grateful to you.

—Harsh Ranjan, Patna

More than a Sweet Memory

After doing the official registration at the guesthouse, the kind-hearted receptionist slowly tidied his desk and before handing me the key, quietly asked; “So you have come from the Bihar School of Yoga?”

“Yes, I live there.”

“May I ask you, have you ever met Swami Satyananda?”

“Yes, I have.”

“I also met Swami Satyananda, once. We even shared the stage. It was in 1981 in Hyderabad. At the time, I was associated with the Vivekananda Kendra, and I helped organize programs and functions. This particular program was conducted at the Electronics Corporation India Limited; they were makers of Dyanora TV. I was a young man of 27 and I had to say a few words about Swami Vivekananda and ended with, ‘Swami Vivekananda believed that the Divine is in everyone and in everything.’

Then I introduced Swami Satyananda. It was his turn to speak and he began by saying, ‘I agree with this young man and with Swami Vivekananda.’ He said, ‘I agree with this young man . . .’

The eyes of the receptionist had the glow of a young man of 27, and after 42 years that brief encounter with Sri Swamiji was as alive and as significant as ever.



Guru

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



The real guru is within everybody. All of you must listen to this truth. Guru is not an external reality, he is within everybody. He keeps on guiding you all throughout life, but we are ignorant people and therefore we are not able to understand that voice or the guidance of the inner guru. The inner guru is known as satguru, and when you praise your guru, you are actually praising him. This is the truth which I am putting before you, how to commune with the inner guru. For that purpose, you have to have an outer guru. The external guru puts you in touch with the satguru.

The external guru is the medium through which you reach your inner guide. Therefore, it is important for you to have faith, devotion and understanding for the outer guru. He teaches you practices through which your mind becomes very subtle and begins to visualize the inner guru. The outer

gurus are of two types. One is called the teacher and the other is called the guru or master. The teacher teaches your intellect, your mind, yoga or anything else, and the guru can transmit the knowledge into your spirit without teaching you.

The main duty of a guru is to remove the darkness within your mind. Within the mind there is no light, there is total darkness. You can remember things, you can think things, but you cannot experience your inner spirit. If all these lights go off just now and there is no moonlight outside, there will be total darkness in the hall. Then I cannot recognize any one of you. You cannot identify anyone here, because there is total darkness. Now you bring the light into this hall and you can identify everyone here. In the same way, within your mind, within your consciousness, within your spirit, there are many wonderful and beautiful experiences.

Within you is bliss and within you is light and within you is divine experience, but you cannot experience that, because there is darkness in your consciousness. Because of this darkness you are not able to experience your satguru, and for that an external guru comes and helps you remove the darkness. If there is a treasure of gold underneath the earth, you will have to dig it out. Without digging you cannot get the treasure, and for digging you need tools and you must also know where to dig. In the same way, in order to realize the satguru you will have to dig into your mind.

This tradition of guru and disciple relationship is very old. The relationship, the link between them is not intellectual. It is emotional initially, but not totally emotional. You have a link with your children, that is paternal and maternal emotion. You have a relationship with your husband or your wife, which is a marital relationship. You have a relationship with your friends, which is a fraternal relationship. You have a relationship with your boss in the office or with your subordinate and that is an intellectual relationship. In the same way, you have a relationship with your guru, and that is a spiritual relationship. It is neither physical, mental, intellectual

or emotional. It is based on the purity of your faith or belief. This is one explanation.

Guru and disciple both make one circuit. When they come together, they create a polarity in the field of energy. Just as in the electrical cable you have two lines, positive and negative, in the same way there is a relationship between guru and disciple. Guru is the positive energy and disciple is the negative energy, when these two energies unite at some point, there is the manifestation of shakti. In fact, this is the true relationship between guru and disciple. It is very difficult to practise this relationship. Guru is pingala and disciple is ida. Guru is purusha and disciple is prakriti. Guru represents consciousness and disciple represents nature. Guru represents masculine energy and disciple represents feminine energy.

There is a third explanation. Guru is the operator and disciple is the medium. Guru uses the disciple as a field of the manifestation of his energy. I have tried this third explanation many times and I found that this relationship is very productive. I think I can project myself in my disciple and create things. This means my disciple is a medium.

There is one way of developing the relationship between guru and disciple and I can give you one example. Here are a number of lights. The moment I put off the main switch, all the lights will instantaneously go off. They won't take time. They obey the law. The light will not think, 'Okay, the switch has gone off but I can stay on for a minute.' That is called obedience, and in the obedience of a disciple there is no place for reasoning, no provision or possibility for reasoning. Reason was the helper once upon a time, but if you want to be a disciple then reason is a barrier. Therefore, you have to transcend reason. If I tell the disciple to sit down, he should not say, 'Why?' If I say, 'Go right now.' He should not say, 'What for? Have you gone crazy?'

There are many stories in the tradition of Christian, Hindu and Buddhist mysticism and I can recite one story here. In Tibet there was one boy called Milarepa. He went to his guru. His



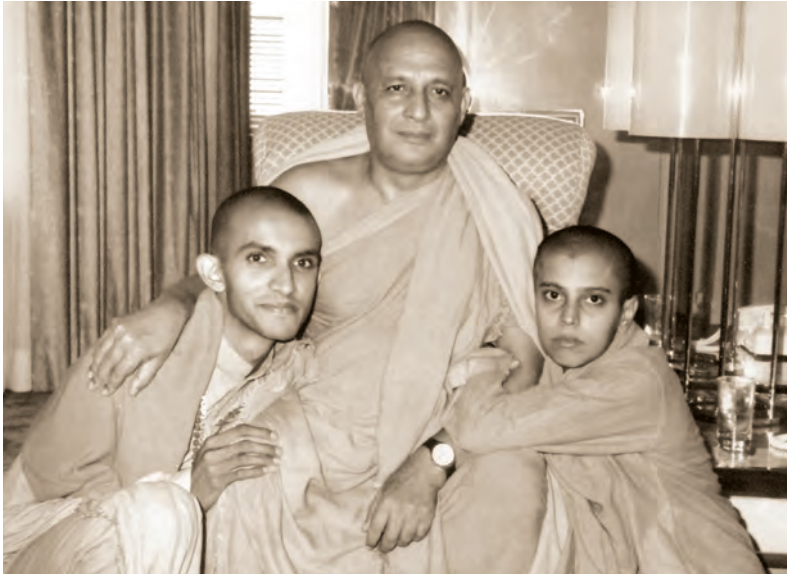
guru did not allow him to enter the house. Instead he abused him and ill-treated him. He misbehaved, and tortured him. Milarepa had completely dismissed his reasoning. One day when the guru had gone out, the guru's wife brought Milarepa some fresh boiled meat to eat. Immediately the guru appeared and he said, 'Ah, I know, what is going on between you two, you rascal get out of here.' He made Milarepa carry stones to the top of the mountain from the road. The poor boy carried boulder after boulder, week after week, and month after month and built a little house for himself. One day his guru went to inspect the house. He found Milarepa relaxing. He said, 'Hey you lazy boy, you are not going to stay here at all – dismantle the house and bring the boulders down.' What would you do if I asked you to do this? You would say, 'Crazy man, crazy man.' You would say, 'I think there is definitely something wrong with my guru.'

This is the way in which Gurus make disciples their mediums. If you cannot obey your guru, you cannot become a medium. If you analyze and assess the guru, you can not be a medium. In history all great disciples have been mediums of their guru. But this third explanation is a very difficult one and not everybody can be like that.

– 6 December 1982, Medellín, Colombia

What can I say . . .

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



I had the good fortune of meeting a great mahatma during my tirtha yatras and when he heard that Sri Swamiji had taken mahasamadhi, he closed his eyes for a few moments and then said, "In this age, no other sannyasin has been able to live all dharmas and fulfil all karmas in the manner that Swami Satyananda did. He is the only sannyasin of such calibre who has lived in the present times."

These were the words of spontaneous praise from a great saint himself. It is true, for we have seen these attributes in his life: his hard work, his faith, his knowledge, his sacrifice, his surrender, his simplicity, his straightforwardness, his love, his gentleness . . . the list is endless.

What can I say about my guru, with what words can I express my feelings about the one because of whom my entire life has meaning and purpose?

Do we need a guru?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Frankly speaking, a guru is very important, not only in yoga but in every science. Of course, a few outstanding people are born in the world who do not need a guru, but most people need a guru. When you follow the path of awakening spiritual experiences, you need someone to help you and guide you.

The relationship between guru and disciple is a very intimate one. It is not based on the body and society and it should not be a physical and social relationship. The relationship between guru and disciple is out and out spiritual. Even as you are related to many people in the world, through worldly relationships, physical relationships, blood relationships and social relationships, you have a spirit, you have the self. It is on that plane that you have to relate yourself with someone, and that relationship you can develop with your guru.

A guru is not a priest, not a religious preacher, not a scholar, nor a moral preceptor, he is just a helper in your spiritual quest. He should know the techniques. Even if he is not intellectual, even if he is not literate, that does not matter. My first encounter was with an illiterate lady. Finally, I came to search for my guru, whom I found after two years.

Now there is a difference between my experience with her and my experience with my guru. She helped me to awaken my psychic or spiritual nature, but it was not possible for her to guide me after a certain point. Therefore, I had to go in search of a guru who would be able to help me transcend the barriers. This is the tradition in India. When we go in search of a guru, we do not go in search of a religion. Whether the guru is a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian, we do not mind because we believe the experience can be had from anyone. Whether you are a good person or not, whether you drink or eat meat, whether you are a Hindu, Muslim or Christian, it does not

matter. If you are a master of the technique, you are my guru.

Hindus believe in one thing and I think you will agree. If you go to the toilet and your diamond ring falls into the toilet, what will you do? Will you flush it out? The precious diamond is lying in a very dirty place but a wise man will not leave it there. In the same way, whatever the spiritual experience is, you should have from anybody without distinction of religion or nationality. That is precisely the reason why all religions are flourishing in India. Everybody has got a wide market because there is always someone who goes to them.

Curious behaviour

There was a Muslim fakir who used to live about one hundred and fifty miles from the place where I have my ashram. One of the orthodox Brahmins from my town went to him because his son was suffering from cancer. He had heard of his great fame so he went there and saw some things with which he did not agree. He had been educated in England for five years, and in the West there are definitions, compartments of 'This is good and therefore it is unequivocally good; this is bad and it is only bad and not good.' So he came back.

I asked him, 'What happened?' He said, 'I don't like him.' I asked why. He replied, 'He is a very fat man.' I said, 'What has fat got to do with it? You have gone to him to get help for your son and you are saying he is fat. You are discrediting a fat man.' He said, 'No, it is not only that he is fat. Any lady who comes, he hugs her.' In India that is not the tradition. You cannot even hug your grown-up daughters. You can only hug your wife in private. The third thing he said, 'He drinks and he makes everybody take it.'

I told him that when you want milk, you must go to a cow. Do not say she is black or brown or multi-coloured, or that she is Indian, Jersey, Australian or Danish. Only be sure that the milk is white! The poor western-educated lawyer was completely dumbfounded when I spoke to him like this. Then I put the same question to him that I put to you now,



‘What would you do with a diamond ring if it has fallen into the toilet?’ He said, ‘I would pick it up.’ I said, ‘Please go back again and if he gives you a little sip of champagne, have it. If by drinking one spoon or half a glass full of champagne, your son becomes free from cancer, well and good.’

The people who are outstanding spiritually have curious behaviour. In India they are absolutely strange people. They just put on a string and piece of bandage cloth, like most of your girls do here and they go walking in the street. Everyone respects them. Whatever they say must happen because they are endowed with the truth of speech. They do not speak but if they do say something, it must come to pass because when you practise higher techniques, then you are in connection with higher energy.

It is very important for everyone to have a guru. Through this, you do not change your religion but you change the quality

of your experience – and this is most important. I am a Hindu, you are a Christian, but our quality of experience is very low. This is something which is very peculiar to India; Indians are always in search of people who have what we call some extra spiritual experience. This does not happen in the West.

Once in India about thirty years ago, a very funny man was found in a dirty place. He was very dirty looking and the place where he was sitting was unhealthy. He used to call everybody and say, 'Hey, bring me ganja to smoke!' He used to smoke a chillum the whole day; ganja means hashish. The people all around began to think, 'Who is this man? Is he a madman or is he something special?' After observing him they found that he had some sort of connection with the psychic realm of the universe, and then people began to flock to him – but until his death he never left that dirty place. He lived there, never changing his way of life.

If such a person happened to be here in the West, he would be put into a mental hospital. In the West, you put yogis into mental hospitals and therefore you do not have any gurus at all. It is not that there are no outstanding people in the West. There are very good yogis, but before they can become gurus, they are sent to the hospital. In India, we make a very subtle distinction between a madman and a yogi. A madman is a madman; he knows nothing; he has no connection with the inner life, but the other type of madman has a connection with spiritual life.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the guru of Swami Vivekananda, was like this. He was a priest in a temple and instead of worshipping the deity, he used to worship himself. Such is the tradition of the madman. These madmen have also been born in the West from time to time, but they were either executed, put behind bars or into mental hospitals. Those who survived left for India. You are also welcome.

– 10 May 1984, Toulon, France

Can a guru be mistaken?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Everything depends on the disciple. When a mother has a baby, her baby is beautiful, ugly, healthy or paralyzed. Is the baby bad for the mother? Whatever may be the state of the baby,

the mother has only one attitude for it: love, affection, care. She does not base her affection on the actual condition of the child. It is the same way with the guru and disciple relationship.

Many times disciples project themselves onto the guru and then the guru is full of mistakes. There are many gurus who behave in a peculiar way, especially with the disciples who live with them. They are never kind to the disciples. They are never straight with the disciples. They keep the disciple always under disturbance. That is the training, isn't it? If the guru is kind, affectionate and always lenient, how can the disciple improve?

For example, how do you make a table? The carpenter cuts the wood, bit by bit. It is a painful process for the wood. Ultimately you have nice furniture. How do you make a shirt? You have to cut the material with scissors. If only the piece of cloth could feel, it would cry at every cut of the scissors.

Reorientation of a personality can never take place unless there is a process of medication: sometimes affection, sometimes harsh words, sometimes love, sometimes contentment, sometimes praise and sometimes insults. This is how to train the undeveloped mind of a disciple. It is not only the guru who does it; you find the same thing in the world. This is the law of nature. If everybody only loves you, praises you, gives you affection and protection, you will never grow. You will not become intelligent. If sometimes you get love, at other times somebody hates you, somebody frightens you, somebody protects you, the mind will undergo a state of fluctuation. Awareness becomes broad. This is the law of nature and this is the law of a guru.

When there is love, there is no mistake. I believe in this. You see the mistake when love ceases to exist. For an intelligent disciple, there is no mistake in the guru. When the disciple is wavering and dwindling in his awareness, he can even see a mistake when his guru is snoring in sleep.

– 11 September 1980, Zinal, Switzerland



To Live the Positive

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

I am not here to say good words, for good is the outcome of transcending the bad. What is the use of saying 'serenity, regularity, absence of vanity' when we are unable to apply them in our own life? I am here to make us aware of the restrictions that block us from experiencing the goodness that Sri Swami Sivanandaji and Sri Swamiji have pointed out. We believe in our convictions more than we believe in the teachings of the master.

We believe that by practising meditation and chanting mantra we can attain higher states of consciousness, however that was never said in any book, satsang or in any of the teachings of Swami Sivananda or Swami Satyananda. Their teachings were an open secret – to be the best, to apply one's skills and qualities to achieve the best in life and to help people achieve their best. In that way, you can become a human being.

To be a true human being is the last state of being a siddha. It is this lesson that I think about. Not of asana, pranayama, mantra and meditation, but how the masters, who have touched our lives and inspired us, have told us to overcome the negative and to live the positive. The positive cannot be lived in meditation, the positive can only be lived in the world. The positive cannot be lived in the Himalayas or in isolation, it can only be lived in the world.

Therefore, Swami Sivanandaji and Swami Satyananda did not advocate tapas for their followers, they did not advocate *moksha* or self-realization for their followers. They advocated 'Serve, Love and Give'. They advocated atmabhava where you are connected to sattwa.

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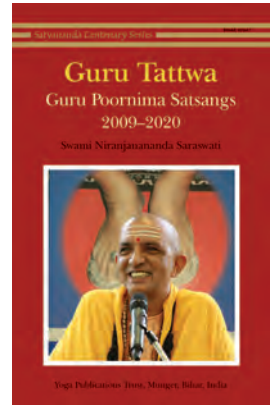
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<i>Oct 15-29</i>	Progressive Yoga Vidya Training
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<i>Every Poonima</i>	Sundarkand Path
<i>Every 4th, 5th & 6th</i>	Guru Bhakti Yoga
<i>Every 12th</i>	Akhanda Path of Ramacharitamansas